



# The Role of Economic Elites in Local Politics: The Gaziantep Example

## Yerel Siyasette Ekonomik Elitlerin Rolü: Gaziantep İli Örneği

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### öz

Siyaset, bireylerin ülke sorunlarını tartışmak, çözüm bulmak, maddi ya da manevi menfaat elde etmek, sosyal ve arkadaş çevresini genişletmek ve siyasal alanda kendini gerçekleştirme alanı olarak gerek ülke düzeyinde gerekse de yerel düzeyde ilgi duyulan bir mekanizmadır. Dolayısıyla birçok kişi siyasal alanda faaliyet göstermek ve etkili olmak için gayret gösterirler. Ancak siyasal alana dahil olan kişilerin çoğu zaman beklentilerinin tam olarak gerçekleşmediği ya da kısmi olarak gerçekleştiği görülmektedir. Bu olumlu ya da olumsuz sonuç doğuran sürece etki eden birçok etken bulunmaktadır. Bunlar arasında kişinin eğitim seviyesi, maddi durumu, kişisel özellikleri, iletişim becerisi gibi etkenler yer alır. Bu çalışmada yerel seviyedeki siyasette elitizmin bireylerin siyasete katılmasındaki etkisi sermaye üzerinden incelenecektir. Elitizm teorilerinde akla ilk klasik elitizm teorisyenlerinden Mosca ve Pareto'nun açıklamaları gelmektedir. Bu çalışmada Pareto'nun Mosca'nın yönetici elit kavramından hareket ederek toplumsal alandaki elit gruplar arasındaki ekonomik elitlerin yerel siyasette etkili olduğu hipotezi test edilmeye çalışılacaktır. Bu bağlamda varsılların politik görünürlüklerinin temsil edilen tabanda ne kadar karşılığı olduğu, milletvekili belirleme sürecinde zenginlerin listelerde yer almalarının etkisinin nasıl olduğu, zenginlerin siyasette görünür olmalarının siyaset finansmanı açısından etkili olup etkin bir varsıl hegemonyasına sebep olup olmadığı, Gaziantep ili örneği etrafında yerel milletvekili mesleklerinin bölge siyasetinde varsıl hegemonyasına ne kadar etkili olduğu sorularına cevap aranmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışmada tarihsel ve betimsel araştırma türü uygulanarak, belgeye dayalı analiz yapılacak olup bu yöntem doğrultusunda öncelikle siyaset, elitizm kavramlarından kısaca bahsedildikten sonra TBMM kayıtlarına göre 22. ve 28. parlamento dönemleri arası Gaziantep ilindeki milletvekillerinin meslekleri üzerinden inceleme yapılacaktır. Bu inceleme yapılırken Gaziantep ili örneği özellikle endüstriyel sektörde milletvekili olarak seçilmiş olan sermaye ve finans sahipleri varsıl olarak kabul edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yerel siyaset, Elitizm, Varsıl Hegemonyası, Temsil ve Taban Karşılığı, Siyasal Katılım ve Ekonomik Etki

### ABSTRACT

Politics is a mechanism that is of interest both at the national and local level as a place for individuals to discuss country problems, find solutions, gain material or spiritual benefits, expand their social and friend circles, and realize themselves in the political arena. Therefore, many people strive to be active and effective in the political arena. However, it is seen that the expectations of people involved in the political arena are often not fully realized or partially realized. There are many factors that affect this process that produces positive or negative results. These include factors such as the person's level of education, financial situation, personal characteristics, and communication skills. In this study, the effect of elitism on individuals' participation in politics at the local level will be examined through capital. In theories of elitism, the first classical elitism theorists Mosca and Pareto's explanations come to mind. In this study, Pareto's hypothesis that economic elites among elite groups in the social sphere are effective in local politics will be tested by starting from Mosca's concept of the ruling elite. In this context, it has been tried to find answers to the questions of how much the political visibility of the wealthy corresponds to the represented base, how the presence of the wealthy on the lists during the process of determining the MPs has an effect, whether the visibility of the wealthy in politics is effective in terms of political financing and causes an effective hegemony of the

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*wealthy, how much the professions of local MPs are effective on the hegemony of the wealthy in regional politics around the example of Gaziantep province. In the study, a document-based analysis will be made by applying the historical and descriptive research type, and in line with this method, firstly the concepts of politics and elitism will be briefly mentioned and then an examination will be made on the professions of the MPs in Gaziantep province between the 22nd and 28th parliamentary terms according to the TBMM records. While conducting this examination, especially the capital and finance owners who were elected as MPs in the industrial sector in the example of Gaziantep province were accepted as wealthy.*

