

BUREAUCRATIC SOCIALIZATION IN TURKISH PUBLIC BUREAUCRACY: A NORMATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper examines the regulations governing bureaucratic socialisation within the framework of Turkish public bureaucracy. I utilise qualitative research, integrating a pertinent literature review and document analysis of Turkish administrative and legal regulations. The research findings demonstrate that the notion of bureaucratic socialisation is not explicitly regulated by Turkish legal and administrative norms; however, there is indirect regulation through concepts such as training, upgrading, and adaptation, as addressed in the literature on bureaucratic socialisation. Additional findings reveal that, although no regulations pertaining to informal socialisation were identified, those concerning formal socialisation focused on the adoption of constitutional ideals and the principles of Weberian bureaucracy by public officials. In Türkiye, characterised by sensitive ethnic and sectarian fault lines, the training of public officials who are impartial, rational, professional, and committed to constitutional principles will significantly enhance the sustainability of the unitary structure and social cohesion by developing and implementing effective bureaucratic socialisation practices.

Keywords

European Union; Strategic Autonomy; Indo-Pacific; Policy Coherence; Actorness; Strategic Culture; Normative Power; Economic Security Turkish Public Administration, Bureaucratic Culture, Bureaucratic Socialisation, Organisational Socialisation

INTRODUCTION

As a basic pillar of the modern state, the public bureaucracy upholds social order and delivers equitable public services. The legitimacy and efficacy of democratic political institutions, activities, and procedures are intrinsically connected to the public bureaucracy's egalitarian, unbiased, and professional conduct towards all segments of society and individuals. Compliance with constitutional and legal standards, judicious exercise of discretionary authority for the public good, and an efficient bureaucracy that is impartial and devoid of favouritism based on ethnicity, religion, language, race, or gender in its interactions with citizens are crucial for maintaining public peace and order.

Both the patrimonial bureaucracy of the early Ottoman Empire and the modern bureaucratic structure established after modernization initiatives were based on an elitist mindset, and these characteristics were reflected in the Republican cadres. The Turkish bureaucracy underwent a transformation as a result of the transition to multi-party rule, which substantially disrupted this elitist structure. Additionally, it is a reality for at least a few bureaucratic cadres that each era generates its own elite. In the latter years of the Republic, new fault lines based on ethnicity, sect, and ideology emerged, leaving the social structure more fragile. The modernist-conservative conflict, which entered Turkish social life as a legacy of early Ottoman modernisation and had significant repercussions on political life, has deepened.

Consistent with these concerns, the Turkish bureaucracy is increasingly reliant on the principle of merit in personnel recruitment, as well as on the observance of legal norms and the guarantee of equal rights and opportunities for all citizens. In addition, it is imperative that probationary employees acquire and internalise legal norms, bureaucratic institutions, rules, and processes in order to mitigate the risk of a fragmented public bureaucracy and guarantee national stability. This is because each individual forms their attitudes under the influence of various aspects and levels of socialisation prior to entering the civil service, and because they join the public bureaucracy from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The Turkish public bureaucracy is primarily influenced by Weberian principles, including impartiality, expertise, equality, adherence to rules, and confidentiality. It is characterised by legal and administrative norms that are intended to communicate these values to probationary employees. Nevertheless, the application of these principles is not restricted to legal and institutional frameworks. Bureaucratic socialisation, a profound and intricate process that influences the attitudes, values, and behaviours of public officials who operate within these structures, is the determining factor.

Bureaucratic socialisation is the process by which probationary employees internalise an organisation's written and implicit rules, values, norms, and behavioural patterns, thereby fostering a "bureaucratic" identity. Although this process may be interpreted as the transfer of organisational values to potential public officials, it can also be viewed as a process by which the potential public official acquires and internalises the structure within which they operate, as well as its operating rules, powers, and responsibilities during their public service. Conversely, bureaucratic socialisation, which ensures administrative continuity and stability by transmitting institutional memory and standards to future generations, has the potential to generate adverse consequences that exacerbate the status quo, a patronising perspective on society, rigid hierarchy, risk aversion, and resistance to change. Additionally, it undermines the principles of impartiality and efficiency, particularly in structures with a profound historical legacy, such as the Turkish bureaucracy.

This study seeks to elucidate the legal and administrative frameworks that influence the bureaucratic socialisation process within Turkish public administration, informed by historical and cultural dynamics. To comprehend bureaucratic socialisation, we first analyse organisational culture, organisational socialisation, and bureaucratic culture, then discuss bureaucratic socialisation. I will examine the current state of these concepts within the Turkish public bureaucracy and the historical forces that shape this situation.

Given that regulations are the essential instruments governing the operations, roles, and career trajectories of civil servants, and that these regulations transform in significance and content according to the political and social history of the nation and the state's designated role (Dreyfus, 2007, p. 23), I examine the dominant norms within the Turkish public bureaucracy, addressing the issue and elucidating the concept of bureaucratic socialization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilises the theory of path dependency to analyse the transformation trends of the Turkish Bureaucracy, while also employing the theory of bureaucratic orientation to examine bureaucratic socialisation.

Path Dependence Theory

Path dependence is a component of the historical institutionalism school (Steinmo et al., 1992). Path dependence theory, developed by economic historian Paul A. David and system theorist Brian W. Arthur, in the 1980s, posited that organisations and actors exist within institutions that shape and direct their behavioural norms and actions along predetermined trajectories. These pathways consist of institutions, characterised by their values, standards, and regulations (Pierson, 1993). Path dependence fundamentally refers to the phenomenon wherein the entrenchment of specific arrangements over time increases the expense of altering them (Pierson, 2000). The primary concept of path dependency theory is that, under certain conditions, economic and other activities can exhibit increasing returns, in which the benefits of participation grow over time as more individuals adopt a specific operational approach. Furthermore, the path dependence theory emphasises self-reinforcing mechanisms, switching costs, and crucial junctures. The first two notions elucidate the challenges of institutional transformation, while the third identifies critical

junctures for implementing more extreme reforms. The literature on path dependence offers extensive insights on institutional change that reformers should consider seriously (Prado & Trebilcock, 2009, p. 351).

