

LOCAL LEADERSHIP AS A PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC: A COMPARISON OF TWO TURKISH MAYORS

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Abstract: Recent developments on Western local governments indicate both the strengthening of local executive as well as the popularisation of participatory mechanisms. In other words, personal and collective dimensions of local authorities are simultaneously highlighted. In this article, these two aspects of the Turkish local politics are examined in a comparative discussion of two cities where local agenda 21 process was initiated. In trying to explain the performance gap between these two cities with regards to the outputs of this process, their mayors are compared in three different dimensions: personal background, political experience and international relations. The paper concludes on the importance of local leaders concerning the success of participatory mechanisms.

Keywords: Local governments, local politics, leadership, participatory mechanisms

Özet: Batılı yerel yönetimlere dair güncel gelişmeler hem yerel yürütmenin güçlenişine hem de katılımcı mekanizmaların yaygınlaşmasına işaret eder. Başka bir deyişle, yerel idarelerin kişisel ve kollektif boyutları birlikte öne çıkarılmaktadır. Bu makalede, Türk yerel siyasetinin bu iki boyutu, Yerel Gündem 21 sürecinin başlatıldığı iki ayrı kentin karşılaştırmalı incelemesi çerçevesinde incelenecektir. Bu sürecin sonuçları arasındaki başarı farkını açıklama çabası içinde, bu kentlerin belediye başkanları üç ayrı boyutta karşılaştırılacaktır: kişisel geçmişleri, siyasi hayatları ve uluslararası ilişkileri. Makale yerel liderlerin katılımcı mekanizmaların başarısı üzerinde önemli etkileri olduğu sonucuna varır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yerel yönetimler, yerel siyaset, liderlik, katılımcı mekanizmalar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the eighties there has been a neo-liberal turn in the public administration bringing about a shift to governance models as well as to the new public management principles. The growing emphasis on the three E's (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) of this administrative shift does not necessarily lead to a democratic evolution even if the related discussions never abstain referring to terms like participation, cooperation, partnership, public involvement etc. Instead, the executive organs of political institutions have been strengthened in order to facilitate more managerial government styles. This shift to more executive-oriented models is best illustrated by the change in local governmental systems. The strengthening of the mayor in a number of European countries, be it by formal reinforcement of his competencies and the weakening those of the councils or simply by their direct election, are observed through a general wave of local governmental reforms¹. Even in contexts where this executive-oriented shift has not yet taken place, the importance of individual leadership has been accentuated since the growing fragmentation and complexity of public institutions necessitate the integrating role of leaders to let individuals and organisations work together (Borraz: 2003 and Borraz and John: 2004).

Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge that in parallel to this managerial, executive tendency, there has been a growing demand in the public opinion for more participatory practices as well as more open, accountable and responsive governments. In other words, executive and participative dimensions of local government which might have been considered as contradictory in the past, are simultaneously highlighted and discussed. It might even be argued that local political power is personalized and pluralized by the same token. In fact, Hambleton (2002 and 2005) combines these two independent but also interrelated dynamics in his "New City Management" approach. According to the author, this new approach goes beyond the development of an array of managerial tools for urban governance by changing the role of political leaders through the promotion of innovation in the politics of place as well as innovation in public service management. In other terms, it is concerned with democratic renewal as well as with public service effectiveness (Hambleton, 2002: 157).

Even if the New Public Management can be softened through the New City Management, the role of leaders will remain as the major determinant of the new administrative scheme. Therefore, be it in the name of a more managerial public administration or a more democratic government, we witness a growing importance of individual leadership whence the multiplication of studies on the issue (Berg and Rao (eds.): 2005; Haus, Heinelt and Stewart (eds): 2005; Getimis, Heinelt and Sweeting (eds.): 2006).

In parallel to this institutional evolution highlighting the role of political leadership at national as well as local political scenes but also due to other local, thus specific factors, the local leadership has been also emphasised in the Turkish context. Indeed, Turkish municipalities were financially and administratively strengthened thanks to the legal changes undertaken since the eighties. Yet, it is not equally easy to state that this enhancement of resources and competencies contributed to the democratisation of local politics. On the contrary, the withdrawal of centralist pressures on local political scene was accompanied with the multiplication of capitalist exigencies. The city was henceforth a valuable domain of investment and ground rent. The new local practices such as the preparation of urban plans at the local level, the privatisation of municipal services and the big-scaled public investments rendered the cities attractive sectors of investment. Since no concern was expressed to assure the public transparency and accountability of municipal decisions and investments, the stories of corruption were multiplied all through the

¹ For a rich discussion of these reforms in Europe and in the United States, see Berg and Rao: 2005 and for general concluding remarks see particularly Larsen's chapter in the book.

country. After being dominated for long by the central governments, the local politics were henceforth determined by usually illegitimate and even illegal networks of private interests supervised mainly by the mayors. Therefore, the mayors started to enjoy considerable financial and administrative power in the absence of adequate checks and balances in the local politics.

In fact, the mayor had always enjoyed a hegemonic position vis-à-vis the council in the Turkish local governmental system. With the gradual lightening of centralist restrictions and pressures, they enhanced their political influence. Particularly, after the systemisation of private credit utilisation by the municipalities, the mayors became further autonomous since their dependence on public resources controlled by the central government was thus weakened. When the personal –and usually illegitimate- enrichment of the mayors is considered, we can state that the mayors have been since then the main power holders of the cities. In other words, the peripheries that had suffered long time from centralist pressures, created their own centres in the personalities of mayors.

These two lines of evolution, one on a worldwide scope through a wave of institutional changes and another on the national context through the enhanced influence of local leaders, lead us to associate the growing literature on leadership to the Turkish context. For this purpose, in the framework of this paper, we shall examine two Turkish mayors by first providing a rapid overview of the state of art on the issue and then by associating these theoretical statements to our empirical findings that will be presented in the second part of the chapter².

2. LEADERSHIP: CONCEPTS AND TYPOLOGIES

2.1. Who is a leader, what is a leadership ?

The most basic way of naming a leader would be to look at the legal framework and to see who holds the formal power. The mayor would be obviously the first local actor to be considered as the local leader. Yet, as the community power literature reveals there might be a number of other actors enjoying a *de facto* power at the local political scene, the businessmen making use of their financial resources, the local party organisation mobilising various electoral machines or bureaucrats taking advantage of their administrative competencies or that of general bureaucratic system may appear to be more influential in determining the way things evolve in local politics. The formal leaders may turn out to be wholly dependent on other actors or forces whence the need to underline that the leadership behaviour is not always exhibited by individuals in formal leadership position (Leach and Wilson, 2000: 8). Therefore, those who formally occupy a leader seat might not necessarily dispose significant power bases and thus execute an actual leadership and vice versa.

What is then a leadership behaviour that could be displayed independently from formal positions? Burns answers this question by first presenting his understanding of power process that can be resumed as a collective relationship involving an intention or purpose between power holders and recipients. More precisely, it is a process “in which power holders, possessing

² This comparison corresponds in fact to a sub-section of a larger study that searches to comprehend the factors of an observed dissimilarity between the performances of these two cities within a nationwide project, namely the Project of Local Agenda 21' s in Turkey. The project that will be mentioned several times through the paper aims at the introduction of new participatory mechanisms in partner cities all through the country. The point of departure of this study is the fact that Bursa was qualified as one of the national best-practices while Mersin did not manage to let the mechanisms function properly.

certain motives and goals, have the capacity to secure changes in the behaviour of a respondent...by utilising resources in their power base, including factors of skill, relative to targets of their power-wielding and necessary to secure such changes” (Burns, 1978: 13). Indeed, the leadership is simply the exercise of this power; in Burns’s (1978: 425) own words, it is “the reciprocal process of mobilising; by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers.”

The particularity of Burn’s approach to leadership as well as to power is that it does not consider the followers as pacified actors who are bought, persuaded, frightened, confused, fascinated etc. to act in a way that they would not do if the power-holder had not intervened. In his understanding, the leadership is the ability to mobilise followers for certain goals that relate to their wants and needs, their aspirations and expectations. Therefore, it is inseparable from followers’ needs and goals; it is a kind of mobilisation rather than coercion as is the case with the naked power (Burns; 1978: 439). Burns arrives thus to a very compact definition of leadership: *a collectively purposeful causation* (Burns, 1978: 434): collective because the leaders, in responding nonetheless to their own motives, appeal to the motive bases of potential followers (p. 452); purposeful since it is goal-oriented by pointing in a direction and by being the vehicle of continuing and achieving purpose (p. 455); and finally it is a causation since the real leadership is tested by the extend of real and intended change achieved by leaders’ interactions with followers through the use of their power bases (p. 434).

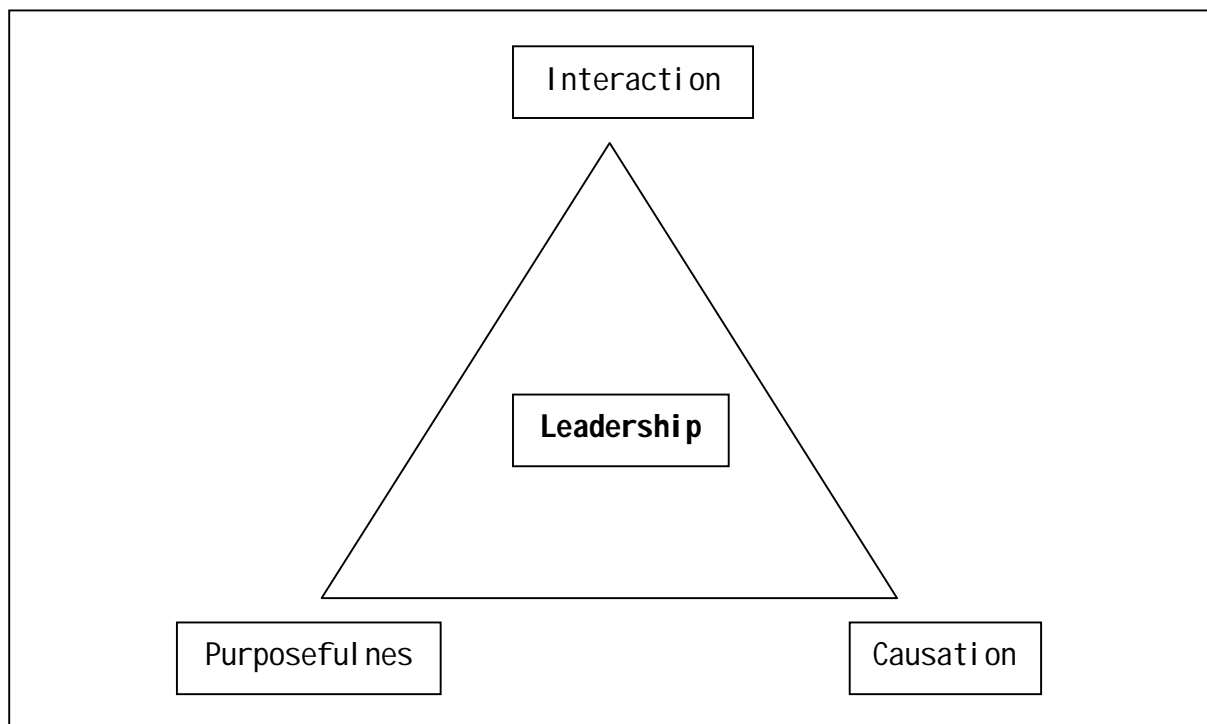


Figure 1. Burn’s approach to leadership

Re-defined in such a tri-dimensional perspective, Burn’s understanding of leadership goes beyond the classical dichotomy between behavioural and structural factors that constitutes the Janus of the study of political leadership in Jones’s terms (1989: 3). When we examine the faces of this Janus of leadership, on one façade, we observe the emphasise of personal characteristics of the leader; it is leader’s personality, ability and attitude that determines the exercise of leadership. At the extreme pole of this approach, one can find Weber’s *charismatic authority* that is founded upon “a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least

specifically exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber, 1947: 358). In this sense, the charisma represents a divine or exceptional personal resource for leadership. However, the legitimacy of such a leadership does not stem from this charisma, but rather from the duty of those who are called to follow the person that had proven her exceptionality always by a miracle. In other words, the former does not follow the leader, but rather act in a total devotion. In any case, the interaction between the leader and the followers stems directly from individual attributes of the person who is considered as the leader of the community.