**Keywords:** Local Politics, Elitism, Hegemony of the Wealthy, Representation and Base Opposition, Political Participation and Economic Influence

## INTRODUCTION

Individuals' interest in politics and their participation in political activities are called and defined as political participation in the political science literature. Political participation is a concept that determines the attitudes, behaviours and stands of individuals in the face of political events and the system. Various factors cause individuals to participate in politics and to be interested in political issues. Among these factors, there is an ideal approach as well as an approach that includes expectations in various aspects. Those who want to be visible in the political arena in order to contribute to the solution of the country's problems, to be able to explain their thoughts and to implement their plans are a manifestation of the ideal approach, while those who are visible in the political arena in order to obtain material or moral benefits, to expand their circle of friends, to obtain a role and status in the political arena are the group with expectations.

Individuals' expectations in the political field may often not be realized at the level they want. It may result in a positive or negative outcome or a partial development. Positive or negative results also depend on a number of factors, and they produce a result with the combination of one or more of these factors. These factors include the level of education, financial situation, personal characteristics, communication skills, as well as the factor of chance. The level of education and the degree of financial situation have been very influential in the political participation of individuals gradually during the process of the expansion of the right to vote in Western countries. Individuals with a high level of education and those with a good financial situation have had an impact on the visibility of individuals in the political arena in terms of both voting and being elected according to the tax rate they pay. Personal characteristics and communication skills are of great importance in terms of self-acceptance in the political arena. It is possible to say that these factors are still continuing. Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is that the general and equal right to vote and the level of education and financial situation no longer have an effect on political participation. However, this situation can be seen as a result of the narrow definition of political participation mentioned at the beginning. Political participation is not only used in the sense of exercising the right to vote and be elected. In the broad definition of political participation, it can be stated as attitudes and behaviours that can be evaluated in a wide range from a simple curiosity to an intense action. Therefore, attending a political meeting or expressing one's opinion on an issue on various platforms can also be considered as political participation. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that financial status and educational level are still effective in political participation. Although these two factors do not have a negative impact on the exercise of the right to vote, it is observed that they have an impact on the exercise of the right to be elected, especially in local and smaller settlements and cities in terms of population. In this study, the effect of elitism on the participation of individuals in politics at the local level will be analyzed. Based on the explanations of Mosca and Pareto, the theorists of classical elitism, it will be tried to test the hypothesis that there are elites in the economic sense and that these elites are effective in local politics by determining the starting point as the idea that elitism is not only handled in the context of the relationship between the ruled and the ruler, but also that there may be elites in all activity groups of people in the social field by placing it on a sociological basis. Among the main components of the hypothesis of the study, it can be said that local economic elites are decisive in the determination of parliamentary candidates and the formation of party cadres, and that political elites are an obstacle to wider mass participation, and that these dynamics can also be empirically analyzed through parliamentary elections and representation profiles. This

hypothesis can be tested through document-based analysis and sociological variables. In this context, How does capital affect individuals' participation in local politics?, To what extent do economic elites play an active role in local political participation?, How do socio-economic factors shape political participation at the local level?, What role do individual and social elements play in the political participation process?, How do social classes and differences between classes affect political participation? In the study, historical and descriptive research type will be applied and document-based analysis will be made. In line with this method, firstly, the concepts of politics, elitism and hegemony will be briefly mentioned, and then an analysis will be made on the deputies in Gaziantep province after 2002. Due to the determination of the volumetric limitation of the study and the evaluation that examining all other actors of the political field other than the MPs would be a very voluminous study, an analysis will be made only on the MPs. Beyond a theoretical study, the study will be analyzed based on documentary analysis, firstly on the entire Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and then on Gaziantep, and then a conclusion will be reached.

### 1. Political Participation

Being a political being by nature, man holds the principle of justice as the highest duty in the states. The administration of justice is the main principle of political social order. State models that can establish justice, especially in the distribution of income and rights, are capable of being the best state model in cases where poles are not formed and the emergence of the best is prevented; in other words, when it is assumed that the middle class is supported. The emergence of pure oligarchy and tyranny is only impossible in state systems where citizens have an average and adequate level of rights and property. Hence, the absence of a permanent classification of average citizenship can hinder political participation and sustainable political influence (Rokkan, 2007: 3).