Historical institutionalism views public policymaking and political transformation as a separate process known as path-dependency, interrupted by chaotic moments in which public policy is given new aims, new priorities are developed, and new political and administrative alliances emerge to sustain those new policies (Peters et al., 2005). Path dependence theory provides an intellectual framework for elucidating the evolution of the Turkish public bureaucracy, the obstacles faced during this evolution, and the critical junctures. This tool effectively elucidates the persistence of Imperial Period remnants within the Turkish bureaucracy, the transformative changes it has experienced during pivotal moments such as the transition from monarchy to republic, constitutional amendments, and military interventions, as well as its continued elitist structure (Tatlıhoğlu et al., 2018, p. 277).

Organisational and Bureaucratic Socialisation

Organisational socialisation refers to the process through which individuals assimilate the attitudes, behaviours, knowledge, and abilities required to engage and operate effectively as members of an organisation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This process predominantly emphasises the transformations experienced by new employees, rather than alterations within the organisation itself (Wanous, 1980). It entails new members acclimating to the organisation, assimilating its values, and discerning cues about what is deemed significant within it (Schein, 1980). Taormina (1997) particularly characterises this process as an adaptation in which individuals acquire skills, attain a functional understanding of the organisation, obtain social support from seasoned employees, and embrace the firm's established norms. In this context, socialisation exemplifies general psychological processes, including behavioural change, compliance, loyalty, and commitment (Nicholson, 1998). Organizational socialization is analysed in the literature through two perspectives: the functional approach, which regards the individual as a passive entity (Schein, 1968; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985, p. 2), and the dialectical approach (Chatman, 1991; Morrison, 1993a; 1993b; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985, p. 2), which perceives the individual as an active participant engaged in acquiring knowledge about the organization's values and operations (Cheng & Pang, 1997, p. 196). More recent studies, however, transcend this binary divide and provide a comprehensive approach focused on the interaction of values and practices among individuals and organizations. This contemporary methodology seeks to examine the implications of the socialisation process for individuals and organisations collectively (Griffin et al., 2000).

Gordon (1970) defined bureaucratic orientation as an individual's dedication to a collection of attitudes, values, and behaviours often promoted and incentivised inside bureaucratic organisations. In subsequent investigations, the notion of orientation was supplanted by that of socialisation. Bureaucratic socialisation is an extensive process of internalisation whereby individuals assimilate the laws, regulations, and procedures that form the legal-rational framework of institutions, along with the organisation's operational rules, hierarchical relationships, intragroup dynamics, and the technical competencies required for task performance. The individual's ideas, values, and norms are congruent with those of other persons in the organisation through numerous processes and procedures, hence influencing role performance and role ideology (Burgaz et al., 2013, pp. 40, 52; Hoy & Rees, 1977). The organisation, as a socialising agency, conveys its unique ideals alongside the fundamental values of bureaucracy to new members. The embrace of these values cultivates a bureaucratic orientation, denoting a dedication to the attitudes, values, and behaviours typically promoted and rewarded in bureaucratic entities, thereby guaranteeing the internalisation of values essential for organisational sustainability (Denhardt, 1968, p. 443; Gordon, 1973, p. 3). An elementary indicator of internalization is the respect for legitimate authority and a propensity to adhere to that authority in organizational processes; this aligns with the classical perspective on administrative behaviour, which asserts that individuals persist in delivering services as long as they operate within the "zone of acceptance" of commands (Denhardt, 1968, p. 445; Simon, 1958, p. 12).

Bureaucratic socialisation denotes allegiance to a constellation of attitudes, values, and behaviours promoted and incentivised by bureaucracies, including spontaneous obedience, impersonality, rule-centeredness, and traditionalism (Aina & Obokoh, 2003, p. 286). It is significant not only in scholarly study but also in practical domains such as people selection, career counselling, and employee development. As the alignment between an individual's work environment preferences and its attributes improves, performance, satisfaction, and organisational commitment may likewise enhance (Allinson, 1988, p. 193). Bureaucratic socialisation is essential for maintaining democratic constitutional values, guaranteeing social cohesion, attaining systemic goals, and promoting organisational efficiency. It also includes acquiring the requisite responsibilities and procedures mandated by laws, rules, and directives (Ottekin Demirpolat, 2011, p. 44; Burgaz et al., 2013, p. 41). The socialisation process differs depending on the employed methods; formal socialisation is orchestrated by organisational figures such as managers and supervisors, whereas informal

socialisation occurs primarily through normative behaviours and social interactions within the peer group (Kuhlman & Hoy, 1974).