The behavioural approach is not obviously exempted from serious critics and oppositions which can be regrouped through three different lines of objection (Greenstein, 1986). First, the randomness of the distribution of personality characteristics in institutional roles is argued to be an invalidating factor of personal behaviours. According to this analytical posture, the extra-personal factors play the major role in the recruitment for institutional positions, thus minimising the influence of personal attributes in the determination of major social status. More simply put, if the individual characteristics are not actually enough to obtain an adequate institutional position that would let the translation of these personal attributes to an exercise of a real leadership, how can we consider these characteristics as the main source of leadership?

A second objection highlights the influence of social rather than personal characteristics; that is to say the attitudes of an actor are more determined by her prior social experiences, social environment than her personality. Therefore, instead of concentrating to the impact of personality, we ought to find out the social factors that bring about the practice of leadership. These two lines of criticism do not actually question the role that can be played individuals within the political processes. For example, when the first group of objections is reconsidered, we have to acknowledge the fact that people with perhaps identical personal qualities can not necessarily play a similar role in politics, but this fact does not nullify the importance of personalities; it shows that the latter is dependent or at least interrelated with other variables. The same argument can be used for the second, social characteristics objection since when the personal attributes are considered we do not necessarily think about the inborn particularities of persons. Be it biologically determined, pedagogically taught or socially acquired; what counts is the personal particularity of a specific personage; the background of such features does not necessarily fall in the discussion of leadership if the analysis does not prone to be prescriptive or descriptive.

In this sense, the third cluster of arguments that Greenstein regroups under what he calls “action dispensability” is quite different from the first two since it either minimises the probable impact of a single person on the events or if played, the independence of that role from the personal characteristics. Very roughly put, this line of objection argues that it is the history that makes the leaders and not the inverse; so it represents the structural pole of the pendulum of discussions on political leadership taking us to the second face of the Janus of leadership. Therefore, the individual actions undertaken by specific actors do not represent an actual impact on the making of history. It is the structural circumstances of a given period of time that determines the direction of events. The emergence of a big leader is not thus the origin but only the consequence of this structural conjuncture.

Burn’s understanding of leadership differs from both of these behavioural and structural approaches. Instead of emphasising structural elements such as the systemic, institutional or functional aggregations or behavioural aspects such as motivations, perceptions, knowledge and skills, Burns focuses on both of the dimensions by considering them as a collective resource pool that is to be mobilised for leaders’ and followers’ motives. In this sense, it is not important whether the source of leadership is personal or structural; what rather deserves an attention how these different resources are mobilised for specific ends.

Burn's understanding of leadership that highlights the factors of interaction, resources and goal-orientation makes us think of Lagroye's conclusion on the leadership that interprets it as a form of social configuration in which "the relations between actors tend to grant to one of them a dominant position, because the latter is perceived and presented as indispensable to the continuation of beneficial relations, instituted as the guarantor of a system which ensures all the players's (at least they believe) presence in the common plays, the safeguarding or improvement of their positions, the vital satisfaction of their interest and the legitimation of their practices and the values to which it are attached (Lagroye's, 2003: 53; our translation.)"

This definition of the leadership by Lagroye reflects in fact his scepticism towards the consideration of the term as a scientific concept or notion. Hence, according the author, the leadership can not be elaborated as a theoretical framework per se and has to be examined by referring to "*notions éprouvées*"³ of the political science. The adoption of such a methodology would be most probably more frequent in the structural façade of our Janus of leadership since there is obviously a great richness of conceptual instruments (e.g. class conflict, socioeconomic development, path dependency etc.) in discussing the structural particularities of a given context. The methodology applied in the behavioural elaboration of leadership can be summarised as the normative appraisal of the great heroes of the history and their extraordinary achievements. The study of leadership becomes the narration of remarkable case studies.

2.2. Functions, styles and types of leaders

Since our intention is neither to underplay the role of individuals in the name of a structural analyse nor to draw up a heroic story of particular actors, we shall need some conceptual guides in discussing the role played by local leaders in our respective cities. For that purpose, prior to our empirical observations, we shall develop a conceptual framework based on the functions, styles and types of leadership by referring to various authors working on the issue.

If we start with a functional elaboration of the specific case of local leaders, we can refer to Leach and Wilson (2000) who identify four major key tasks of mayors. Hence, according the authors, the first task of a mayor would be the maintenance of cohesiveness within the party group, local party organisation, the municipal administration or between the former two. Second, the mayors should be able to initiate new policies, develop strategies and/or set their proper agenda to mark their difference in government. Thirdly, they ought to represent their localities in the external world. And finally, they must ensure the accomplishment of the tasks that fall under their responsibility and competence (Leach and Wilson, 2000: 14-16). As a matter of fact, Leach and Wilson's approach to the leadership tasks -the representation in the external world excepted⁴- is quite similar to Burn's triangular definition since the task of cohesiveness relates to interaction, the political innovation to purposefulness and the ensuring of executive tasks to the causation. In other words, Burns's definition of leadership reveals implicitly its major tasks.

The question at this point of our discussion on leadership is not whether the mayors or other political actors manage or not to carry out the totally of these functions. There is indeed no "one best way" to perform these tasks that would enable us to conceive a pattern of good leadership. Depending on the contexts and on particular priorities, there could be numerous appropriate ways to fulfil these key tasks. Nevertheless, we can refer to a major distinction of leadership

³ « ...les rapports entre groupes dominants, l' imbrication des activités économiques, sociales et politiques, les intérêts et les croyances des acteurs, l' idéologie diffuse qui sourd des relations sociales et en légitim la forme contingente » (Lagroye, 2003 : 52).

⁴ The representation in the external world is indeed a relatively particular task of local leaders and thus can not be expected to be present in a very general definition.

styles between *transactional* and *transformational* leadership conceptualised by Burns (1978). According to the author, the transactional leadership is founded on –as its name reveals– transaction, on the exchange of economic, political or psychological goods; the whole interaction is a bargaining process that does not bond the leader and the followers beyond the goods exchanged. It does not represent a joint effort for common aims acting for the collective interests of followers, but rather a bargain to aid the individual interest of persons or groups going their separate ways (Burns, 1978: 425). In contrast, the transforming leadership is founded on mutual engagement of leader and followers for a common purpose without actually seeking counterweights in the bargaining process; they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978: 19-20). It represents an alteration or elevation of motives, values and the goals of followers. The outcome is a “relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents” (Burns, 1978: 4).

When the four key tasks identified by Leach and Wilson are re-considered within Burns’s transaction/transformation perspective we see that all these functions can be indeed carried out either way. As a matter of fact, the cohesiveness might be maintained by permanent negotiations or by assembling the parties around new ideas and projects by highlighting common objectives. Similarly, the new strategies and policies proposed by the mayor could be marked by ‘give and takes’ among different actors or by transformative features that go beyond the particular interests of the concerned parties. In the same way, representing the authority in the external world can be a mere presence or a strategy in finding new resources or methods in other parts of the country and the world. Finally, the task accomplishment could similarly represent an instrument of transaction (e.g. in the form of meeting a request of a group of actors) or of transformation.

One step beyond the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership styles would be the conceptualisation of different leader models. Indeed, Fiorina and Shepsle (1989) develop such an approach without yet making any reference to Burns’s distinction of leadership styles. According to the authors, three different models of leaders can be stated: the agents, the agenda setters and the public entrepreneurs. The agent is the most responsive type of leader to her public; leader’s acts are wholly determined by the follower behaviour since the most important ambition of the leader is to remain leader in the following period by maintaining the followers’ support. When re-formulated in Burns’s perspective, all the acts of leaders are more or less fixed by a macro level transaction that can be resumed as “whatever you want as soon as I am re-elected.” Within this grand framework, there would be of course a great number of little-scaled transactions between the followers and the leader. However, the margin of negotiations can not be actually very large since what is really at stake for the latter is her re-election rather than any strategic priority of policy choice.

The second model of leaders that Fiorina and Shepsle propose is the ‘agenda setter’ that indicates a leader whose actions are also determined by permanent transactions undertaken with her followers. But in contrast with the agent-leader, the agenda setter does not simply obey to the outcomes of such transactions; she uses the extraordinary powers of the leader status in order to manipulate the perception of what is really at stake. Therefore, the agenda setter can bias final outcomes in the direction of her preferences without actually being obliged to oppose to the followers’ choices. So, in a way, the agenda setter appears to be as responsive, as representative, as submissive as the agent since she does not contradict with the preferences pronounced by the public; but actually she is the one who influences the outcome by making use of diverse methods of manipulation. That is why, the agenda setter can be situated in the middle of transactional and transformational leadership since although still dependent on transactions, she manages to transform the way the problems or questions are formulated in order to be able to influence the outcome. In other, words, even if not associated really on a strategic vision or a determined policy orientation, the agenda setter disposes of a transformational influence.

Finally, the public entrepreneur that Lewis (1986: 250) defines “as a person who creates or profoundly elaborates a public organisation so as to alter greatly the existing pattern of allocation of scarce public resources.” The most important feature of the public entrepreneurs is the fact that they manage to acquire a relative autonomy from their followers by engaging in particular strategies of organisational design. According to Fiorina and Shepsle, the leader can either attempt to coordinate the actions of a group of people with the objective of constituting her power base independent from those that already exist and that would constraint her decisions. This coordination consists of assembling people that have not being able to communicate among each other. By coordinating the actions of thus until then separated group, she creates a profit opportunity for herself. The coordination of this collective gathering and mobilisation will not also contradict with her policy priorities since she would be the one to define such preferences of the coordinated group. A second method, albeit not wholly different from the former, would be to create a specific social organisation that would support the leaders’ actions. The influence that the leaders enjoy in coordinating or organising the followers let them dispose a very important autonomy in government. Therefore, the public entrepreneur is quite associated to the transformational leadership since she transforms first of all the social order by coordinating groups or creating formal organisations. Furthermore, the political autonomy that this social transformation enables her to pursue her proper policies without being constraint by the pressures of status quo issued from the permanent transactions between herself and the followers.

Until now, we have discussed different tasks, styles and models of leadership which relate to persons who have already acquired political influence. Yet, another major dimension of the leadership would be indeed the process of reaching to power, becoming a leader. We have already evoked that it is the structural, personal or social factors that determine the emergence of leaders, but we did not actually evoke how these different resources can be mobilised. Leach and Wilson (2000: 41-44) identify in fact three different forms of leader ascension: congruence, reaction and transformation. The *congruence* represents the emergence of a new leader as the outcome of a stable situation between political and organisational culture; the leader is likely to reflect and reinforce the traditional cultural ethos; the status quo is maintained in the personality of the new leader.