Political participation is the involvement in politics as a subject of politics with actions, thoughts, attitudes and behaviours towards political developments. As stated before, political participation, in a narrow sense, goes beyond the exercise of the right to vote, which is the determination of political decision-making bodies, and includes monitoring political events, being interested, receiving information about political events and actively participating in them (Dahl, 1963:57). Dahl, after stating that these four dimensions of political participation are related to each other, explains the levels of political participation and states that at the lowest level, there are those who follow political events through printed or visual media such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and attend rallies as listeners. Those in this group can be defined as the spectators of the political sphere. Apart from these, there are those who openly take a stand and react to political problems and events. Those in this group engage in activities such as writing articles in newspapers and magazines, speaking at rallies and meeting with political leaders to try to influence them. Dahl explained the last group, the most advanced ones, as being an active member of a political party, taking part in party organs, being a member of various levels and working actively in election activities (Dahl, 1963: 57, 58; Kapani, 2009: 144, 145).

When analyzing the structural context of political participation, some vital observations should be underlined. The first of these is the decisions that legally establish political participation in the region. This context determines the segments of political participation such as income groups, occupational groups and technocrats. Secondly, it refers to the conditions that cause participation rates to be high or low. Lastly, it refers to the acculturation or interaction activities that come along with political activities; this is also a specific type of connection between parties that refers to voter or elected interaction (Rokkan, 1961: 137).

When the explanations on political participation are analyzed, it is possible to read that participation does not only take place within the political sphere, but in connection with it, it is also stated as being involved in the decision-making processes of the relevant mechanisms at the central and local levels

of the public sphere, both in terms of action and expression of opinions. Apart from this, being involved in all legal or illegal, successful or unsuccessful behaviours that are outside the public sphere but related to the public sphere and politics, organized and carried out by others can also be explained as political participation (Özbudun, 1975: 4).

It is possible to answer the question 'Why do people take part in the political sphere?' in two groups as realizing individual and social functions. Individual functions can be stated as self-development, self-expression, obtaining material and moral benefits and protecting their interests, expanding their social and political environment. In addition, it has functions that integrate people with the state in a social sense, identify the person with the political system, ensure the legitimacy of the political system, and contribute to the utilitarian and rational realization of decisions to be taken in the political and public sphere. (Lipset, 1959: 85-87).

In the studies conducted, it was stated that the issue of political participation, which is generally done to combine public policies in order to influence them, is also expressed as a way to convey a message to public officials in an unforeseen way. In this sense, while producing political participation policies related to both social science and the participation of modern citizens, patronage activities and hegemony perspectives can also be used as a selected part of the system (Verba & Brady, 1995: 32).

Politically, being part of a hegemonic power can be expressed theoretically and practically as a process of difference and separateness. In this context, the concept of hegemony represents a step forward in politics as well as philosophy. This step brings with it an assumption that includes intellectual unity and political ethics (Gramsci, 1971: 66).

Along with the functions of political participation, there are also a number of factors affecting political participation. It is possible to analyze these in two groups as individual and social. Individual factors include educational level, age and gender. Social factors include the type of society, political culture of the society, group membership, family and social class, occupation and social status (Öztekin, 2013: 252-257).

Each of these factors and the levels of political participation specified by Dahl are the subject of a separate study and research in their own field. Within the scope of this study, the most advanced level of political participation, which is taking office in the political field and becoming a candidate, and family and social class, which are mentioned among individual and social factors, are included. Family and social class are evaluated in the context of lower - upper income groups and affluence is prioritized.

The development and expansion of political participation is a process that continues and develops with the democratization process. The process, which started with the idea of limiting power, has reached its current position by passing through many phases such as the desire of individuals to participate in decision-making processes and the spread of the right to elect and be elected with industrialization (Lipson, 2005: 253).

Political and economic events have an important role in the development and expansion of political participation. Industrialization and urbanization have also led to an increase in political participation. In this process, the expansion of the right to vote, the transformation of the unequal voting rights granted to the educated, elite and wealthy into equal voting rights, and the spread of this right to the grassroots has had an increasing effect on political participation. The demands for improvement in the personal rights of those who came to the cities from rural areas to work attracted the attention of politicians and they tried to address this large mass of people and to direct their will towards them in order to maintain their political future. The increase in face-to-face communication with urbanization has led to a change in people's political behaviour and culture, both in finding solutions

to their individual problems and in the identification and recognition of social problems and in the efforts to solve these problems (Gökçe, Özdemirci and Ceylan, 2017: 293).