Professional Socialisation (Orientation)

The principal alternative to bureaucratic socialisation in public organisations is professional socialisation, as a phase of occupational socialisation. In previous literature, Corwin (1965) introduced the term "professional orientation" as a role-perception variable to characterise individual behaviour across various contexts. Corwin posits that a professional orientation is defined by an individual's focus on growth and transformation, knowledge-based skills, autonomy in decision-making, alignment with a reference group, goal attainment, and commitment to clients and professional organisations. In more recent studies, the term 'bureaucratic socialisation' is preferred over 'bureaucratic orientation'. Professional socialisation is defined as an evolutionary process in which adults entering a profession learn values and roles that help them evaluate new roles (Mangolian Shahrabaki & Nouhi, 2023). Research suggests that professional employees within formal organisations often exhibit a bipolar role orientation: individuals with a "bureaucratic" orientation reconcile conflicting expectations by adhering to organisational policies and procedures, whereas those with a "professional" orientation prioritise the norms, values, and reference groups of their profession over the specific rules of the organisation (Billingsley, 1964, p. 400). This contradiction reveals a structural tension between occupational specialisation and bureaucratic discipline, as the control mechanisms of professions fundamentally differ from the hierarchical control implemented in bureaucratic organisations (Blau & Scott, 1962, pp. 59-74). Evidence indicates an inverse correlation between bureaucratic role orientation and occupational role orientation (Miller & Wager, 1971). Consequently, the more inflexible and constraining authority framework of bureaucracies, compared with that of professions, may diminish individuals' professional autonomy by realigning their role priorities with bureaucratic expectations; thus, a professional is prone to losing autonomy when employed in a bureaucratic organisation (Blau & Scott, 1962).

DEVELOPMENT TREND OF TURKISH BUREAUCRACY

In the early 2000s, Turkey significantly transcended the bureaucratic patron-client system of medieval Ottoman beginnings and is progressing towards a socially diversified and heterogeneous social structure. Given the decline of bureaucratic authority and the emergence of a liberal market economy since the 1980s, a reversion to the "Western tutelary bureaucracy" in its original form seems unfeasible. The bureaucracy must comprehend evolving social dynamics and adopt problem-solving approaches within a diverse democracy, as the global order only acknowledges such solutions. The internal and international difficulties confronting Turkey also require this attitude (Inalcik, 2004, p. 71).

Modernisation Initiatives During the Imperial Era

The bureaucratic elitism of the Ottoman-Turkish state legacy has been perpetuated via continuity and transformation during the phases of modernisation. During the classical period, a simple bureaucracy was founded on the servitude system, with military and civilian bureaucracies structured around the sultan's household troops (Kapıkulları) (Heper, 1974, p. 38). The conventional characteristics of authority, the rigid centre-periphery dichotomy, and the perception of the central leader as the nation's proprietor were pivotal in the development of this patrimonial bureaucracy (Heper, 1977, p. 55). For an extended period, administrative levels remained inaccessible to the general populace, and despite rising literacy rates, the bureaucratic sphere continued to be dominated by a select elite; in addition to literacy, allegiance to the state and adherence to "Ottomanism" were the primary qualifications sought (Weiker, 1968, p. 103). This centralised and elitist framework established a divide between the rulers and the governed; the Ottoman social hierarchy was predicated on the unequivocal dominance of the centre over the periphery (Heper, 1974, p. 59). The estrangement of public administration from the populace and the institutional scepticism towards citizens engendered inflexible centralist administrative practices aimed at safeguarding the regime; this administrative legacy and political culture were transmitted to the Republic (Berkes, 1969, pp. 39-41; Karatepe, 1995, p. 164).

During the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876), the bureaucratic elite undertook the modernisation of the state and society, adopting all available methods to avert the state's collapse (Deringil, 2002, p. 31; Durgun, 2003, p. 208). During this period, the locus of authority distinctly transitioned from the palace to the newly liberated bureaucrats of the Sublime Porte (Babîâli). As previous institutions diminished, the civil bureaucracy swiftly sprang to prominence, serving as both the architect and guardian of new political standards (Zürcher, 1999: 90). In this environment, the bureaucracy did not entirely forfeit its influence within the Ottoman-Turkish state; it preserved its control by leveraging state power and functioning as an elite in areas of contemporary necessity. The finance and diplomacy of the nineteenth century, along with the assimilation of Western civilisation in the twentieth century, rendered the bureaucratic elite operational.

The institutional underpinnings of the modernisation process were established during Mahmud II's reign; this era marked the initial significant efforts to develop bureaucratic institutions in a Western context, including the dispatch of students to Europe on state scholarships to cultivate the bureaucratic cadre of the subsequent period (Göktürk, 2015, p. 18). Contemporary educational institutions, established during the Tanzimat and further advanced under Abdülhamid II, notably through Küçük Said Pasha's initiatives, emerged as a symbol of prestige within the social hierarchy, providing the bureaucratic elite with essential knowledge and perspectives grounded in a paradigm that prioritised "Westernisation/modernisation" over socioeconomic principles (Heper, 1974, p. 80). Ottoman diplomats in the foreign affairs exemplified elitist modernisation by prioritising the representation of the external world to people over the promotion of the state internationally (Findley, 1996, p. 12).

A dual organisation among the bureaucratic elite formed during the Tanzimat, characterised by a traditional faction and a modernising faction, both of which, albeit employing divergent techniques, shared the common objective of "dominating society" (Durgun, 2003, p. 208). The disintegration of the kul system led the bureaucracy to resemble an oligarchy; the eras of Abdülmecid and the İttihat ve Terakki Party were commonly referred to as the "golden years" of the bureaucracy (Heper, 1973, p. 88). The civil and military bureaucracy, solidified during the Constitutional Era, formed a substantial segment of the Republic's bureaucratic elite, thereby guaranteeing personnel continuity (Heper, 1973, p. 58). The Tanzimat period witnessed the emergence of a new bureaucratic elite, characterised by education as its defining trait. The division between the conventional and modernising factions within the bureaucracy was formalised during this period (Heper, 1974, p. 83).