The second scheme of leader ascension is identified by instability in the political environment bringing about a *reaction* against the prevailing leader who would be sooner or later challenged by a leadership contender who represents the forces for change. Therefore, if the latter manages to obtain the leading role, his ascension to the power would be marked by this reaction. How he will use his newly acquired power is another question; he can pursue a transformational leadership and attempt to change the conditions that he reacted or he might achieve transactions with different actors with the objective of maintaining the cohesiveness after reaching to a relative stability.

The third form, the *transformational* ascension, resembles to that of reaction except the fact that the leadership contender does not profit from an ongoing instability within the political environment. He mobilises a group of followers by persuading them on the need for a change of the leadership; this change may be due to personal, ideological or operational reasons. Whatever the motive would be, the most important feature of transformational ascension is that the contender himself initiates the dynamism for change independent from the current situation of the political environment. It is necessary to highlight that not every leader that acquired political power in a transformational manner, pursues a transformational leadership when actually in post; the processes of ascension and of the actual use of power should be carefully distinguished.

3. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MAYORS' LEADERSHIP STYLES IN BURSA AND MERSIN

Having rapidly provided a basic theoretical outline on the leadership, we can now pursue our discussion by presenting our empirical observations and then associating them to this theoretical framework. For this purpose, instead of developing separately personal monographs of the mayors, we prefer to structure the discussion through three main dimensions, namely personal background, political careers and international contacts. On each dimension, the mayors will be juxtaposed to see their contrasting characteristics.

3.1. Leadership as an habitus:

In discussing different types of leadership, Burns distinguishes executive leadership from party and parliamentary leaders due the lack of reliable political and institutional support as well as the dependence on bureaucratic resources such as staff and budget of the former. In the absence of an adequate machinery (such as a political party or a legislative bodies totally in their service)⁵, the executive leaders may have great troublesome in activating, shaping and channelling the public opinion for bringing it to bear on the decision-making process. Their most important resource in doing so is their own talent and character, prestige and popularity; in short nothing other than themselves (Burns, 1978: 371-372). The mayors are no doubt the executive leaders by excellence at the local level. Even if it is not actually possible to argue that they totally lack institutional and political resources, their personal attributes represent the most important source of their influence whence the need to initiate our empirical discussion from this dimension.

A. Personal backgrounds

After graduating from the prestigious Civil Engineering Faculty of Istanbul Technical University in 1959, he was recruited as project engineer by the State Waterworks (DSI) where he had already been working as an intern for two years. Very rapidly, he had become the regional director of the institution in 1971; a post that he held continuously for 23 years until 1994. Such a professional experience was without any doubt one his most important assets for diverse reasons.

First of all, as being the director of Bursa's region of DSI, he acquired an immense acquaintance on the city's problems and needs. In any case even without such a long professional career, he would not totally be a stranger of the city since he was born and grown up in Bursa. As a successful technocrat, he is known as the person who had solved Bursa's problem of potable water by establishing first a provisory system based on water pits and then by the construction of the Dam of Doganci. He had been so interested in the local problems that he was even criticised by his superiors for going beyond his technocratic competencies:

⁵ Writing particularly on the American context, Burns seems to disregard the possibility of fusion of executive, parliamentary and partisan powers as is a frequent case in the European context. Nevertheless, since we are rather interested in the local level, the assumption holds to be valid for our discussion.

“...when I was still at DSI, the minister of public works of the period said one day: ‘It seems that you had misled us, director.’ When I asked the reason, he said that what we had been doing were not the duties of DSI but of the municipality. ‘You are right, Mr. Minister’ I replied ‘officially, these are the duties of the municipality. For example, the municipality should have constructed the pipes connected to the refinement plant. However, if we had waited for the municipality to construct them, the dam as well as the plant would have not been operational; the citizens would have not had potable water...’ It’s true that we had gone beyond our competencies at the time...I did my duty to the inhabitants of Bursa. I do not regret it.”⁶

In all these projects and during all these years, he was in close relation with all the local bureaucrats and politicians; during his directorate, he had worked with six mayors and ten governors. Thus, even before becoming the metropolitan mayor of Bursa, he had not only a clear idea on the city and its problems, but also a respected reputation among the local bureaucrats and politicians, a very valuable social capital that would no doubt facilitate his mandate as the metropolitan mayor of Bursa. By already possessing such close contacts with the local actors, he must have more easily established a sustained interaction with the latter and secured a more effective cohesion; two factors that foretell the signs of his strong leadership.

On the other hand, the metropolitan mayor of Mersin has a quite different personal background. First of all, he was neither born nor grown up in Mersin though he had not been a total stranger; he is from the neighbouring city, Adana, where he was born in 1954 and pursued all his studies, university included. After graduating from the university as a civil engineer in 1975, he had worked for various public institutions. It is interesting to note that he changed his post almost once a year. In 1982, he resigned from his post and started to work for diverse private companies as a construction supervisor until 1984. After getting occupied with commercial business for the following couple of years, he became interested in public works and obtained a number of state contracts mainly in the surroundings of Nigde, a central Anatolian city. During these years of state-contracting, he was accused of being involved in corrupted activities; he was even banned from all public offers in the year of 2003⁷

The professional stability and expertise of Mr. Saker is not observed in the background of Mr. Ozcan who unlike the former, had been employed in diverse public institutions before becoming a private entrepreneur, albeit closely associated to public affairs. They had both realized public works, but while it was a duty of service for the former, for the latter it seemed to be mainly an economical activity. Moreover, neither the bureaucratic past nor the private undertakings do not seem to familiarise Mr. Ozcan to the problems and the needs of the city that he would govern from 1999 and on. The managerial experiences of both mayors also contradict since Mr. Ozcan’s past consists mainly of quite small-scaled activities that would not necessarily lead to very developed managerial skills.

Nevertheless, it would not be just to argue that his past career did not have any impact on his leadership style. All through those years during which he had been a contractor of the state, he must have acquired a great know-how in more obscure aspects of public works and bureaucratic functioning given the scope of illegal and illegitimate interactions within the public contracting has been remarkably large in Turkey. As we have noted above, there are obvious evidences revealing Mr. Ozcan’s involvement in such illegitimate activities. His experience in abusing the legal lacunas or concealing the illegitimate acts must have enabled him to master the clientelist networks in which he became the absolute patron thanks to his control on the local resources. In other words, after long years of being a client, he became a veritable patron of such relationships founded mainly on public contracts.

⁶ Interview with Erdem Saker, <http://www.yeni bursa.com/index.php?mod=Soylesi&Soylesi=12>.

⁷ E-mail correspondence with Abdullah Ayan, May 2005. Ayan states ironically that “ the mayor Ozcan would not be able to work with the contractor Ozcan.”

If we turn back to Mr. Saker, it seems that his area of expertise, the waterworks, had also contributed to his personal capabilities. In his words, “as being an engineer, [he] had struggled against the nature all through [his] life, especially during the years at DSI, and had thus learned how to overcome the factors decelerating or impeding [his] efforts⁸.” Thanks to such a permanent struggle against the natural conditions in his professional past, he had developed management skills that would be useful during his municipal mandate. An example for such skills might be the ability to think and plan in a long-term perspective:

“In DSI, when you enter to a river basin, you have to prepare immediately a thorough project even for a task that will be completed in 40 years. Then you start working from a point. At first, you plan the first ten years. While realising that first stage, the conditions change; consequently you revise the project according to these changing conditions... Nevertheless, an initial macro perspective is indispensable⁹.”

In order to be able to adopt such a long-term perspective, Mr Saker had first re-activated the office of local planning and then transformed it to a municipal directorate consisted of the experts of the issue. He closely cooperated with the professional chambers and particularly with the university. His objective was to realise a thorough diagnostics on the problems of the city, then develop adequate strategies and policies to solve these problems and finally establish functional organisations that would enable the realisation of the determined policies. For this, such structural adjustments were more than necessary since:

“...be it social or economic issues, be it the government of a country or of a city, the establishment of systems, systems that can function independently from actors, is essential. During my rule of five years, I aimed at establishing such systems. I wanted them to be so well-established that they do not degenerate when others intervene ultimately¹⁰.”

Saker’s remarkable concern for establishing systems with the objective of preventing the later degeneration reminds directly Selznick’s (1984) emphasise for the importance of institutionalisation of organisations: “the more precise an organisation’s goals, and the more specialized and technical its operations, the less opportunity will there be for social forces to affect its development” (p. 16). Yet, this institutional process is not merely a technical endeavour since it represents also the infusion of the organisation with values (p. 17) so that it embodies the aspirations of its members and obtains a common identity. Individuals sharing those values are not any more simple technicians carrying out a given task, but persons enjoying a great satisfaction from what they are doing for the organisation. According to the author, the main agent of this evolution from organisation to institutional is the leader that offers “a guiding hand to a process that would otherwise occur more haphazardly, more readily subject to the accidents of circumstance and history (p. 27).”

The “institutionalisation” of the municipal organisation under Saker’s rule through can be best observed through his attitudes to the municipal employees. Instead of following the tradition of ‘spoil-system’, he kept, to a large extent, the personnel of the previous mayor and imposed them four principles: honesty, productivity and being apolitical as well as hardworking. He argues that all the employees who had respected these principles had maintained their posts and had even ascended in the municipal hierarchy (Saker, 2000: 39). If we think in Selznick’s terms,

⁸ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul.

⁹ Interview with Erdem Saker, <http://www.yeni.bursa.com/index.php?mod=Soylesi&Soylesi=12> last consulted June 17th, 2005.

¹⁰ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul.

these four principles represent the values fused to the municipal organisation for achieve its institutionalisation. This process was highly important for Saker since what he aimed for the government of Bursa was a team-task and thus absolutely not a personalised rule:

“I don’t remember anything during my rule that I regretted afterwards since every step we had taken was a product of hard work. They were not decisions that I had taken alone. They had issued from conclusions reached by a large municipal team and I believe sincerely in the adequacy of the accomplished projects. Therefore, I feel comfortable about what we had done between 1994 and 1999; I am even proud of them (Saker, 2000:53)”

Saker’s concern was not only to establish a functioning system, but also to determine a strategic framework that would let the municipality determine and achieve its policies. This is exactly what Leach and Wilson (2000: 76-77) call strategic direction identified by core values, strategic vision and strategic responses. In the Saker’s practice, this strategic framework consisted of –in addition to the governmental principles that we cited above- clearly identified objectives, determined policies and *ad hoc* measures. This political framework when combined with an exemplary municipal team enabled Erdem Saker to a veritable managerial success.

For the case of Mersin, the situation had been contradictory since the mayor has governed the city in a more personal and spontaneous manner. Far from aiming at the establishment of autonomously running system and of general principles, he had even attempted to by-pass the legally protected schemes about the personnel regime of the municipalities. Since the municipal employees enjoy a civil servant status, the scope of mayor’s competencies on their internal status is not indefinite. However, Mr. Ozcan was creative enough to by-pass these legal restrictions. Instead of struggling with the municipal bureaucrats, he established a *de facto* signature competency to his personal consultants. He declared that the documents without the signatures of his consultants would not be valid even when they were approved by the municipal bureaucrats. This practice created a significant internal conflict in the municipality between the bureaucrats and the consultants of the mayor. The system was paralysed and even the most ordinary tasks were hardly realised. Finally, after three and a half years of conflict and struggle, the Mr. Ozcan had no choice but to abandon the practice of consultants’ signature¹¹.