The British, American, French and Russian revolutions can be counted among the political developments affecting political participation. The 17th century British Revolution introduced the parliament, the first mechanism of political participation, to the political system. While the Declaration of Independence of the American Revolution explained the view that people are free from birth, the French Revolution emphasized the general will with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and explained the necessity of an accountability mechanism. The Russian Revolution, on the other hand, stated that classes would be abolished at the end of the class struggle, that the state would fade away in the process, and that all members of society would become visible in the political sphere. All of these issues contributed to political participation from their own perspectives (Eroğul, 2014: 228; Gökçe, 2011: 70; Aksu, 2021: 16).

## 2. Elitism

As a sociological practice, elitism is a concept that can be examined up to a large number of social administrative structures such as aristocracy, oligarchy, meritocracy and plutocracy, where any group is seen as superior to the main group. Technically, elitism is a social program proposal that has taken the concept of elite for granted. At this point, the elite is a powerful and ideological person (Hughes, 1988: 20).

Elitism is the definition of the distinction that emerges in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Those who claim that there has always been a distinction between those who make political decisions and those who implement them have explained this as the minority who take and manage decisions and the majority who implement the decisions taken. This point has been put forward by many thinkers from Plato to our time. However, it is Mosca and Pareto who scientifically examined this view with a sociological approach and explained it as 'elite theories'. Mosca used the term ruling class in his theory and stated that the ruling class is always in the minority. He explained the ability of the ruling class to keep the majority under control despite being in the minority through the criteria of organization and superior ability. He states that although the ruling class is in the minority, it always holds superiority over the majority in the context of governing because it is well organized and those who belong to the ruling group are highly skilled people (Delican, 2000: 326).

While legal and illegal issues are among the methods used by the ruling class to keep the ruled under its influence, it is not important whether these methods are ethical or not. The important thing is to ensure the continuation of the administration by influencing the ruled. Influencing the ruled can be done through law and legal means as well as through deception, deceit or violence. Mosca stated that the ruling class does not have a closed, unchanging structure and that its structure may change depending on social and cultural changes (Mosca, 1939: 52-53).

Pareto used the term elite in his theory. Influenced by Mosca's views, Pareto analyzed and developed Mosca's concept of the ruling class and put it on a broader sociological basis. Pareto stated that each person has a value according to his/her ability in all branches of human activities, and explained that the best in his/her field will be given the highest score or value, and that everyone will be evaluated as much as what they do and can do in their field. Therefore, not only in terms of management, but also in every field of social structure, economic, political, cultural or in the context of every professional group, those who do their job best or earn the most can be elite in their field (Delican, 2000: 326; Gökçe, 2021: 50).

After Pareto divided all societies into elite and non-elite, he also divided the elite layer into ruling elite and non-managing elite. He states that the ruling elite consists of people who are directly influential in the governance of society and have influence on political powers. In other words,

Pareto says that it is possible to talk about elites such as military elite, religious elite, business elite, intellectual elite (Pareto, 1935: 1419-1423).

Similar to their predecessors, Machiavellian sociologists Mosca and Pareto have mentioned their names with the theories of “ruling class” and “elite circulation”. Pareto’s “elite circulation” theory is resistant to the phenomenon of global and definite human differentiation. The designed “social pyramid” rates the top features as individual rich systems and the poor at the broad base. This pyramid, which he states is dependent on the change and psychological characteristics of people, expresses the “total social” in a scientific language. Pareto states in his defense that the upper classes are also rich, and that this class completes itself with art, intelligence, cultural talent, ethical values and similar features. At this point, these classes have strong powers representing an “elite”, that is, “aristocracy”. Mosca, on the other hand, mainly operates on the political organization structure. The essence of these studies, which can be expressed as simple, narrow but functional, expresses the hegemony of an effective minority under all kinds of political will. Pareto's theory of elite circulation differs from Mosca's work in advocating the need for order and the rule of all rights, not constrained by groups (Kolegar, 1967: 362).

Michell, on the other hand, moves away from individualism and brings an institutionalist approach to elite theory. With the hierarchical structure and bureaucratic organization of institutions, centralization of institutional power emerges. The centralization of power creates a restrictive effect on the participation of the lower levels of the institution and each institution creates its own elite. This issue moves in a cycle. Michell calls this cycle the ‘bronze law of oligarchy’ (Michels, 1966: 341-355).

These theories, which we can call the classical elite theories, have been criticized for not providing precise information about how and from whom the elite is formed and its social structure, whether it is possible to distinguish between the rulers and the ruled with a clear line, and whether the existence of the elite has established democracy in that place (Kapani, 2009: 129).