The modernisation initiative established bureaucrats as a "guiding" class inside society. Abdullah Cevdet, a prominent theorist of the Tanzimat, posited that elites ought to direct the populace; nevertheless, for the populace to adhere to this direction, fundamental education was essential (Heper, 1974: 87). The inadequacy of the Westernist perspective to effectuate tangible social welfare, coupled with the discontent stemming from the rights conferred upon foreigners by the Reform Edict, exacerbated the conflict between bureaucracy and the public; public administration remained alienated and detached from the populace throughout the Tanzimat era (Yalçındağ, 1970, pp. 52, 35; Göksu, 2000, p. 381). The impetus for change did not originate in society, but rather in the modernising bureaucratic elites; they perceived a problem that the populace could neither comprehend nor resolve, and so deemed the remedy the obligation of the "elders." Consequently, the populace was effectively marginalised from the identification and resolution of issues, remaining apathetic to changes due to their obligation of "servitude" (Durgun, 2005, pp. 40–41). This paradoxical situation emerged as the majority of Tanzimat bureaucrats perceived themselves as "essential" for the populace, although in reality, they were often in conflict with them (Küçükömer, 1969, p. 97). Ultimately, despite the divergent means and techniques of the traditional and modernising factions, the shared hegemonic objective rendered the bureaucracy the creator and enforcer of new political norms. Although institutional capacity was developed via diplomacy, finance, and education, the elitist modernisation strategy perpetuated the gap between bureaucracy and the populace (Deringil, 2002; Durgun, 2003; Heper, 1974; Yalçındağ, 1970; Göksu, 2000; Göktürk, 2015; Findley, 1996; Heper, 1973; Zürcher, 1999).

Modernization Initiatives During the Republican Era

The Republican administration inherited a robust, centralised bureaucratic framework from the Ottoman Empire, alongside an elitist bureaucracy that used it as an instrument of power. About 93% of Ottoman civil servants and 85% of civilian employees continued their roles in the Republic, thereby demonstrating a distinct continuity in the bureaucratic administrative tradition despite the "radical modernisation" initiative (Rustow, as cited in Turan, 2003, p. 125; Bozkurt, 1998, p. 3571; Ergun & Polatoğlu, 1992, p. 76). The modernising civilian-military bureaucracy that instigated the War of Independence was characterised by idealism and patriotism; nonetheless, it was perceived as detached from the public, hence exacerbating the divide between the bureaucracy and the populace (Yalçındağ, 1970, p. 55). Feroz Ahmad observes that in the Republic of Turkey, the westernised secular minority culture, linked to the bureaucracy, coexisted with the indigenous culture of the majority, associated with Islam; this dual cultural framework bolstered the bureaucracy's inclination to align more closely with the elite segments of society (Ahmad, 1995, p. 133; Aykaç, 1997, p. 211).

In the single-party era, statist policies reinforced centralist inclinations and conferred upon the bureaucracy authority exceeding its prior capabilities. The amalgamation of the party and state, with the general secretary serving as both provincial governor and party provincial chairman, together with the nearly unrestricted authority of party inspectors, raised the era to a status that can be described as a "bureaucratic monarchy" (Aykaç, 1997, p. 168). The belief that "force is often necessary to implement reforms" persisted as a hallmark of top-down integration, emblematic of both the Ottoman administration and the Republican bureaucracy, reflecting the official ideology of the era (Aykaç, 1997, p. 166). In World War II, the introduction of additional levies, severe collection methods reminiscent of the Ottoman period, preferential food

distribution to bureaucrats, and the persistent disdain for them exacerbated relations between bureaucrats and the public (Yalçındağ, 1970, p. 56). Throughout this period and subsequently, the bureaucracy emphasised a regulatory rather than a representative or mobilising function; it preserved the facade of an intellectual elite seeking to maintain economic, political, and social dominance (Turan, 2003, p. 125).

As the Democratic Party ascended to power, the conflict between central bureaucrats and peripheral politicians, who had capitalised on the opportunity to position themselves centrally, intensified. The bureaucratic elites were subjected to the political authority of a faction of rival elites with whom they lacked inherent connections (Şaylan, 1976). Notwithstanding the emergence of a new political elite, the bureaucratic elite persisted (Durgun, 2003: 212). The bureaucracy was compelled to abandon its role as an agent of social change and transform into an extension of the executive branch, supervised by the legislature. This initiative, together with the enforcement of civil servant law restrictions, such as "assignment under ministerial authority, involuntary retirement," and "obstruction of legal recourse in governmental matters," culminated in a coup orchestrated by the military-civilian bureaucracy and the Republican Public Party elite (Bozkurt, 1998, pp. 3576-3577).

The military intervention on May 27, 1960, was executed by the National Unity Committee, which proclaimed itself a continuation of the historical bureaucracy intended to safeguard the state from the "threat of national division" and embraced a Western value system; consequently, the "obligation to protect the state" within the Ottoman-Turkish state tradition was reaffirmed by bureaucratic elites (Küçükömer, 1969, p. 124). The 1961 Constitution augmented the authority of bureaucratic elites by eliminating parliament as the exclusive entity exercising national sovereignty, thereby subjecting politics to bureaucratic oversight through a framework of autonomous institutions populated by bureaucrats or bureaucratically inclined individuals (Eser et al., 2012; Yalçındağ, 1970, p. 57). Post-1980s, the bureaucratic elite exhibited an ambiguous, condescending attitude towards private-sector development, resulting in a novel dimension of centre-periphery antagonism (Turan, 2003, p. 139). Nonetheless, the bureaucracy currently has the challenge of overseeing emerging socioeconomic differences within a pluralistic democracy.