Even this very simple example reveals to what extend Mr. Ozcan was not eager to undertake an institutionalisation of the municipal organisation. Far from strengthening the formal functioning by determining and imposing institutional principles, he favoured a more arbitrary rule identified by individual decisions taken mostly by himself or his personal consultants. We have to acknowledge that such a managerial orientation is in fact mandatory if what is at stake is the subsistence of clientelist networks. If one aims at maintaining his *patronal* status, the informal and arbitrary practices have to be encouraged so that the clients comprehend well that it is the patron in person rather than the intangible rules and principles that determine the municipal policies and practices.

B. Personal characteristics

Such a difference in the governing styles of the mayors is obviously associated to their personal characteristics which had probably been determined also by their professional backgrounds. Mr. Saker has been for example renowned for his self-confidence acquired during decades of experience in regional bureaucracy:

¹¹ Interview with N. O., June 20th, 2003.

“Erdem Saker had a personal quality; he was determined and self-confident. In other words, he trusted in his experience and he could struggle. I am not one of his electors; I do not agree with his opinions, nevertheless I appreciated his determined personality¹².”

As the quotation illustrates, even the ones who do not politically appreciate the mayor of Bursa, cannot avoid respecting his self-confidence and self determination. Although these personal features might have been sometimes considered as the signs of an authoritarian rule, Mr. Saker has been always identified with his openness to communication and deliberation:

“He was a despotic manager, very despotic. I mean, an intriguing character, I would like you to know him. Someone who had worked for 35 years in the same institution and during 25 years of this period as a regional director starts suddenly governing a municipality, an institution in which democratic principles are essential. He could not distinguish the difference in these institutions, though he could do the following: to fight on an issue, but to cooperate on another...I have never sympathized politically with him, but he is a very good friend of mine. I fought too much with him, but it is a pleasure even to fight with Erdem Saker... We could not hit each other, but we hit the table with our fists to show our anger. Nevertheless, each time, we left the room hand in hand and we could cooperate with pleasure on another issue. He was apt to such relations¹³.”

Similar quotations might have been multiplied, but the idea is obvious: Mr. Erdem is unanimously respected because on the one hand he is determined and confident, even sometimes authoritarian; on the other hand open to communication and discussion, and ready to defend his arguments against his opponents. Of course, it would be an exaggeration to claim that all the decisions of his mandate were made in a veritable democratic manner. However, even the local opposition acknowledges the fact that he was always ready to discuss the issues on the agenda rather than making the decisions behind closed doors:

“We had criticized Mr Saker a lot; he always gave a response to us. We could at least share a common language; we could ultimately agree on a common position. Somehow he seemed much more sincere to us¹⁴.”

This apparently democratic style of government represents also a valuable leadership quality. Indeed, as Burns (1978: 374) states clearly, the effectiveness of a leadership is highly associated to leader's ability to communicate with a variety of people of widely different background, temperament, interest and attitude. As the quotations reveal well, Mr. Saker is highly appreciated in his manner of dealing with the local actors whether or not a common consensus is formed. Such a quality of interpersonal relations presents a very valuable personal resource that enhances Mr. Saker's leadership capabilities.

While the self-determination and democratic aptitudes of Mr. Saker is highly appreciated in Bursa, in Mersin Mr. Ozcan has represented quite a contrast in terms of individual personality. He is considered almost unanimously by my interlocutors in the city as an asocial person lacking any kind of self-confidence and managerial vision. Governing the city thanks to a political machine based on patronage relations if not corrupted interactions, he has never taken part in democratic deliberations where his opponents could have expressed their opinions. He has been intolerant to any kind of criticism to himself. A. L. Y., a local journalist, illustrate Mr. Ozcan's attitude by a concrete example:

¹² Interview with M. O., Bursa, July 27th, 2003.

¹³ Interview with L. K., Bursa July 18th, 2003.

¹⁴ Interview with Y.S., Bursa, July 24th, 2003.

“For the last two years, the annual press meetings of the mayor of the metropolitan municipality turned out to be a one-man show, a stand-up show...because he makes a power-point presentation, then he reads a press declaration and that is all. Afterwards we are invited to the brunch organized at Hilton. The press does not have the chance of asking even one question. Is that a press meeting? In my newspaper, I qualified it as a one-man show rather than a press meeting. Then, a couple of days later, the mayor stopped me and asked me whether I was not ashamed of criticizing, of writing against him. I responded by saying that I had always done my job. Questions have been asked, criticisms have been made, but they have never been replied by even a word....There is a group of flatters among which there have been also some journalists around the metropolitan mayor. He has got used to this. In their bi-weekly or montly newspapers, these flatters praise the activities of the mayor. They are paid in countrepart. Macit Ozcan is fond of this, not of criticims¹⁵.”

The preference of the mayor for not being criticised was obviously not possible, but he developed a strategy to fight against the emerging criticisms. In case of the formation of a local opposition, he has immediately disqualified it as treason to the city or a personal attack to himself. For example, when the representatives of the professional chambers of Mersin had expressed their doubts and criticisms on the project of the refinement plant that will cost approximately 100 million euros, they are immediately accused of betraying the city. In the declaration that he had made after the comments of the professional experts, he had stated clearly that “he [would] realize the project despite everybody and all criticisms ”(Ayan, 9/4/2003).

This attitude of Mr. Ozcan reminds what Stone (1995:100) calls the ‘conspiratorial worldview.’ Perhaps due to the weakness of his managerial skills and professional experience, he has developed a governing style based on machine politics. Apart from distributing local resources and illegitimate privileges to his supporters, he has mobilized the local population on ethnical bases. By highlighting his Arab origins, he had already constituted a loyal local community. Besides, he enjoyed a broader support by playing on the Kurdish menace to the city. When such ‘politics of division’ (*ibid.*) becomes the rule, there was naturally no room left for democratic deliberation or public discussion. Every criticism has been interpreted (or more probably presented) as an unjustified attack from the enemy camp, the camp of betrayers, of separatists to the actual servitors, to the real interests of the city.

The contradiction between the mayor of Bursa and of Mersin is quite clear. On the one hand, we have Mr. Saker who had had a long and stable professional experience that had endowed him with managerial skills. Thanks to such a professional past, he developed a long-term municipal vision and mobilised effectively the human and financial resources of the municipality to the determined objectives. Meanwhile, he had never neglected associating local actors to the government of the city; perhaps thanks to his confidence in himself and his vision, he was not reluctant in discussing the municipal issues with other local actors. Consequently, even if the decisions or the politics adopted were severely criticised, his attitude that had enabled local deliberations was unanimously appreciated.

On the other hand, for Mr Ozcan who had not had a stable professional career since he changed several institutions and posts before getting into business affairs, the government of the city turned to be a personal task accomplished either by himself or by his nearest and dearest. Deprived of managerial skills and a political vision, he adopted a social scepticism towards others. Consequently, the world had divided between ‘us’ and ‘them’ transforming the local politics to a deadlock of social conflicts. Nevertheless, his success in his ‘politics of division’ enabled him to maintain his post whereas the mayor of Bursa lost his second elections. To be able to understand these quite surprising electoral results, we propose to examine the political relations of our two mayors in the following section.

¹⁵ Interview with A.L.Y., Mersin, June 23rd, 2003.

All these observations related to the impact of personal backgrounds of the mayors on their leadership styles encourage us to interpret the leadership as an *habitus* by borrowing Bourdieu's very popular concept. According to his definition, the *habitus* indicates "a system of sustainable and transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu, 1980: 88). In this conceptual framework, the dispositions imply a particular inclination to perceive, feel, do and think incited by the social trajectory of a person. These dispositions are sustainable since even if it is not impossible to modify such inclinations, they reveal mainly a veritable continuity in time. These dispositions are transposable since they affect different aspects of a person's life, from social relations to professional attitudes. Finally, this scheme indicates a system since the dispositions tend to unify among themselves (Corcuff, 2004: 32-33).

To put it more simply, the *habitus* emphasise the importance of past experiences in the determination of the present perception, thought and action. When our narrative on the mayors' personal background is reconsidered through this conceptual framework, we see that their leadership styles are actually highly influenced by their personal past. Thus their professional experiences, personal interactions, initiatives and interests represent a non-negligible factor in the shaping of their observed leadership styles. For instance, without the managerial experiences that Saker had acquired all through his career in the Public Waterworks, he would not probably achieve the institutionalisation of the municipality. Similarly, if Ozcan's had not been a public contractor, his tendency to machine politics would not be perhaps so marked.

The examples can be multiplied through our observations that we cited above. Each aspect of their past experiences can be associated to their leadership styles. Therefore, we argue simply that there is in fact a leadership *habitus* that is consciously or unconsciously acquired during one's past experiences and relationships. In this sense, if leadership is to be analysed through a behavioural evidences, the concept of *habitus* could be quite useful in associating the present observations to the individual past experiences.

3.2. Political career

Occupying the post of a mayor necessitates obviously an enormous political support within first the party to which the mayor belongs and then from the public who votes in the elections. Enjoying one of these kinds of political support does not actually confirm the presence of the other. In a political context where the political parties are organised and governed without really respecting the democratic principles, acquiring an adequate political support from parties could be extremely troublesome for the political candidates, be it in the national scene or at the municipal level. In most of the cases, it is the central administration of the party if not the president himself, who determines the candidate for a political post. The undemocratic internal structure of the political parties is not only the origin but also the consequence of such a problematic way of candidate determination. Since the political ascension of the persons who might attempt to question this problematic functioning of the parties are thus impeded, the partisan system is easily reproduced, even strengthened over time thanks to the relative 'hygiene' of the party's cadres.

If ever consulted, even the influence of the local branch of the party could be only insignificant; not even mentioning the preferences of the general public¹⁶. So, until the official declaration of candidates, the local political scene does not quite interest the pre-candidates most of whom camp in the central offices of the party buildings at the capital in struggling to

¹⁶ It is for instance not so extraordinary to observe mayors or municipal deputies who have been elected independently or from the lists of political parties other than the one that they had been long time adherent.

exchange a few words with the president to be able to prove the adequacy of their candidature. No matter how brief or simple it could be, any gesture or the expression of the president is interpreted as a sign of the eventual decision on the lists of candidates. For example, Mirza Turgut (2005) narrates the disappointment of a pre-candidate who returns proudly and confidently to Mersin since the president of his party had told him to 'return and continue to work for the city.' Interpreting this brief expression as an obvious sign of his candidacy, the pre-candidate initiated his actual 'local' campaign with an effort that would turn out to be useless since another person would be shortly assigned as the candidate.

In such circumstances, the political investment destined to an eventual candidacy consists of two totally separated phases: one that occurs years before and another just days before the official declaration of candidates of a party. Someone who envisages becoming a candidate for a political post, starts first investing in the local branch of the party. He starts first by multiplying his supporters within the political party from which he thinks of being a candidate. This enhancement of partisan influence could be either 'seducing' the actual members or by persuading his entourage to join to the party. Within a short period of time, an ambitious pre-candidate can acquire enough power within the local branch either to enter to its executive committee or to influence it from exterior. Yet, no matter how important it could be, the real stake is not the control of the local branch, but rather being influential in the determination of the local delegates who possess a right to vote in the general assemblies of the party, thus an influence in the determination of the party's central cadres. The number of delegate votes of a candidate is certainly his most important political capital when it is time to determine the candidates. More the central bodies owe their position to his support in general assemblies, more he has the chance to be assigned as the candidate of the party. Nevertheless, it is still mandatory to show up in the party coulisses when the negotiations on the eventual candidatures are going on in the party offices as well as very familiar hotels and restaurants¹⁷.