While reinterpreting the theories of democracy, contemporary political scientists have stated that the existence of elites in a society does not mean that that society will have an antidemocratic structure. Stating that the role of the people in democratic regimes is to determine those who will govern themselves, Schumpeter explains democracy as a government approved by the people. In addition, Giovanni Sartori states that there should be talented leaders and ruling elites with democratic values, otherwise it will be under the rule of antidemocratic counter-elites. Laswell, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of ensuring the responsibility of the ruling elite and ensuring that the accountability mechanism is active and effective. Raymond Aron, on the other hand, compared the governments in Marxist regimes and Western-type regimes and stated that both have an oligarchic structure (Kapani, 2009: 132-135).

When the classical and democratic elite theories are analyzed, it is seen that there is a relationship between ruler and ruled in the structure of societies. It is seen that elites exist within each group that makes up the society, that there are elites in the economic, political, religious, etc. sense and that they use various methods to be effective in governance. What is democratically important is the placement of responsibility and accountability mechanisms as stated by Laswell and bringing people with democratic values to the management staff as explained by Sartori. As Schumpeter states, it is the people who will realize this work.

It is obvious that the relationship between ruler and ruled is not realized in line with the determinations and explanations of scientists. Today, especially in the determination of political elites, as Pareto stated, the elites within the groups that make up the society are effective. The most important group among these is the economic elites or businesspeople or the wealthy. The person,



individuals or groups who want to seize political power in any part of the world, who want to be effective in politics, must necessarily solve monetary problems. Because politics is an expensive endeavour where big money is involved. In order to be able to take part in high level positions in politics such as deputy, municipal councillor, mayor, etc., it involves great promotion, advertisement and campaigns in the pre-election period and election periods. In addition to all these, if one is a candidate for a political party, the donations made to the party or the nomination fees paid, or if one is an independent candidate, the need for large amounts of money to organize one's own campaign puts politics under the hegemony of the wealthy. Today, in the United States of America, the amount of money spent on the campaigns of the candidates in the presidential elections as well as in the elections for the House of Representatives or the Senate is quite large and is carried out thanks to the support of the wealthy in the country or in the states. This situation in the US parties, which fits Maurice Duverger's cadre party type, is also the case for the mass parties. It is also known that the candidates of the British Labour Party are supported by the wealthy or by the big trade unions. Considering that a member of any trade union, which Duverger calls indirect membership, is also accepted as a member of the British Labour Party and that membership fees are paid regularly in such mass parties, it is possible to talk about the weight of trade unions here as well.

Michels determined the law of oligarchy in his work titled "The Iron Law of Oligarchy" based on the concept of organization. The law of oligarchy should be differentiated from the concepts of organization and basic oligarchy as much as possible as a result of any generalization to be made. Michels particularly focused on the "ruling class in society" in his work. Unlike elitists such as Mosca and Pareto, he particularly focused on the concept of organization (Cassinelli, 1953: 774). Pareto defined the conceptualization of elitism with the nuance of classifying the most competent in the profession, but this gave rise to the situation of "circulation of elites" within the power struggles. In all three authors discussed, power sources such as education, political capital and good manners emerged as power sources that enabled the selected minorities to distinguish themselves from others. These sources used by the elites are revealed in Mosca's distinction between the ruler and the ruled, Parve's distinction between the masses, and Michels' "Iron Law of Oligarchy." In all three thinkers, a continuous discussion has been created from Marxism, and the common agenda of these discussions has been political proximity, the political leadership role of the elites, and their positions of dominance (Osorio, 2014: 102).

In Türkiye, political parties do not receive any financial assistance other than state aid. Newly established parties need a lot of money for all these activities such as the establishment of provincial and district organizations, organization, preparation for elections and election campaigns. For this reason, newly established parties choose the provincial and district presidents and the majority of the board of directors from the wealthy people of the region to carry out the initial organization in provinces and districts. Those who serve as provincial and district chairmen see it as a natural right to put themselves at the top of the candidate lists in the elections. Even in political parties that were established before, received state aid and managed to enter the parliament, the hegemony of the wealthy exists. Here, too, the names suggested by the wealthy of the region, or themselves or their relatives are placed at the top of the candidate lists. By taking part in these lists, the local wealthy make substantial donations to the political party and support their election campaigns. This situation is especially valid for the parties that are marching towards power and have high hopes of coming to power, but it is also the case for the opposition parties. They want to take advantage of both the financial power of the wealthy and the environment they have by putting wealthy people or people recommended by them in the ranks of the deputies they can elect in the relevant electoral district. There are exceptions to this situation. It is observed that experts, competent people, women and young people are placed at the top of the lists as candidates of the party headquarters. When nominating candidates among women and young people, attention is paid to the fact that they

should be from locally known and wealthy families. Here, only those who are experts and competent in their fields are nominated, and this is only at the will of the headquarters.