Consequently, in opposition to Weberian forecasts, the bureaucracy, which aligned with the political elite and aimed to reform society since the late Ottoman era, preserved a considerable sphere of influence in the Republic due to the continuity of its personnel and mindset (Bozkurt, 1998, p. 3571; Ergun & Polatoğlu, 1992, p. 76). This central organisation, which emphasised state objectives while marginalising society and tradition, served both as a catalyst for progressive change and as a formidable privileged group that aggressively pursued its own interests (Inalcık, 2004, p. 62). Elitist modernisation tactics were used in various sectors, including the foreign ministry; the bureaucratic elite's detachment from society was perpetually reinforced by the patrimonial heritage and dual cultural framework (Findley, 1996, p. 12; Heper, 1977, p. 65).

The 1961 Constitution, by transitioning to a multi-party system, reinstated the status that bureaucrats had forfeited nearly a decade prior. By conferring constitutional status upon entities such as the Constitutional Court, the State Planning Organisation (SPO), the National Security Council, the High Council of Prosecutors, and the High Council of Judges, the authority of politicians was diminished in favour of bureaucratic governance. This sought to alleviate political pressure on the military and judicial bureaucracy, while the SPO intended to obstruct the government's populist approaches in developmental measures. This scenario becomes a source of stress between bureaucrats and politicians (Aydın, 2021). During these years, when socio-economic issues became prominent, the power of a technocratic, expert bureaucratic faction was amplified (Heper, 1974, p. 80). The neoliberal policies implemented globally in the 1980s led to the emergence of a new technocratic class, accompanied by the establishment of regulatory and supervisory organisations independent of ministerial bureaucracy. In contrast to its predecessors, this class received considerable authority from both politicians and central bureaucrats.

The extensive and constitutionally enshrined framework of fundamental rights and freedoms established by the 1961 Constitution, coupled with a weakened governmental structure, precipitated political conflicts in Turkey, resulting in a regression of Turkish democracy in 1980 and hindering the progress toward democratisation. The 1982 Constitution, written by the military regime that ascended to power following the 1980 coup, aimed to address the situation by curtailing fundamental rights and liberties while augmenting governmental powers. The terrorist attacks that commenced in the late 1980s and escalated in the 1990s, coupled with political instability and the ascendance of the Welfare Party as the representative of the periphery, assumed a new dimension with the February 28 memorandum, which would be recorded in Turkish political history as the "Postmodern Coup."

As the AK Party administration emerged on the political landscape during the 2002 general elections, following a tumultuous period, the conflict between the centre and the periphery escalated to a new level. The AK Party government, by its liberal policies, initially privatised state-owned firms and diminished the authority of technocrats within those entities. Subsequently, the 2010 constitutional amendments

established the composition of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, facilitated appeals against dismissals, augmented the number of Constitutional Court members, raised the voting threshold for party closures from 3/5 to 2/3, permitted legal action against dismissal decisions by the Supreme Military Council, and abolished military courts, except for disciplinary courts. In 2011, the SPO was disbanded and reconstituted as the Ministry of Development, diminishing the power of technocrats. The regulations governing the registry of civil servants were eliminated in 2011.

Subsequent to the Fethullah Terrorist Organisation (Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü-FETÖ) insurrection on July 15, 2016, initiatives designed to expel members of the organisation, who had permeated many tiers of the bureaucracy, especially within the judiciary and military, compromised the integrity of public institutions regarding personnel. The neglect to thoroughly adhere to the merit principle in appointing individuals to vacant posts amid the ongoing crisis has deprived the bureaucracy of essential competence and technical knowledge, a vital asset for political influence. In October 2016, the practice of appointing rectors from among professors chosen by university faculty was abolished, and the direct Presidential selection of rectors was instituted, therefore consolidating control over the higher education bureaucracy. Following the 2017 constitutional revision, the Presidential System of Government conferred exclusive authority to the President over numerous executive duties (Akçakaya & İlhan, 2021). The bureaucratic roles of the undersecretariat were supplanted by the political roles of deputy ministers. Appointments and promotions circumventing the conventional military structure were instituted, especially within the senior and intermediate echelons of the Turkish Armed Forces. In 2018, the composition of the National Security Council, a pivotal mechanism of bureaucratic oversight and a significant participant in the February 28th process, was reorganised to benefit civilian members. This diminished the central bureaucratic elite, which could have contended with the periphery political elites, while establishing a new elite faction, especially in senior bureaucratic roles. Although empirical research is necessary regarding this new group's public engagement, it is evident that the Turkish bureaucracy maintains its elitist legacy, with public officials often prioritising avoidance of confrontation with the political elite over accountability to the public.

TURKISH BUREAUCRATIC CULTURE AND BUREAU-CRATIC SOCIALIZATION

The Turkish bureaucracy reflects the universal characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy while also establishing a distinct identity influenced by prior developments (Ergun & Polatoğlu, 1992, p. 82). The Turkish bureaucracy upholds a status quo framework and exhibits resistance to progress. Any effort to alter the structure encounters vigorous opposition from the bureaucracy. The principal factor influencing a public servant's attitudes and behaviours is the demeanour and conduct of their superiors. A civil servant's initial lesson upon entering the bureaucracy is the formal and informal regulations (conventions) they are required to follow. These rules, transmitted through generations, are the essential determinants of a civil servant's conduct. It is a fundamental value that the institution's internal matters remain confidential and are not disclosed to external parties (Bener, 1998, pp. 55-56). This circumstance facilitates a culture of evasion regarding responsibilities by adhering to these regulations (Eken, 2005, p. 114).

A further trait is the evasion of initiative and accountability. The existing legal framework emphasises accountability for officials who take risks, while those who exhibit indifference are seldom held responsible, and the practice of rewarding risk-taking authorities is infrequent. Officials who enter the bureaucracy at a younger age and lower hierarchical levels are unable to cultivate their development within the existing structure, acquire risk assessment skills, or gain experience. Upon attaining managerial positions, these authorities are unable to make judicious decisions.