At this stage of the process, the influence of the local branch could only be very limited since their preferences are not actually considered. Nevertheless, they can not be wholly neglected by the pre-candidates since they play a non-negligible role during the actual campaign. Yet, it is not so uncommon that local disputes arouse within the local branch before each election. The supporters of a specific pre-candidate give up working for the campaign or at least do it begrudgingly. In any case, the principal determinant of the campaign is neither the support of local branch nor the collective mobilisation of party activists, but the individual resources of the candidate in the form of social or economic capital.

Such a scheme of political career building leads to a relative autonomy of the mayors with regards to the local branches of the political parties. Assigned by the central office and mobilised mainly his personal resources the mayor does not feel necessarily dependent on the local party branch¹⁸. Therefore, the task of cohesiveness that Wilson and Leach consider among the main functions of local leaders does not represent a significant burden for the Turkish mayors. The political ascension of the mayors of our respective cities demonstrates very adequately this feature of Turkish local politics even though they dispose absolutely distinctive political careers.

¹⁷ It is quite interesting to note that there has been no research to our knowledge on these public places as an informal but a major scene of Turkish politics.

¹⁸ Nevertheless, the bridges can not be totally burnt since the party branch could be capable of exerting pressures on the central government or state bureaucracy through the clientelist networks that it controls and the mayor can find himself suffering from central pressures be it in financial or administrative form.

A. A good leader but a bad politician

To start with, Erdem Saker's entrance to local politics was not in fact quite premeditated. As one would expect, since he had been a prominent and successful local bureaucrat, he had been recurrently receiving political offers from various political parties. However, he had not been so willing to start a political career; he thus refused the political proposals made for the local elections of 1994. Yet, the candidate for the metropolitan municipality of ANAP (Motherland Party, centre-right) had serious health problems during the electoral campaign and had to abandon his political ambitions. In search for a new candidate, Mr. Saker appeared to be the only alternative. Nonetheless, even in those conditions, it was not easy to convince him; he was taken to the president of ANAP as if the latter had wished to listen to his opinions on the potable water problems of Istanbul in order to give some ideas to their candidate of the city. In fact, the actual objective of the meeting was to persuade him for an eventual candidacy of the metropolitan municipality of Bursa. After hours of discussion during which other important leaders of the party had also intervened, he was made to recognize that the city as well as the party needed his candidacy. Upon his return to Bursa, he asked the opinion of his family and of his personal doctor who all encouraged him to go ahead in local politics¹⁹.

His reluctance in being a candidate reveals indeed his understanding of the politics. In replying to the president of ANAP who asked him why he hesitated so much to enter to politics, he stated that the politics, particularly at the municipal level, had been based upon personal interests whereas all through his life he had cared for the public interests by even sometimes going beyond his legal competencies (Saker, 2000:51). For him, "in the politics two times two is not always equal to four; it is sometimes 3.8 sometimes 7.8. However, for [him] it is always equal to four because [he] has always been above all an engineer²⁰."

In responding to his concern, the president of ANAP encouraged him to take measures for improving the transparency of the elaboration of urban plans in case of election as the metropolitan mayor. As a matter of fact, Mr. Saker admits that during his rule of five years he never received a political request from the president. Though, in the first two years of his mandate, he had had some problems with the local branch of his party on the pretext that he had not been working for the party. The tension continued until he clarified his understanding of the politics in a meeting of the party:

"One day, I had enough. I took the floor and said: 'I am not elected to render service to the members of the party. I am elected to work for this people, the people of Bursa. If you accept this, support me as the members of the party, let us work together for the people of Bursa.'...After that, during the last three years of my mandate, I had not had any such demand or criticism from my party (Saker, 2000:51)."

It is clear from the cited anecdotes that Mr. Saker enjoyed a veritable political autonomy that enabled him to pursue his own political priorities. Although his political autonomy vis-à-vis his political party does not correspond exactly to the pattern we resumed above, it depended also to the support of the party's central figures. Hence, even if he did not undertake that long run from the control of the local branch to the determination of national delegates in order to be able to exercise pressure on the central direction, the undeniable support of the president of the party facilitated the gaining of his relative political autonomy.

¹⁹ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul and Saker, 2000:38.

²⁰ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul.

At this point, a very justified question would be to ask what this political autonomy represents actually. Shall we interpret it as a positive evidence of a democratic leadership because it neutralises the particularistic and clientelistic demands that would come from the party or shall we see it as the blockade of one of the major representation channels that would counterbalance mayor's individualistic rule? Even if the issue deserves a veritable discussion especially for the Turkish case where the political parties represent the main instrument of clientelist relationships, given the limits and the focus of our study, we shall simply state that the political autonomy of the mayor can not be qualified as a democratic gain per se. Such a context of political gap between the party and the mayor would indicate either an authoritarian rule by the latter, or his association to other political, interest or collective organisations as a source of institutional support. Yet, for Saker's case neither of these possibilities turned out to be true since a probable democratic lacuna was avoided by the introduction of new participatory mechanisms.

By launching original participatory practices, Mr. Saker not only managed to associate the citizens to the local government and thus democratised the local politics, but also used these new political instruments to resist to the particularistic demands coming from various organised interest groups. For instance, he relates his successful resistance to a very influential multinational company and to the local chamber of industry to these new mechanisms:

“Let me tell you something. One day, one of the most influential business groups had come to me. They were willing to set up an automotive plant in the city. I objected to this idea since according to our strategic plan, there was no room left for the conventional industry in the city. They were extremely angry. They even attempted to change my opinion by asking the intermediation of some of my party members. Moreover, the Chamber of Industry of Bursa was also annoyed because I had not asked their opinion before giving a response to those entrepreneurs. Then, I reminded them the strategic plan. I asked them whether we had not discussed it all together, whether or not I had the approval of the Chamber. Afterwards they kept silent. Here you are the advantages of participation²¹.”

The initial political autonomy from the party politics when combined with the political legitimacy issued from the deliberative processes obviously reinforced Saker's position vis-à-vis other political and business actors. His efforts on behalf of the public interest were not thus degenerated by interventions from outside the municipality. Therefore, he managed to pursue the urban politics determined by thorough deliberations with the municipal agents as well as the external experts. In short, he could continue referring to a technocratic rationality based on cost-benefit estimations rather than getting paralysed in fragile political equilibriums founded upon particularistic interests. Nevertheless, this technocratic tendency did not represent an authoritarian rule since apart from establishing a deliberative tradition within his administration, he also managed to assure public support for his policies and activities through participatory mechanisms.

Such a description of Saker's leadership might seem to be ‘too good to be true.’ Indeed, a leadership that is technocratic but also participatory, authoritarian but also democratic, autonomous but at the same time supported could be only an ideal type of the concept. As a matter of fact, it is not quite possible to consider Saker's mandate as an adequate example for a quasi-ideal leadership type simply because he did not manage to prolong his mayoralty to a second term; he lost the local elections of 1999 to which he had presented his candidacy still from ANAP. How can this electoral defeat be explained given that almost all my interlocutors in the city express their esteem with regards to his mandate? One explanation to this contradiction would be the methodology that we applied in our field works, namely to interview the local – political, associative and civil- elite that obviously represent a very small proportion of the

²¹ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul .

electoral base. Saker's reluctance in developing clientelist networks and pursuing populist policies would not necessarily concern these upper-middle classes whose interests found on rather post-materialistic issues that do not require any particularistic effort. Yet, for the electoral majority who has been accustomed to populist and clientelistic leaders, Saker's would have seemed to be too indifferent to their 'wants and needs.'

Particularly, in a city that has been known as highly sensitive to nationwide electoral tendencies, Saker's apathy to electoral policies might have paved the way to his departure from the local political scene. Indeed, several of my interlocutors in the city argued that Bursa has been governed traditionally by whom the country was governed. In other words, the party holding the political power at the national scene had almost always achieved also in the city. Consequently, Saker who obtained his post thanks to the wind of ANAP in 1994, left the seat with that of DSP in 1999. Therefore, the political autonomy he enjoyed vis-à-vis his party and other political bodies did not save him from the consequences of the nationwide political developments.

B. Patronal leadership

On the other hand, as one might expect by now, the political career of Macit Ozcan has had an entirely different evolution though his entrance to local politics was also quite unattended. His political ambitions were not known until several months before the local elections of 1999. As I have already indicated as being a state contractor working mainly in the city of Nigde, he had not been quite present in the local socio-political life although he had been residing in the city for about two decades. According to N.B. who was one of the members of the executive committee of the local branch of the Social-Democratic Party (DSP, Centre-left with a nationalist accent) at that period, his candidacy did not seem to be quite probable. Apart from not proposing a concrete political program based on the problems and priorities of Mersin, he had left an impression of an awkward personality especially during the interviews realised with all the other pre-candidates. Consequently, in the report of evaluation sent to the national direction of the party, his candidacy was not backed; at least the members of the selecting committee had thought to state so. Nevertheless, the final decision taken by the national direction designated him as the candidate of DSP for the metropolitan municipality of Mersin²².

The members of the local branch of the party thought that it was another unilateral decision taken by the party-centre which had not been quite unusual with regards to the internal functioning of DSP. However, later on, they discovered with great surprise that the report that they had prepared was modified by the local president before being sent to the centre. Even if this discovery provoked a considerable scandal in the party, the extraordinary electoral mobilisation prevented it to become a veritable crisis. Nevertheless, the local branch was divided into two separate groups; while a group continued to work for Ozcan's campaign, a second group supported another candidate of the party aiming at a district municipality²³.

²² Interview with N.B., May 2005, Paris.

²³ This candidate for the district municipality was in fact the one who was designated by the local branch as the candidate for the metropolitan municipality. N. B. remembers a telephone call that this candidate received from Macit Ozcan just after the official declaration of party's candidates. According to her, Mr. Ozcan explicitly stated that the former had cost too expensive for him and he would have to pay that one day. Even if I could not confirm personally whether there had been actually such a conversation, none of my interlocutors in

Finally, even if it was not actually quite expected, Mr Ozcan was elected as the metropolitan mayor. The most important factor behind his election was perhaps the extraordinary success of his party, DSP, in the elections. Thanks to the nationalistic wind caused by the arrest of the chief of Kurdish separatists, Abdullah Ocalan and the popularity of DSP's leader Bulent Ecevit due to his honest personality that contrasted with the overwhelming corruption stories of the political elites, the party managed to become the strongest political organisation in the national assembly as well as in numerous municipalities²⁴.

Ozcan's electoral success was not obviously only owing to the unexpected rise of DSP. Even if he had not proposed a well-prepared political program, he managed to achieve a significant popular mobilisation in the city thanks to his ethnic origin. In most of the interviews that I realised in the city, the question on the metropolitan mayor was replied firstly by referring to his Arab origin:

“Macit Ozcan is Arab. That is a wonderful capital for him as he admits explicitly. There are native Arabs, Alevi Arabs in Mersin who make their electoral choices in referring to the logic of minority. The entourage and the actual electoral base of Macit are from this Arab community and he invests this capital successfully. He is from Karatas, thus does not have any connection with Mersin. He settled here not so long ago, but he managed to establish that electoral basis by making use of clientelist relations. He acts according to the demands of that communitarian basis²⁵.”

This accentuation of Arab origins can actually be considered as contradictory to what Christian Le Bart (2003) calls “the incarnation of the locality in the personage of the mayor” that requires the deactivation of all the signs that can be seen as a constituent of another identity. According to the author, no other factor has to contradict with mayor's expressivity with regards to the city s/he governs. Yet, the Arab ethnicity can not be counted among the authentic characteristics of Mersin, so *à priori* it should not contribute to Ozcan's local leadership skills. But the reality contradicted totally with Le Bart's theoretical assumption. Ozcan's emphasised Arab identity did not prevent his election as the metropolitan mayor of Mersin. This apparently unexpected outcome can be explained by the traditional influence of national politics over the local political scene. Even if this feature of Turkish politics has relatively evolved since the 80's by leading to emergence of more local issues in the electoral campaigns²⁶, the 1999 electoral results of Mersin were significantly determined by the rise of DSP on the national scene. Profiting veritably from this political wave, Ozcan was comfortably elected in a city where he was almost an unknown.