### 3. Capital Hegemony (Gaziantep)

Before analyzing the influence of the wealthy on politics with figures, it would be useful to specify the occupational groups, individuals and their qualifications that will be included in the definition of the wealthy. As mentioned before, in every occupational group or social group, those who do their job best are described as elites within that group. However, when it comes to politics, it is a problem to determine which or how many of those who want to operate in the political arena are selected among the elites within these groups. Because the specific characteristics of the political sphere, the social status of political elites and the roles they take will make them political elites, perhaps even ruling elites, being visible in this sphere is a matter of prestige, honor and pride and there is a fierce struggle to reach this point. There are not many options to win in this struggle. One of them is to grow up from the nucleus, to serve in party organs and to be recognized by all party members; the second is to be approved by the party headquarters; the third is either to become a local wealthy person or to get the support of a local wealthy person. Among these options, those in the first group usually try to gain a place for themselves by being active in the party from the women's branches and youth branches, while those nominated by the party headquarters are usually bureaucrats, journalists, academics, etc. who are not well known locally but who should definitely be on the list. Thirdly, there is a local wealthy local person or his/her relatives or people who are supported by the wealthy. These wealthy people, on the other hand, are financially well-off and may consist of various professional groups. It is actually quite difficult to make this distinction. When it comes to wealthy, businesspeople and industrialists come to mind first. Certainly, their financial earnings are quite high. However, there are also some professional groups that can be characterized as local wealthy with their earnings and social status, even if it does not come to mind that they can earn like industrialists and businesspeople at first. These include physicians, pharmacists, contractors, civil engineers, businessmen and self-employed people. Another occupational group, which is outside these groups but is highly visible in the political arena, is the lawyers. It can be debated which or how many of the lawyers are wealthy or not. However, among them there are also those who do politics with the support of a local wealthy person.

Political parties in which intellectuals are influential are usually political parties at the center of politics in an ideological sense. In political parties at the extremes of politics, candidates are usually determined by the center and the successors have little effect here. Among the reasons for this are the possible losses that it will bring to them in the material sense of being in the extremes of politics usually.

Within the concept of political elites, it is possible to specify lawmakers, mayors, ministers, regional and central members of political parties and board members, municipal council members and delegates. In this study, only lawmakers will be examined as described earlier. Among the reasons for this is that first of all, examination in all categories does not exceed the volumetric limit of study. Another reason is that the social status of the deputies is more important than others, that the ultimate goal of holding other local posts is to be a member of parliament, and that the heirs play an active role in determining the deputies in particular.

In order to see the effect of the decades in the political field, the result will be tried to be reached by first examining all of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) and then through Gaziantep.



Table1: TBMM Deputies Periodical Review, All Profession Groups Considered Wealthy

Parliamentary Term (P.T.)	Number of Deputies	Total Occupation Group	Number of Deputies in Professions Considered Wealthy	Ratio of the Wealthy to the Number of Deputies in Parliament %	Ratio of Occupational Groups Considered Wealthy to Total Occupational Groups %
22. P.T.	547	74	233 (12 different professions)	42	16
23. P.T.	548	73	159 (8 different professions)	29	10
24. P.T.	549	88	288 (9 different professions)	52	10
25. P.T.	550	86	183 (10 different professions)	33	11
26. P.T.	537	90	176 (9 different professions)	32	10
27. P.T.	596	92	162 (10 different professions)	27	9,78
28. P.T.	593	96	195(different professions)	32	10.41

Source: [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM\\_Album.htm](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM_Album.htm)

In Table-1, the number of deputies from the 22nd Term to the last term, the 28th Term, and the professional groups classified by the TBMM according to the statements of the deputies of each term, as well as the professional groups previously mentioned and accepted as wealthy in this study, were determined and the ratio of the wealthy to the number of deputies and the ratio of the professional groups accepted as wealthy to the total professional group were examined. When the TBMM terms are examined in Table-1, it is seen that there are at least 73 and at most 96 deputies from different professions in each term. These include industrialist, physician, businessperson, contractor, civil administrator, painter, worker, economist, theologian, officer, police, lawyer, banker, researcher. Among these professional groups, there are 12 professional groups accepted as wealthy. The only period in which all 12 professional groups are present is the 22nd Term, and this number varies in other periods. The least number of professional groups is in the 23rd Term with 8 professions. The period with the highest number of wealthy people was the 24th Term with 9 wealthy professional groups and a rate of 52%. During this period, 288 of the 549 deputies in TBMM were wealthy. Although the lowest number was in the 23rd Term with 159, the lowest period in terms of the number of deputies was in the 27th Term with 27%.