The Turkish bureaucrat asserts that society is uninformed and, hence, oblivious to and unable to comprehend laws and regulations. Consequently, bureaucrats are the individuals most positioned to make judicious decisions concerning public administration. In this perspective, which carries elitist implications, civil servants perceive their principal obligation not as serving the public but as safeguarding the state from society (Eken, 2005, p. 117). Bureaucrats assert that knowledgeable and seasoned officials ought to influence the formulation of government policy (Heper, 1974). In an agrarian society, authority is revered and originates from the governing class. In industrial civilisations, authority emanates from the populace, officials serve the public, and their conduct towards clients is courteous (Presthus, 1959, p. 30). The largely agricultural nature of Turkish society is reflected in the bureaucracy's public-oriented orientation. During the 1945-1960 period, bureaucrats exhibited minimal consideration for public preferences in shaping government policies; nevertheless, this proportion increased to almost 30% by 1974 (Heper, 1974), indicating a significant transition within the bureaucracy.

Previous studies indicate that civil servants predominantly originate from families of civil servants (Dodd, 1965; Mihçioğlu, 1968), wed individuals from similar backgrounds, and predominantly have spouses who are also civil servants (Bozkurt, 1980, pp. 203-204). Despite government officials abandoning the notion of societal modernisation, they persist in upholding an elite framework. While many civil service professions

have been made accessible to all societal sectors, the elite framework, particularly within the upper echelons of bureaucracy, remains largely intact.

BUREAUCRATIC SOCIALIZATION TOOLS IN TURKISH PUBLIC BUREAUCRACY

This qualitative study was conducted utilising a document analysis method and involved a review of documentation, specifically analysing Civil Servants Law No. 657, the General Regulation on the Training of Candidate Civil Servants and the Regulation on the Oath-taking Ceremony for Newly Appointed Probationary employees all within the framework of bureaucratic socialisation, with the research confined to the reviewed documents.

As a term, “bureaucratic socialisation” is not directly defined or regulated in the administrative or legal norms or practices of the Turkish bureaucracy; however, its constituent elements are incorporated into the foundational and preparatory training curricula for probationary employees. Under the Civil Servants Law No. 657, probationary employees who meet the required posting criteria are assigned as public servant candidates for a period of no less than one year and no more than two years (Article 54). The law regulated that probationary employees must initially complete basic training on standard civil servant credentials, subsequently engage in preparatory training and internships pertinent to their service categories, and must successfully fulfil these training requirements. Training provisions are governed by a regulation to be formulated by the President (Article 55). Nevertheless, the aforementioned regulation has yet to be formulated, and the relevant procedures are currently being implemented in accordance with the stipulations of the “General Regulation on the Training of Probationary Employees,” established by the Council of Ministers in 1983. Public institutions and organisations must promulgate their own regulations within three months of this regulation's enactment, ensuring alignment with the principles established herein and considering their specific service characteristics (Article 33). It has been ascertained that numerous public institutions and administrations with public legal personality have promulgated their own regulations; nonetheless, these regulations do not encompass any distinct provisions from those outlined in the general regulation.

Basic training seeks to furnish candidate employees with essential knowledge pertaining to the standard qualifications of civil servants, whereas preparatory training is designed to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills relevant to their current roles and responsibilities, facilitating their adaptation to their duties. Internships, conversely, seek to furnish aspiring public officials with practical experience by implementing the theoretical knowledge learned during the preparatory training phase, alongside pertinent knowledge and procedures associated with their current roles and responsibilities, as well as the skills developed. Basic training may last from ten days to two months, whereas preparatory training may extend from one to three months. Internships must be undertaken during the candidacy period and shall last no less than two months (Article 4).

Basic and preparatory training is provided online via an educational portal created by the Presidency and integrated with the e-government application. Access to this portal is granted through a citizen ID number and an e-government password. Candidate civil servants are initially registered in this system by their institutions and subsequently allocated the mandatory basic education courses mandated by law, along with the courses required for preparatory training. Candidate civil servants undergo assessments during and subsequent to each course they complete, with a success chart compiled and saved online in a file available to the institution.

The Scope of Basic Training

The basic training subjects encompass Atatürk's principles, the Constitution (including general principles, fundamental rights and duties, essential organs of the republic, and the executive branch), state organization, the Civil Servants Law (covering duties and responsibilities of officials, general rights, prohibitions, disciplinary issues, social and financial rights, superior-civil servant relations, applications and complaints, dress code, appointments, and interpersonal relations), correspondence and filing protocols, measures for the protection and management of state properties and sources, public relations, the significance of confidentiality and secrecy, the history of the Turkish Revolution, national security information, communication, Turkish language, and human rights.

Atatürk's principles are regarded as the foundational elements of the contemporary nation-state that emerged following the monarchical empire, with the objective of enabling public employees to comprehend and assimilate these ideas. These ideals, enacted through a revolutionary decision, have encountered criticism from conservative groups and persist in facing criticism from some segments of Turkish society. Public officials, who are obligated by a duty of loyalty to the state, are anticipated to oppose threats to the state through these principles. The subsection of general principles within the Constitution encompasses concepts such as the rule of law, the social state, and Atatürk's nationalism and principles, including the

unitary structure of the state, the capital city, and the flag's design and colour. The constitutionally protected political, economic, social, and legal rights and freedoms of Turkish citizens and foreign residents in Türkiye are included in the training provided to new public employees. The sub-title of fundamental organs of the republic and the executive branch encompasses the primary state organs, notably the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, together with each of their powers, responsibilities, methods of assuming office, and interrelationships. In addition, under the heading of state organisation, newly hired civil servants receive training on key structures within public services, including the capital and provincial executive bodies, local administrations, functional decentralisation units, professional chambers, regulatory and supervisory institutions, and their interrelationships.