Mr. Ozcan has managed thus to create a significant political loyalty by accentuating his ethnical origins. He has also achieved to keep this communitarian influence alive by making an efficient use of patronage relations. The rumours of political corruption have turned out to be extremely widespread in the city since his election as the metropolitan mayor. According to almost all my interlocutors in the city, the mandate of Mr. Ozcan has exclusively been identified with corruption. He has been considered as a specialist of making use of legal gaps and/or of very complicated bureaucratic techniques on behalf of personal profits. In this way, he has been supposed to create an immense personal fortune of which a proportion has been distributed

the city could disregard the probable impact of some illegitimate interactions during this period of candidate determination.

²⁴ The same wind of DSP leads to the electoral defeat of Mr. Saker in Bursa since the candidate of DSP is elected also in the city.

²⁵ Interview with I. Y., Mersin, June 26th, 2003.

²⁶ For a discussion of this evolution see Incioglu :2002.

among his political collaborators or followers. Several projects of urban landscape improvement have particularly roused general suspicions on the accountability of his mandate.

Furthermore, his political party allegiance did not follow a stable evolution. When a group of opponents to the party's leader Ecevit seceded from DSP and founded a new political party, namely the Party of New Turkey (*Yeni Türkiye Partisi* –YTP) Mr. Ozcan followed them and adhered in the new party. Despite the noteworthy support of the mainstream media to the movement, the YTP had turned to be a big political fiasco. Therefore, while the local elections were approaching, Mr. Ozcan found himself in a political solitude. Finally, after a long period of ambiguity, he adhered to Republican People's Party (CHP) just a few months before the elections and became the candidate of the party for the metropolitan municipality. Obviously, this last minute manoeuvre did not lack rumours on some illegitimate transactions between himself and the party's leading elites since there was a consensual opposition to his candidacy from the local branch of CHP since Mr. Ozcan had competed with them not only in the last local elections as the metropolitan candidate but also during the legislatives of 2002 as being one of the founders of YTP.

The opposition to his candidacy developed quite early because it turned out to be clear that he would tend to adhere to CHP and to become its candidate after the fiasco of YTP. He could not return to DSP simply because he was one of the main actors of the secession and the party had eroded all its public support. In such circumstances, the pre-candidates (candidates for candidacy) initiated their campaign quite early with the main objective of avoiding Ozcan's eventual candidacy. Their strategy was concordant with the scheme that we described in the beginning of this section; namely to get the control of the local branch and then exercise pressure on the central bodies through delegates in order to assure their candidacy.

On Ozcan's side, he did not bother to get into such a complicated struggle. In any case, he did not have any experience in such partisan affairs. As we have already noted above in discussing his previous candidacy, his preference was to intervene in the last minute to persuade the key-actor (the local president in the previous case) instead of trying to gain the support of the local party organisation. Even after the elections, he did not bother to get into the local party affairs. After the failure of YTP and thus when CHP was left as the only address for a future candidacy, he did not neither try to gain influence in the local organisation. Hence, in the local congress of the party in mi-2003, Ozcan was totally absent (Turgut, 2005: 82-86).

During the summer of 2003, when we were carrying out the first part of our fieldwork, Ozcan's future party affiliation was one of the favourite political issues in the city. Even if there was no doubt that he would insist on CHP, there were not a lot of people who believed that he would manage to be the party's candidate. But there were also rumours that in case of refusal from CHP, he would orient to the nationalist MHP. Yet, a few months later, in early December, Ozcan's adhesion to CHP was officialized; the probability of his eventual candidacy was henceforth much higher.

The reaction of the party's branch –under the direct influence of one of the pre-candidates, was immediate; ten busses of party activists departed to Ankara with the objective of avoiding his official adhesion. Before the departure of the party convoy, Ahmet Akin, a pre-candidate for the metropolitan municipality who won the local congress of the party, stated that “nobody should worry since Macit Ozcan can not be a candidate from our party. It seems that our president has been misinformed. We are departing to Ankara in order to correct this mistake²⁷.” Yet, these efforts would turn out to be vain and the president of the local branch would feel obliged to defend himself by stating that “the decision [related to Ozcan's adhesion to the party] was the general president Deniz Baykal's determination and instruction” and he was just

²⁷ <http://www.zaman.com.tr/2003/12/03/akdeniz/h16.htm>; last consultation March 30th, 2006.

“telephoned by the central office and notified to come to party’s parliamentary meeting with Macit Ozcan²⁸.”

After a few weeks from the official adhesion to the party, Ozcan was indeed CHP’s candidate for the metropolitan municipality of Mersin. Furthermore, the scope of Ozcan’s success went beyond his own candidacy since he imposed his own preferences with regards to the other district candidates. As a matter of fact, Zekeriya Ozgur who was the actual mayor of Yenisehir, was expected to be CHP’s candidate in the district for the approaching election since his mandate was judged positively. But, his candidacy was cancelled in the last minute due to Ozcan’s pressures²⁹. We would like to underline that Ozcan’s implication to Ozgur’s candidacy is not an interpretation or deduction; it was even unofficially admitted by Baykal himself to Ozgur:

“Immediately after the withdrawal of my candidacy, I went to the president’s office not to beg for the candidacy, just to learn the reason. He could tell me that I was unsuccessful or this or that. On the contrary he acknowledged my success and said that he did not understand why *Macit Ozcan did not want me* despite that success. ‘Why would he want’ I said ‘I adhered to the part much earlier than him; when I adhered to CHP, he did not sign my assembly decisions in order to hinder me. This is the origin of our conflict...’ He could not of course say anything. Can you imagine a president as such³⁰ ?”

Very similarly, Z.K., a pre-candidate for one of the district municipalities, stated that her candidacy was directly obstructed by Ozcan who did not forget her critics as being the local president of chamber of environmental engineers about the water refinement project that the former defended furiously. What is further interesting about her case is that her pre-candidacy was directly encouraged by Baykal who was quite impressed by her presentation on the problems of Mersin during one of his visits to the city³¹. In other words, Macit’s influence was so significant on the president of the party that the former had to contradict with his proper advice at the dawn of approaching elections.

Given this unusual process of Ozcan’s candidacy, two questions deserve to be posed. First of all, how could this great influence of Ozcan in a party that he adhered at the last minute be explained? We can propose a first hypothesis founded on the electoral counts. In supposing that Ozcan would eventually find another party to be the candidate for the metropolitan elections, the president of CHP might have been concerned for not being able to win the elections. When the rumours on the former’s possible adhesion to the nationalist party is considered, this thesis might have been strengthened. No matter how contradictory it would appear, by such an adhesion, Ozcan would take with himself a considerable proportion of his supporters attached to him on the ethical basis and not on ideological grounds. Already concerned by the union of socialist and pro-Kurdish parties around a strong candidate, the president might have preferred not to take the risk of further division and to back his candidacy.

A second hypothesis that seems less realistic but much more evoked, is the presence of an illegitimate exchange between the president and the mayor. As a matter of fact, just shortly after the local elections, a national conservative newspaper claimed that Macit Ozcan’s brother had transferred 1.5 million dollars to Baykal’s daughter’s account in a Swiss bank just before the local elections in order to secure Ozcan’s candidacy³². Even if this thesis was furiously rejected

²⁸ <http://www.zaman.com.tr/2003/12/05/akdeniz/h20.htm>; last consultation March 30th, 2006.

²⁹ It should be hereby underlined that Ozgur was the candidate who was determined by the local branch of DSP in the previous elections; the one that cost very expensive to Ozcan as we have already noted above (see note 19 above).

³⁰ Interview with Zekeriya Ozgur, Mersin, July 15th, 2004.

³¹ Interview with Z.K., Mersin, July 13th, 2004.

³² *Dunden Bugune Tercuman*, March 3rd, 2004; the related article may be consulted on

by Baykal, the clouds of suspicion with regards to Ozcan's candidacy were never dispersed. Perhaps in his understandable disappointment, Ozgur believes sincerely in the presence of such an interaction:

“It was not only me who opposed to Macit. There was nothing left that was pronounced against him; by Mustafa Ozyurek who is very influential in the party, and by the deputies of Mersin included. But despite of all, the guy managed to be the candidate. This is really intriguing... CHP is over; for me it is henceforth a private company. It is unbelievable that the chief of the main opposition of the country could be so simple, so corrupted, so ‘buyable’; i could not personally believe until I discussed with him. There was indeed nothing to discuss. ‘What shall i do?’ i asked to him, ‘what do you advice me?’ ‘Go and work with him’ he said. Can you believe, he advices me to work with someone who personally hindered my candidacy... Even if it was claimed by a lot of people, I did not believe. But when I talked to him, I understood it, I saw it by my eyes³³.”

Whatever the real reason might be behind Ozcan's candidacy from CHP, how he managed to be elected despite the veritable opposition against it remains as a second question. The urban landscape improvement projects that he had accomplished during his first mandate, on which there had been numerous speculations of illegitimate profits, was obviously one of the factors of his success. Instead of investing in the urban infrastructure (in other words of “burying the money underground”), he spent the municipal resources in parks, gardens and outdoor furniture, thus in visible actions. This urban transformation might have actually facilitated his re-election.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a more important determinant behind the second electoral victory of Mr. Ozcan; his re-election was identified to a great extent with a reactionary behaviour vis-à-vis the growing political influence of Kurdish minority in the city. In the previous local elections of 1999, the pro-Kurdish party had indeed gained one of the sub-metropolitan municipalities. Since then, the city has been represented as being under a significant menace from the separatist organisation. The scenarios of a probable annexation of the city to a future Kurdistan had already started to spread. According to such conspiracy theories, the city would be the port of Kurdistan, its contact point with the world; it was even argued that Abdullah Ocalan had said that he “could give up even Diyarbakir³⁴, but not Mersin” (Turgut, 2005:17).

For the local elections of 2004, the political influence of the Kurdish community was expected to grow further since the pro-Kurdish party had made an electoral coalition with some leftist parties and had agreed on the candidacy of a well-known local socialist for the metropolitan municipality. Thus, the election of a pro-kurdish metropolitan mayor was perceived as quite probable. In such a context of urban tension, Mr. Ozcan managed to attract the nationalist voters by representing his candidacy as the only way to defend the city against the separatist threat. Consequently, these reactionary votes of the nationalists when combined with the traditional social-democrats of CHP and the personal cliental base of Mr. Ozcan, led him to a second mandate. As matter of fact, all rumours on his corrupted activities, all criticisms on the local policies pursued in his first mandate as well as all concerns on the growing social fragmentation propagated by the clientelist practices of the mayor were completely disregarded on behalf of protecting the city from the Kurdish menace.

To put it differently, Ozcan managed to maintain and even strengthen his leadership on the one hand by clientelist transactions and on the other hand by creating an ideological constituency, namely a nationalist mobilisation. At the first sight, this form of leadership corresponds indeed with Bailey's conceptualisation that is considered as one of the major anthropological works on leadership. According to Bailey (1971: 60), a leader can have a first

<http://www.realist.com.tr/seci mkul isi /haber5-15.html>, last consultation March 30th, 2006.

³³ Interview with Zekeriya Ozgur, Mersin, July 15th, 2004.