In the 23rd Term, where there were the fewest different professional groups, there were 73 different professions, 10% of which were wealthy. In the 22nd Term, 12 out of 74 professional groups were wealthy, with a rate of 12%.

As seen in Table-1, the number and rate of wealthy people in the TBMM are quite high both in terms of the number of deputies and in terms of total professional groups. While there are one or two people in other occupational groups, for example, there are wealthy people such as 77 industrialists, 31 free traders/merchants, 30 medical doctors, 10 pharmacists in the 22nd Term. These figures are seen as 82 industrialists in the 23rd Term, 65 industrialists in the 24th Term, and 87 industrialists in the 27th Term ([www.tbmm.gov.tr](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr))

Table-2: Periodic Review of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Deputies Industrialists and Businessmen

Parliamentary Term (P.T.)	Number of Deputies	Total Occupation Group	Number of Industrialists and Businesspeople	Ratio of the Number of Industrialists and Businesspeople to the Number of Members of Parliament %
22. P.T.	547	74	135	24
23. P.T.	548	73	96	17
24. P.T.	549	88	93	16
25. P.T.	550	86	93	16
26. P.T.	537	90	99	18
27. P.T.	596	92	128	21
28. P.T..	593	96	142	23

Source: [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM\\_Album.htm](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM_Album.htm)

In Table-2, only those who are considered as wealthy and those who are stated in the TBMM album as industrialists and businesspeople are included among the occupational groups, the others are removed and examined. The first occupations that come to mind as wealthy are those in these two groups. Therefore, it was deemed useful to look at the figures from this perspective. When these figures are examined, quite high rates are seen. In the 22nd term, approximately one quarter of the TBMM consists of these two occupational groups. The lowest is seen in the 24th and 25th terms with 16%, and 93 deputies are industrialists and businesspeople in the Assembly. These figures are important figures. Although it is not possible to think of these deputies acting together in terms of Türkiye's political culture or party systems, they will have an indirect effect on the other members of the assembly or the profit takers in the adoption of laws or in many economic decisions.

Table-3: Occupational Groups Accepted as Wealthy in Gaziantep Province Deputies Periodic Review

Parliamentary Term (P.T.)	Number of Deputies	Total Occupation Group	Number of Deputies in Professions Considered Wealthy	Ratio of the Wealthy to the Number of Deputies in Parliament	Ratio of Occupational Groups Considered Wealthy to Total Occupational Groups %
22. P.T.	10	5	6 (3 Different Professions)	60	60
23. P.T.	10	5	6 (2 Different Professions)	60	40
24. P.T.	12	6	7 (3 Different Professions)	58	50
25. P.T.	11	6	4 (2 Different Professions)	36	33
26. P.T.	11	5	4 (1 Profession)	36	20
27. P.T.	13	7	6 (3 Different Professions)	46	42
28. P.T..	14	6	9 (3 Different Professions)	64	50

Source: [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM\\_Album.htm](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM_Album.htm)

The province of Gaziantep is also a reflection of Türkiye. Being an industrial city, being a city above the Turkish average in terms of exports, and its geographical location cause the city to have quite high numbers of wealthy people. Therefore, it can be naturally accepted that the wealthy are influential in politics and visible in politics. It is a normal situation for Gaziantep that industrialists and businessmen, if not themselves, propose and have accepted as candidates for deputy either their relatives or reliable people they can trust and who will represent and protect their interests in the political arena. This situation, which is more common in central parties in Gaziantep, is not seen much in other parties that are outside the center and have a group in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Considering the ideological structures of those parties and the limited number of votes they can receive and the number of deputies they can elect, candidates determined by the center are usually included in the lists for places where they can be deputies, and these are outside the wealthy.

However, the situation is different in central parties. Considering the probable vote rate of the parties and the number of deputies they can elect, the struggle to intervene in the lists of the political party that may come to power and to be included there is quite active and it is seen that the wealthy intervene in these lists using various methods. In this study, which is taken as an example in Gaziantep, the situation of the wealthy is tried to be explained through numbers rather than sharing data based on names.

When Table-3 is examined, it is seen that the influence of the wealthy is quite high in the 23rd and 24th terms. It is seen that 6 out of 10 deputies are determined as wealthy or those who have received the support of the wealthy. In terms of numbers, the period when the wealthy are most influential is the 25th term. In this period, 7 out of 12 deputies belong to the occupational group that can be defined as wealthy. In Gaziantep, MPs are generally selected from 5-7 different professional groups. Among these occupational groups, the rate of the wealthy is quite high, with the highest period being 60% in the 22nd Term.