The Civil Servants Law, which represents a substantial component of basic training topics, constitutes the foundation of the Turkish public personnel system. The stipulations of the Civil Servants Law extend to issues not explicitly addressed by rules pertaining to specific public personnel categories, including the Turkish Armed Forces Personnel Law and the Higher Education Personnel Law etc. Under the sub-title of duties and responsibilities, the program encompasses training for new civil servants on loyalty to the principles established in the Constitution and laws, avoidance of privilege and discrimination based on race, religion, language, sect, etc., among individuals or societal segments, maintaining impartiality, refraining from political party affiliation, declaration of acquired goods, avoiding divisive and polarizing conduct and attitudes, and exhibiting behaviour deserving of the respect and trust requisite for their official roles. Furthermore, they receive training on the exercise of rights, including occupational assurance, retirement, resignation, application and grievance procedures, litigation, union membership, permissions, prosecutorial and trial regulations pertinent to their responsibilities, and protections against accusation and slander. Additional topics encompassed in candidate officer training regarding prohibitions include participation in collective actions and movements, striking, engaging in trade and other profit-generating endeavours, accepting gifts related to public service, acquiring personal benefits, and sharing secret knowledge pertinent to their responsibilities. The procedures governing employee dressing during work hours, the regulations pertaining to interactions with colleagues and superiors, the penalties for violations of disciplinary rules, as well as their social and financial entitlements, appointments, and issues concerning relocations are included in the basic training curriculum. Finally, the curriculum of basic training encompasses bureaucratic protocol rules, filing the documents, official correspondence, public resource protection measures, guidelines for public relations activities, adherence to reliability and confidentiality principles, Turkish Revolution History, national security issues, proficient use of the Turkish language, and respect for human rights.

Preparatory Training

The General Regulation on the Training of Candidate Civil Servants gives the authority to determine training subjects for preparatory training to the relevant public organisation where the candidate civil servant is appointed. The public organisation mandates the candidate officer to complete the requisite courses successfully by enrolling the officer in the courses listed in the aforementioned online portal. The course topics on the portal include zero waste management, public ethics and principles of ethical behaviour for public officials, training on public institutions' compliance with Law No. 6698 on the Protection of Personal Data, psychological violence in the workplace, applied MS Office user training, financial literacy, effective and correct email writing, common postural problems in office workers and office exercises, using electronic document management systems, correct and effective use of Turkish language, addiction awareness training, the importance of content in communication, the principles of Law No. 4734 on Public Procurement and the processes of procurement of goods and services, Law No. 6245 on Daily Allowances, Law No. 3071 on the Exercise of the Right to Petition and Law No. 4982 on the Right to Information, Law No. 4735 on Public Procurement Contracts, electronic tendering and auction procedures, service tracking program (HITAP) training, the universal aspect of communication, Law No. 5018 on Public Financial Management and Control, digital transformation, Industry 4.0, general health insurance registration and premium training. These are listed as MEDULA and IT applications training, minimum labour procedures training, disability training, government accounting and Higher Education Personnel Law No. 2914 training. Preparatory training subjects encompass information on the institution and organisation, the candidate civil servant's cadre and responsibilities, issues pertinent to the candidate civil servant's duties, and additional topics deemed relevant by the institution or organisation.

Internship

The internship training subjects are established by the pertinent public organisation (Article 5). While the assessment of basic and preparatory training relies on online examinations, the success of internships is determined by the evaluations of the first and second chief clerks. During the internship evaluation, probationary employees are assessed on their overall qualifications, including adherence to a formal dress code, good manners, courtesy, modesty, sobriety, dignity, seriousness, self-interest, impartiality, fairness in

practice, and efficient utilisation of resources and time. Compliance with disciplinary regulations is also evaluated, encompassing adherence to laws, regulations, and directives, timely and complete execution of responsibilities, and appropriate conduct towards superiors and colleagues. Diligence is measured through enthusiasm and commitment to duties, research and investigative capabilities, and resilience against physical and intellectual fatigue. Cooperation is assessed based on willingness to engage in teamwork and agreeableness. Reliability and loyalty are evaluated through honesty, avoidance of gossip, maintenance of confidentiality, and trustworthiness. Lastly, professional knowledge is appraised according to criteria established by the institution (Article 36).

Furthermore, the dress code, conduct, and demeanour of public officials during their official duties are also governed by administrative regulations. In this context, it is forbidden to partake in actions that advantage or disadvantage any political party, individual, or group; to discriminate based on language, race, gender, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, or sect; to express statements or undertake actions with political or ideological objectives; to contravene the parameters set by the Constitution and laws; or to engage in activities that compromise the independence and integrity of the State. Civil servants who successfully finish the candidate civil service process must take an oath within one month of their appointment, as stipulated by the Regulation on the Oath-Taking Ceremony for Principal Civil Servants. Civil officials are mandated by applicable regulations and their oath to diligently adhere to the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Turkey and to faithfully execute the laws (Article 2). The oath-taking ceremony is conducted by all civil servants and public authorities in various ways, depending on the nature of their work; however, it serves a uniform function.