³⁴ The largest Kurdish city in the southeastern Anatolia.

circle of persons whose attachment reveals a moral character (the *core*) and then another circle, a remoter one that is identified with more transactional attachments (the *entourage*). When interpreted within this perspective, Mr. Ozcan seems to enjoy a moral core founded upon the Arab identity and a transactional entourage that is established through clientelist networks. Yet, on a more outer layer, we observe another circle that can be considered moral and transactional at the same time. This outmost group is nothing but the nationalists' support during the elections; it is moral as it is ideological and value-based and transactional because it is valid only during the electoral period. It can be thus argued that his second victory in the local elections was mainly thanks to this third circle of support that combined moral and transactional motives.

Given the way Ozcan became the candidate of CHP and managed to be elected for the second mandate indicates clearly to what extent his political autonomy could have been reached vis-à-vis the local party organisations. He was far from being backed by the local party activists who even opposed to his candidacy. In such circumstances, it would be unrealistic to suppose that the local branch could have enjoyed a significant influence on the policies adopted by the mayor. Yet, different from the political autonomy that Saker established in Bursa, Ozcan did not bother to check and balance this autonomy by adequate measures and practices such as participatory mechanisms. On the contrary, the lack of veritable mechanisms of political control represented the original source of his political strategy. In playing the one and only political patron of the city, he could have developed his clientelist networks and thus maintained his political power. In other words, both of our mayors enjoyed a political autonomy during their mandates. However, the pattern of this autonomy seemed to be significantly different from the traditional scheme that we underlined in the introduction of this section. Furthermore, the outcome of such an autonomy was also remarkably distinctive under the rule of our respective mayors. On the one hand, we observe a mayor, Erdem Saker, who tries to keep his autonomy form the party politics, from external political influences with the objective of pursuing freely his local policies that were justified nevertheless through internal and public deliberations. On the other hand, the mayor of Mersin founds his mandate to a large extent on a political autonomy in order to be able to pursue his political relations blended with corrupted activities and electoral bargaining.

In sum, when the political careers of both of our mayors are considered, we see clearly that neither of them correspond to the political ascension schemes theorized by Leach and Wilson that we resumed above. As a matter of fact, we observe neither congruence, nor reaction, nor even a transformational motivation in their political ascension to the mayoralty. We can not even speak of a veritable political competition among different political actors in which the mayors appear as the actual winner. It is true that in Ozcan's case there were other pretenders for the post, but there had been no open confrontation during which the different actors applied open strategies to strengthen their position. At least on Ozcan's side, all had taken place behind closed doors hindering the development of a democratic competition.

Such a difference in the political careers of the mayors provides indeed important clues about their dissimilar actions in introducing new participatory mechanisms within the LA21 project. For a mayor whose main concern was to free his hands in order to be able to pursue and enhance his clientelistic bases, such participatory mechanisms would represent nothing but a very probable headache. So was the case as we have already described in the related chapter. On the other hand, Saker introduced and used these practices in order to provide a public and institutional support for his policies. Therefore, he sincerely supported the process in order to keep his political autonomy vis-à-vis local and national political actors and institutions. But such different attitudes towards the project were not only originated from personal characteristics or political strategies since the LA21 process was in fact transferred to the Turkish context from abroad. Therefore, the relations with the original sources of the initiative, with the external world deserve to be elaborated in order to see whether or not the scope and the nature of their international relations affected the observed outcome.

3.3. International contacts

In theoretically discussing the leadership, we referred to Leach and Wilson (2000) who consider the representation of the local authority in the external world as one of the key tasks of the local political leaders. In our understanding, such a representation does not imply a mere presence of mayors in different places on national or international occasions aiming at a better promotion of the locality in the external world. It represents also an effort to bring home new resources and methodologies that will facilitate the realisation of policies and strategies developed by the leader. As a matter of fact, thanks to a better and easier contact with the international organizations as well as foreign counterparts, local leaders can thus be more informed and motivated in adopting new political visions about democratic practices or entrepreneurial initiatives. Moreover, financial or technical support provided owing to the international contacts of the local governments facilitates the realisation of such visions. A comparison between Bursa and Mersin demonstrates excellently the impact of international contacts on the local politics.

A. Global innovators

Even before becoming the metropolitan mayor of Bursa, Erdem Saker had significant contacts with international organisations. Apart from being closely related with the international organisations on his domain of expertise as a technocrat, he had taken responsibilities in numerous international sport organisations such as the International Ski Federation as well as being a member of the National Olympic Comity. Therefore, he had been quite interested in what had been going on out of the national borders. His understanding of the local government had also been determined by his interest in the international developments:

“I believe that all what we discuss here will be solved by the principles already determined by the international developments...What has been going on in the world? We have been not only following these developments but also trying to apply them. Nowadays, a governmental earthquake, like the one that had taken place in transiting from Medieval Age to New Age, is taking place. A governmental earthquake...I mean from the feudal states in the Medieval Age, we had passed to kingdoms, to empires, later on to central democracies. However, on the eve of the 21st century, we are transiting from central to local democracies. And the key concept of this transition is ‘partnership’. There are three dimensions of this partnership. The first, the vertical, dimension is between the central and local governments...the second dimension, the horizontal partnership, is between the local governments and the citizens...and finally the third dimension, the global partnership, is between local governments and international organizations (Saker, 1997).”

In the circumstances of the ‘governmental earthquake’ that Mr. Saker observes, the international partnership appears to be an adequate means to develop new policies for responding the local problems of Bursa. He insisted on the absurdity to ignore what has been going on abroad and on the need to profit from the international experiences. That was obviously why, during his mandate, the Metropolitan Municipality of Bursa multiplied its international relations and adhesions. The list of organizations adhered under the leadership of Mr. Saker would reveal the scope of such efforts: International Council for Environmental Initiatives (1995), World Academy of Local Authority and Democracy (1996), World Conference of Mayors for Peace Through Inter-City Solidarity (1997), United Nations Development Programme (1997), Association of Cities for Recycling (1997), World Conference of Mayors for Peace Through

Inter-City Solidarity (1997)³⁵. He also posed the candidacy of the municipality for the Healthy City Project of the World Health Organization and initiated a national network of Turkish Healthy Cities. However, both of the application processes were concluded in 2000, after the election of the new mayor.

Furthermore, in his understanding, the importance of international relations was not limited solely by contacts established with the international organisations. He also adhered to the significance of developing bilateral relationships with other cities with the objective of sharing local experiences. For this purpose, he displayed considerable efforts in twinning Bursa with other, particularly less developed cities (Saker, 2000: 56). Indeed, Mr. Saker signed nine of the nineteen foreign city twinnings of Bursa. The cities twinned with Bursa during his mandate are as follows: Bitola (Macedonia-1996), Herzlyia (Israel- 1997), Cadir Linga (Republic of Moldova-1997), Kizilorda (Kazakhstan-1997), Mascara (Algeria- 1998), Kulmbach (Germany-1998), Plevne (Bulgaria-1998), Plovdiv (Bulgaria-1998), Tirana (Albania- 1998).

The impact of such a concern for international connections can be easily observed in Mr. Saker's efforts in trying to establish participatory mechanisms in Bursa. He states explicitly that the projects that he undertook were significantly influenced by his personal experiences acquired while serving in the executive boards of international organizations such as International Union for Local Authorities (IULA) and International Council for Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)³⁶. As a matter of fact, the launching of LA21 in Turkey first as a local initiative in Bursa, was in fact thanks to a regional meeting of ICLEI in Rome in 1995. Mr Saker who got to know the concept in that meeting, initiated the process even before arriving back to the city as O. E., the first general secretary of LA21 in Bursa, remembers smilingly:

“It was a Sunday; I was going to Istanbul when my car phone rang. ‘Mr. Erdem Saker wants to speak to you’, they said. He was a quite interesting man. He had always had someone in his secretariat until midnight and even during weekends to be able to reach to people via teleconference from wherever he was. ‘Hello O., how are you?’ he said. ‘I am fine thank you, Mr. Mayor. Welcome back’ I replied. He immediately invited me for dinner that evening. I said that I couldn’t because I was on the ferry on my way to Istanbul. Coincidentally, he was also on the ferry on the opposite direction towards Bursa. ‘Ok’ he said, “come to me on Tuesday then, I have things to tell you.’ He mentioned briefly about LA21 but of course I understood nothing. On Tuesday, we met for lunch. He started enthusiastically telling me about LA21 that he heard in Rome. ‘LA21, it’s just for you. We will initiate it here in Bursa. We will be the pioneer in Turkey.’ But that strange concept of LA21 did not mean anything to me. He explained more in details. The LA21 process had indeed started like this³⁷.”

Mr. Erdem's enthusiasm about the international relations and his interest in global developments should not be interpreted as a purely passive attitude towards the occident. His ambition did not consist of ‘importing’ new concepts, new practices or new mechanisms from the western world to Bursa. Instead, what he aimed was to re-interpret, re-evaluate the particular characteristics, problems of the city in a global perspective. “We ought to sew our own clothes [institutions],” he was telling to the Turkish businessmen gathered to discuss the local governments, “however these clothes have to be associated to the globally determined principles³⁸.” Hence, even if he had heard about the LA21 in Rome in 1995, what he undertook

³⁵ The website of the metropolitan municipality of Bursa, <http://www.bursa-bl.d.gov.tr/uluslararasi/uluslararasi.asp?uluslararasiID=1&uluslarID=1&dil=Turkce> last consulted June 13th, 2005.

³⁶ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul.

³⁷ Interview with O. E., July 21st, 2003, Bursa.

³⁸ Oral intervention during the conference on the local governments organised by TUSIAD, October 1997, Istanbul. <http://www.tusiad.org.tr/turkish/rapor/yerel/html/sec7.html> last consulted June 13th, 2005.

upon his return was not to initiate a totally new process. Indeed, briefly after his election, he had already established a city council and district organizations. What he did after participating to the meeting of ICLEI, was to associate these local efforts to a global framework. In this way, he facilitated the process not only by enjoying a veritable resource of global know-how, but also by justifying his efforts in referring directly to international themes and practices. In other words, without his political program and vision, all these efforts would not necessarily mean much. Yet, it does not mean that international relations are only useful when the local leader has already a political perspective. In the contrary, according to Mr. Saker, the local leaders need to get involved in international activities in order to undertake democratic steps on behalf of local democracy and of participatory mechanisms:

“The actual problem is that the mayor should believe in such efforts and to be able to believe, he needs to observe them with his own eyes. Of course, not speaking a foreign language is a big handicap for the mayors, they get bored. For example, me, when I go to a meeting, I don’t miss even a minute of the meeting; when I go to somewhere, I go there for the meeting, not to walk around the city. However, when the mayor does not speak a foreign language, he gets bored and then leaves the meeting...I learned a lot from international meetings. That’s why we need to take them to such meetings. For this purpose, when I was in the executive of board of IULA, we were trying to arrange simultaneous translation in Turkish; we were paying for that...We need to spread such ideas like this, by the multiplication of such international contacts³⁹.”

In short, in Mr. Erdem’s understanding, international contacts represent an adequate instrument for what Rebecca Abers (1998: 56) calls as the ‘demonstration effect.’ He believes that the mayors who witness the institutional innovations and contemporary policies undertaken by their foreign counterparts, would become eager to adopt similar strategies in their localities. At least, for the case of Bursa, the influence of such ‘demonstration effect’ is obvious. Particularly interested in the international experiences and developments in the domain of local governments, Mr. Saker managed to undertake original initiatives that were closely associated to global themes and experiences.