In the 26th Term, the hegemony of industrialists is clearly seen among the wealthy. Industrialists, as a professional group alone, constitute 20% of the deputies with 4 deputies. In Gaziantep, in the 22nd Term, there were 4 industrialists, 1 holding company employee, 1 lawyer, 1 contractor, 2 academics, 1 bureaucrat deputies, while in the 23rd Term, there were 5 industrialists, 1 holding company employee; in the 24th Term, there were 5 industrialists and 1 holding company employee, 1 medical doctor; in the 25th Term, there were 3 industrialists, 1 medical doctor; in the 26th Term, there were 4 industrialists; and in the 27th Term, there were 3 industrialists, 2 medical doctors, and 1 pharmacist.

When the names on the lists are examined, it is seen that the same people were included for 3-4 consecutive terms. Therefore, the wealthy in Gaziantep show their presence in politics quite effectively.

Table-4: Gaziantep Province Deputies Periodic Review Industrialist and Businessperson

Parliamentary Term (P.T.)	Number of Deputies	Total Occupation Group	Number of Industrialists and Businesspeople	Ratio of the Number of Industrialists and Businesspeople to the Number of Members of Parliament %
22. P.T.	10	5	5	50
23. P.T.	10	5	6	60
24. P.T.	12	6	6	50
25. P.T.	11	6	3	27
26. P.T.	11	5	4	36
27. P.T.	13	7	3	23
28. P.T.	14	6	3	21

Source: [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM\\_Album.htm](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/TBMM_Album.htm)

In the data in Table-4, which is only considered as industrialists and businesspeople, it is seen that the rich industrialists and businesspeople are effective at a rate of 60%. It is seen that this rate is quite high especially in the 22nd, 23rd and 24th terms and that the rich people who became MPs in this term are generally the same names. In the 28th term, although the rich people have a rate of 42% in general (Chart-3), it is seen that the rate of industrialists and businesspeople has decreased to 23%.

#### 4. Conclusion

Although the visibility and influence of the wealthy in local politics is not a desirable situation in terms of democracy and the spread of the represented segments to the base, it does not go beyond being an ideal idea and it is seen that this does not happen in reality. In this study, only the Gaziantep province example was examined, and all the deputies in Turkey were classified according to their professions declared by themselves in the TBMM albums. In both studies, it is seen that the wealthy are influential in politics, especially in determining the deputies and their inclusion in the lists, either in terms of themselves or the people they support. This situation is also likely to be seen when other provinces are examined. Due to the limitation of the volume of the study, other provinces were not examined, but an attempt was made to reach a conclusion from Türkiye as a whole and from the Gaziantep province example.

Capital hegemony is the use of economic power by the bourgeoisie or dominant capital groups to control political and cultural areas and shape social relations. In Gaziantep, this situation is seen in the local industrial and commercial elites who influence political decision-making processes and direct urban transformation, employment policies and resource distribution in line with their own interests. The close relations of powerful families, especially in the textile and industrial sectors, with local governments embody the hegemony of capital over politics, while limiting the representation of civil society and working classes in decision-making mechanisms.

The visibility of the wealthy in politics and their desire to be influential cause them to establish a hegemony especially on the parliamentary lists in terms of financing politics, the concerns of the wealthy for the future and the representation of their own groups or someone close to them, and the sustainability of their interests. The fact that politics is a very costly business today, due to the reasons explained above, makes it almost difficult for the wealthy to be visible in politics. When the

efforts of the wealthy to sustain their material interests are added to this, the existence of the hegemony of the wealthy becomes inevitable.

While discussions and research on how to overcome this issue and what kind of measures should be taken so that other professional groups can have more space, especially on the parliamentary lists, are the subjects of other studies, the determination of the status of the hegemony of the wealthy on local politics is important in terms of providing resources for future studies.

As a result, although it is important for politics to spread to the grassroots and for different professional groups to be represented in parliaments, it is seen that the hegemony of the wealthy will continue for a while in the context of today's political culture.

### Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of Interest:** The author(s) declare that they do not have a conflict of interest with themselves and/or other third parties and institutions, or if so, how this conflict of interest arose and will be resolved, and author contribution declaration forms are attached to the manuscript process files with wet signatures.

**Ethics Committee Permission:** Ethics committee approval is not required for this study. The original signed consent form is attached to the article process file.

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