DISCUSSION

Research findings suggest that, although bureaucratic socialisation in Turkey lacks a precise definition, it is effectively shaped through diverse training and assessment processes governed by legislative and administrative frameworks. The results indicate that the organisational socialisation processes of candidate public employees in the Turkish public bureaucracy are predominantly structured according to the principles of the Weberian bureaucratic model: hierarchy, regularity, specialisation, objectivity, formality, merit, and the continuity of public service. Both basic and preparatory training, along with internship procedures, are governed by comprehensive laws, with each phase grounded in established frameworks. The training primarily emphasises the instruction of legal regulations and seeks to influence government officials' conduct in accordance with the integrity of laws and regulations. Assessing the candidates' performance during the internship based on criteria such as "appropriate conduct," "superior-subordinate dynamics," and "professional manner and seriousness" reflects the internalization of hierarchical power. The compulsory character of training, the presence of standards, and the assessment of performance via examinations ostensibly bolster the notion of merit. The substantial influence of subjective criteria (e.g., "humility," "seriousness," "politeness," and "avoiding gossip") in internship assessments indicates a partial erosion of an objective comprehension of merit. The comprehensive inclusion of training topics such as Atatürk's principles, constitutional principles, the unitary state structure, and national security in basic training demonstrates that bureaucratic socialisation encompasses not merely technical skill acquisition but also ideological integration. This aligns with the notion of "political neutrality and objectivity" inherent in Weberian bureaucracy, yet it also demonstrates that the conventional interpretation of bureaucracy, which emphasises state-centric standards, is being perpetuated in the Turkish setting. The system serves as a robust bureaucratic socialisation mechanism that enhances rational-legal legitimacy in accordance with Weberian principles.

The results indicate that, whereas socialisation processes uphold the tenets of conventional bureaucracy, certain aspects of the New Public Management (NPM) framework are included in the programs, albeit in a restricted and superficial manner. The e-government-integrated online training portal aligns with NPM's principles of technology utilisation, digitalisation, and performance measurement. All training processes for aspiring government servants are quantified digitally and archived in a performance file available to institutions. The system is consistent with contemporary public administration methodologies. The preparatory training courses, including "MS Office applications," "effective email writing," "public financial management," "personal data protection," "zero waste," "digital transformation," and "Industry 4.0," are output-oriented elements of NPM designed to enhance operational efficiency.

Although themes like "principles of ethical conduct," "public relations," "effective communication" and "personal data security" correspond with NPM's tenets of transparency, ethical governance, and citizen-centric public service, the overarching structure of the training predominantly emphasises adherence to rules, hierarchical authority, and ideological loyalty. The emphasis on behavioural and personal traits instead of performance metrics in internship assessments contradicts the objective approach to performance management advocated by New NPM. Consequently, although the existing bureaucratic socialisation system in Turkey somewhat integrates NPM principles, it fundamentally preserves the normative structure of

conventional bureaucracy. Themes such as constitutional principles, Atatürk's principles, state integrity, official ideology, and ethical and disciplinary regulations seek to cultivate public officials within a framework of loyalty and impartiality; however, these processes are predominantly centralised, rule-based, hierarchical, and delineated by written statutes. Although NPM aspects are integrated into the process via digitisation, ethical management, communication skills, and productivity-focused training, these elements do not alter the system's logic.

As a conclusion, the socialisation processes for aspiring civil servants in Turkey exhibit a hybrid structure that preserves the continuity of the state-centred, corporate, traditional bureaucratic paradigm while integrating certain instrumental features of the NPM approach. Nonetheless, this hybrid structure fails to completely realise the flexibility, performance-driven, inventive, and citizen-centric approach anticipated by the NPM. The system seeks to cultivate public officials who align with the prevailing bureaucratic culture, comply with regulations, minimise conflict, and demonstrate loyalty to state-centric principles. The findings indicate that public administration reforms in Turkey have predominantly occurred at the technical level, and bureaucratic socialisation continues to operate within a framework that emphasises old bureaucratic norms.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A "Bureaucratic Socialisation Framework Regulation" may be developed under the auspices of the Presidential Human Resources Office, incorporating contemporary components such as ethics, citizen-centricity, democratic principles, a performance-oriented culture, digital proficiency, and public service consciousness. Considering institutional disparities, any entity may revise its internal regulations accordingly. The foundational and preparatory training content, primarily focused on disseminating legal knowledge, should be reformulated into a competency-based framework that incorporates subjects such as problem-solving, analytical reasoning, public policy acumen, digital governance, data security, innovation, and crisis management. Collaboration must involve universities, public administration experts, and educational researchers in defining the training curriculum. The content should emphasise the significance of public service, public values, and social impact, rather than merely rote memorisation of legal rules.

The emphasis on subjective factors in internship assessments must be diminished, and ambiguous, behavioural, and personality-oriented criteria should be substituted with explicit, quantifiable, and evidence-based performance metrics. NPM instruments, including 360-degree assessments, peer evaluations, and performance metrics based on task examples, can enhance the reliability of the evaluation process. Although preparation training introduces institutions, it lacks a structured method for imparting corporate culture. To rectify this weakness, a "Corporate Culture Orientation Program" at the organisational level may be established, and in-house mentorship could be instituted for aspiring government servants.

Training content must transition from a state-centric paradigm to a citizen-centric framework. Consequently, training modules must be incorporated to meet the demands, satisfaction standards, and expectations of citizens regarding public services. Digital service design, accessibility, and effective communication with citizens should be mandated. Pedagogical content centred on "creating public value" must be produced to enhance public personnel's accountability to society. The oath-taking ceremony, however symbolically important, can be reconciled with the standards of contemporary public administration. The ceremony may be modified to highlight legal faithfulness, ethical ideals, citizen benefits, and the obligation to generate public value. A brief orientation session addressing the historical evolution of public service and contemporary management ideas may be incorporated for newly appointed government servants.

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The author declares no competing interests.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable. This study analysed publicly available institutional documents and did not involve human participants.

Informed Consent

Not applicable.

Data Availability

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Use of Generative AI

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