At this point, it would be useful to refer once more to Burns who emphasizes the importance of ‘motives’ and ‘resources’ for the leaders to dispose a veritable power: “Lacking motive, resource diminishes; lacking resource, motive lies idle. Lacking either one, power collapses (Burns, 1978: 12).” When reconsidered in this perspective, the significance of international contacts can be better perceived since firstly such contacts may provide excellent opportunities for improving resources available to the local leaders. For the past two decades, the multiplication of funds, aids, credits and donations of international organisations destined to social projects, infrastructure investments and democratic initiatives have represented very valuable means of fund-raising for municipalities for whom the scarceness of financial resources has been the rule due to centralist political traditions. Apart from such direct resources, the international contacts may provide non-negligible strategic and methodological resources for the local governors. By getting to know the different experiences all around the globe, the leaders may develop more adequate and effective policies in their locality. This importation of global know-how may even be reinforced by various means of cooperation and exchange by national and foreign counter-parts. Furthermore, as a second dimension, these contacts with the external world constitute an excellent means of motivation for the local leaders. By witnessing personally to various innovations undertaken by other local actors, leaders become more motivated in achieving similar policies. In this sense, the international contacts may contribute the reinforcement of the second condition of Burn’s power approach. As Saker demonstrates perfectly, being aware of what is going on in other localities, encourage the leader to determine and work for his own motives. In other terms, Aber’s ‘demonstration effect’ contributes to

³⁹ Interview with Erdem Saker, July 29th, 2003 ; Istanbul .

Burns's 'motive' condition through the development of international contacts, which simultaneously improve the financial and personal resources of the leaders.

B. Glocal brokers

On the other hand, as for Mersin, the dissociation of Mr. Ozcan's mandate with international developments has been obviously an important determinant in the city's unsuccessful attempt for introducing new participatory mechanisms. Indeed, although the mayor had personally engaged in establishing participatory mechanisms during his electoral campaign, his intention was not quite based on a personal conviction. According to some of my local interlocutors, his engagement did not represent a sincere ambition since even his electoral programme was prepared by third persons:

"I was personally present in the electoral campaign of Mayor Ozcan. When his electoral program, his electoral brochure was prepared, he was not involved...He did not even know what the city council, LA21 signified. He signed what was proposed to him by others⁴⁰."

From all I have discussed until now, it is not quite difficult to adhere to the assumption that Mr. Ozcan was not actually convinced about the need for establishing new participatory mechanisms. In several of the interviews, it is even argued that his later hostility to the process was because he understood lately what the process would actually bring about. According to this point of view, he appeared willing to introduce new participatory mechanisms only until he became aware that this would oblige him to share his political power and in the 'conspiratorial worldview' that I outlined above, this would mean the reinforcement of his political enemies. Therefore, he has not been actually quite aware of the new global tendency on behalf of the local democracy. The motive stimulated by the international developments is thus only decorative; it enables the mayor to develop a discursive strategy that aims at giving to his mayoralty a democratic, globally-connected and innovative image. In other words, it represents mainly a rhetorical resource for the mayor of Mersin, a resource than can be further used for other ends than a democratic image...

Mr. Ozcan's lack of sincere interest to international context should not be interpreted as an isolationist attitude since he has had quite frequent interactions with the foreign institutions, not mentioning the very frequent touristic visits to abroad. Yet, the nature of his international connections seems to differ significantly from what Mr. Saker sought. Instead of international organisations and bilateral relationships of cooperation, he is more associated to foreign business corporations and international credit organisations. In every urban project he undertook or tried to undertake, there was always a foreign partner involved in the initiative either as a contractor or as a financier. For example, in every occasion he proudly announces that he managed to obtain the cheapest international credit for his project of water refinement plant. But, of course, such a great achievement was hindered by numerous local traitors who furiously criticised the initiative on 'unjustified' grounds. However, as the formers argue, the fact that the credit is allocated with a reasonable interest rate does not necessarily indicate that it is actually adequate for city's financial situation on the long-run⁴¹. In any case, the focus of opponents' argument is in fact the

⁴⁰ Interview with I. B., Mersin, June 26th, 2003.

⁴¹ That is exactly why the majority of the Turkish municipalities have been in a *de facto* bankruptcy since the nineties. The mayors have used inadequate middle or long term credits without considering the future burden of these amounts on the city in perhaps supposing that

nature of the project; they criticise the location of the plant, the system that will be installed and the demographic estimations on which the efficiency projections are founded. However, instead of responding to these very concrete arguments, Ozcan have preferred to repeat how cheap the foreign credit is. In a way, he seemed to justify the end by the means.

The discussions on the water refinement plant project illustrate how the international contacts can contribute to the leadership resources. The resource in the example includes indeed a financial dimension. But it also represents a rhetorical resource that would be very useful in Ozcan's defence for the project. Another example that illustrates the rhetorical capacity of international contacts would be Ozcan's Italian partners that were presumed to undertake three major projects of the city. In December 2003, upon his return from a voyage to Italy, Mr. Ozcan announces proudly that the metropolitan municipality found an Italian partner who accepted to engage in all of the three large-scaled projects of the city, namely, the water refinement plant, the solid waste burning plant and the tramway; the total sum of the envisaged project corresponds approximately to 500 million dollars. However, a local journalist who makes a rapid search on the internet finds out that no such company exists in reality. After publishing an article on his unexpected finding, the municipality corrects the name of the related company in explaining that the mistake was "due to the abundance of English words in the agreement." Yet, the journalist is still far from satisfied with the response of the municipality and thus pursues his investigation on the net. What he finds out with the corrected name is an amateur webpage of a Swiss finance company that arranges short and medium-term financings for borrowers not having ready access to the international public issue market. The company had indeed a contact office in Rome, but as anyone would suppose, it was far from representing an adequate expertise or references for getting involved in an immense undertaking of 500 million dollars (Ayan 2004a, 2004b). As a matter of fact, the Italian partner never arrives to the city and the projects remain on paper.

As the cited examples reveal, the international contacts enable the mayor of Mersin to develop a rhetorical power that is used to justify his policies and projects. The fact that there are foreign actors that are interested and ready to cooperate in such initiatives provide a discursive evidence for the mayor to prove the adequacy of enterprise. Thus, for Ozcan, those who oppose to such efforts could only be mistaken, manipulated or prejudiced since they could not evaluate the situation better than the international –more specifically occidental- agents. In other words, such contacts provide him a very rich resource of political legitimacy.

Consequently, the difference in the nature of international contacts that both of the mayors pursue during their mandates is undeniable. While international scene represents a rich source of inspiration for new policies and practices of Mr. Saker, for Mr. Ozcan it is rather solely a resource of financial credits and business partners if not a purely rhetorical strategy. It would be false to argue that the metropolitan municipality of Bursa does not associate financially with foreign institutions since the legal framework obliges all the Turkish municipalities to seek for foreign credits. However, during the mandate of Mr. Saker Bursa appears to have taken one step forward than this economical globalisation. Personal implication of the mayor in the international organisations, thus in the global exchange of new ideas and practices, had significantly determined the outcome of the undertaken participatory initiatives. Therefore, in addition to his personal characteristics and his political positioning, the international relations that he pursued had enabled Mr. Saker in introducing new participatory mechanisms in Bursa. On the other hand, in Mersin, the establishment of similar institutions turned to be problematic since they are condemned to remain artificial in the local context due to the total indifference of the mayor to the global efforts on the issue.

they would have until then already quit the municipal functions.

4. LEADING BY POLICIES OR POLITICS

Based on the observations and analyses concerning the mayors of Bursa and Mersin, we distinguish two contradictory leadership styles in the Turkish politics. On the one hand, Mr. Saker represents a local leader with a clear political vision based on a collectively determined political programme and concrete objectives. Endowed by a highly significant professional expertise and managerial skills, he manages to develop local policies that cope with the problems and the needs of his city. Moreover, by managing to keep a distance with the party politics, he enjoys a political autonomy that enables him to pursue the undertaking of his projects. In this sense, Saker meets both of the conditions that Burns determines for being able to dispose power: motive and resources. When his political vision and objectives, thus his motives combined with his individual resources in terms of personal (non-negligible experience in the bureaucracy, managerial skills and attitudes) and social (being well-known in the city, international contacts) capital, we observe a transformational leadership in the personality of Mr. Erdem Saker. As we have already repeated for several times, his particular leadership style as well as his innovative services in the city have been acknowledged and appreciated by even those who were not necessarily among the sympathizers of the political tradition that he represented.

Given these features of his leadership style, we can argue that Saker represents an adequate example of the public entrepreneurs in the Turkish context. His political autonomy with regards to the Turkish partisan politics was balanced by his success in mobilising the local community through the participatory politics that he introduced in the city. In this sense, we can note that he achieved an exemplary political enterprise by procuring a general support for his municipal endeavours. Furthermore, these activities represent a very original example of innovative government since they aimed at the transformation of the local context. Therefore, they can also be considered as the evidence of a public entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, the leadership of Mr. Ozcan is founded upon very delicate political accounts. Devoid of a significant professional expertise neither on a technical issue nor on public management, Mr. Ozcan does not manage to propose concrete policies for the city he governs. Instead, his political legitimacy is based on machine politics that consist of electoral mobilisation by the distribution of particularistic privileges or by the identity politics. Thus, his leadership style corresponds perfectly to Burns's transactional leadership. His political power stems indeed from the explicit or implicit transactions that he establishes with various actors and local communities. Be it in the form of clientelist exchanges or identity politics, such transactions enable Ozcan to keep his political power. Even if his policies and initiatives have not been actually appreciated, he has managed to prolong his mandate for another term; a political success that Saker was deprived.

Despite the prevalence of populist or particularistic transactions in his authority, Ozcan can not yet be considered as a simple agent in Fiorina and Shepsle's typology because he does not appear as a totally passive actor who is subjected absolutely to the wants and demands of his supporters. Instead, he manages to manipulate the formulation of the socio-political issues and questions in a way that the popular tendency corresponds exactly to his interests. Hence, by making use of the Kurdish problem, his ethnical identity as well as international contacts, he manages to influence the public opinion to vulgarise his conspiratorial worldview so that the projects are discussed not on terms of socioeconomic or technical adequacy but on the division of city-lovers and local betrayers, municipal elections are determined not by achievements or projects but by a virtual Kurdish menace etc. Consequently, even those who do not appreciate his municipal practices, find themselves supporting him in the new agenda set by the mayor himself.

Therefore, we argue that Ozcan is actually a good example of a local agenda-setter in the Turkish context.

Giving such apparent differences between the mayors of Bursa and Mersin, a theoretical distinction can be proposed to conceptualise the observed dissimilarity in leadership styles. The two mayors discussed along this paper reflect indeed two different perception of local government that we propose to call as *government by policies* and *government by politics*. Government by policies, as the mayor of Bursa demonstrates, is a governmental style in which the local leader appears as a political visionary. Founded upon personal technical experiences and managerial skills and developed by the participation of the municipal bureaucrats and civil societal experts, the mayor manages to propose concrete policies for local development as well as to cope with the city's problems. His political career either depends on the success of the policies pursued or does not exist at all as for Mr. Erdem since the party politics is kept apart from the determination of urban policies.

On the other hand, in the style of government by politics, local government becomes an instrument of the daily politics. The municipality appears as a framework of resources and advantages ready to be used for political ends. The local leader, in this scheme appears as a political entrepreneur who cares mostly for his personal interests or the ones of his political cliental. He proposes, if he does at all, populist undertakings that do not respond actually to the real problems of the city. Nevertheless, by playing on socio-political cleavages and urban conflicts, he manages to maintain his political power.

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