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TITLE: Foreign Policy Leadership Comparison of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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PAGES: 709-718

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/995854>

# MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK VE FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'İN DIŞ POLİTİKADAKİ LİDERLİKLERİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI

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## ÖZET

Makale, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri başkanlarından Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) ile Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kurucusu Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün (1881-1938) dış politikadaki liderliklerini karşılaştırmalı olarak irdelemektedir. Her iki liderin politika ve uygulamalarının ne ölçüde etik ve etkin olduğu değerlendirilmektedir. Roosevelt ve Atatürk ülkelerinde köklü değişiklikler gerçekleştirmişlerdir. Onların dış politika alanındaki karar ve uygulamaları, iç politikadan bağımsız olmamıştır. Özellikle Türk dış politikasındaki gelişmeler, Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Devrim sürecine değinilmeden anlaşılamaz. Bu nedenledir ki makale, iç politika unsurlarına da yer vermektedir.

Makalede Atatürk ve Roosevelt'in dönüşümcü liderlik (transformational leadership) nitelikleri ortaya konmaktadır. Çalışmanın esas amacı her iki liderin dış politikadaki karar ve uygulamalarının ne ölçüde etkin olduğu ve sonuca ulaşırken ne derece etik ilkelere bağlı kaldıkları hususlarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu bağlamda, iki devlet adamının liderlik özellikleri Amaç, Araç ve Sonuçları temelinde irdelenmektedir.

Her iki lider de ülkelerinde büyük değişim yaratan dönüşümcü (transformational) liderler olarak tarihteki yerlerini almışlardır. ABD dış politikasında köklü değişiklikler yapmasına rağmen Roosevelt'in özellikle toplumu ikna etme noktasında ilk hamleyi yapmada bazı zafiyetleri olduğu görülmektedir. Ülkenin dış politikasını belirli prensipler üzerinde kuran Atatürk, etkin ve sonuca ulaşan karar ve uygulamalarında ahlaki unsurları göz ardı etmeyen tarihteki sayılı liderlerden biri olmuştur.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Liderlik, Dış Politika, Etik.

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## FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP COMPARISON OF MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATÜRK AND FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT

### ABSTRACT

This paper compares and contrasts the effectiveness and ethics of the foreign policy leadership of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882-1945) and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938). The two men had transformed their countries in a myriad of areas. The change they brought for their nations could not be analyzed completely without studying their foreign policies. While analyzing foreign policies, the paper makes references to the domestic agenda as well. In particular the transformation in Turkish foreign policy could only be comprehended with the national struggle and the Revolution.

The paper attempts to figure out the transformational leadership of both statesmen. It explores the effectiveness of their foreign policies through an ethical dimension. Roosevelt and Atatürk's decisions and the implementation of these decisions are analyzed based on Joseph Nye's framework of Objectives/Means/Outcomes (Nye 2006: 164).

Both leaders emerge as transformational leaders who created great change in their countries. Even though Roosevelt eventually transformed the United States foreign policy, there have been shortcomings in the effectiveness and ethics of his initiative taking. Atatürk, whose foreign policy was bound to strict principles, is probably one of those few leaders in history who managed to pursue effective policies without leaving ethics aside.

*Key Words:* Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Leadership, Foreign Policy, Ethics.

### Introduction

According to James MacGregor Burns, an authority in leadership studies, transformational leadership is based on the concept of metamorphosis (Burns 2003: 26). Metamorphosis is a process during which transformational leaders lift their followers into better selves, to higher levels of motivation and morality.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had both transformed their people. They brought change in a myriad of areas. Atatürk en-

ded an Empire of more than six centuries old and established a democratic, independent and secular nation state out of it. He was more than a political leader. He was a war hero, a revolutionary fighting for a secular country with female participation, a headmaster who replaced the Arabic script with Latin alphabet besides other things. Roosevelt, whereas, had been the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States. He was an elected politician in an already established system. Being aware of the shortcomings of the comparison of these two great men, the paper attempts to analyze their leadership skills and actions based on their respective time, condition and context.

The leaders are analyzed based on Joseph Nye's framework of Objectives/Mean/Outcomes. Within this framework, the effectiveness and ethics of leadership is evaluated in relation to goals set, means used, and consequences emerged.

### **Objectives/Ends**

Both Roosevelt and Atatürk had transformational objectives in their domestic agenda. Roosevelt was determined to rescue the nation from Great Depression with his broad program of New Deal. Against the interests of the WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant) establishment, he created a radical change in the socio-economic structure of the country in favor of millions of Americans. He was even labeled as a "traitor to his class" (Burns & Dunn 2001: 567). He, on the other hand, did not hold a clear transformational objective in foreign policy. He had an aspiration of linking Wilsonian idealism with realism but he couldn't pronounce it as an objective until 1941.

Atatürk, from the outset had held the objective of a metamorphosis of creating an independent, modern and secular Turkey out of the "sick man of Europe", the out-dated Ottoman Empire. He mobilized the Turks with the ultimate goal of reaching that sense of collectivity, a national identity "which in turn brought stronger feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy" (Burns 2003: 25). Higher values of liberty, independence and equality were at the core of this national metamorphosis. Atatürk's objective in foreign policy during the Independence War was to achieve the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli), which stood for the country's irreducible territory. He had set his objective of transforming the country through solid plans that were designed years ago. According to one of his best friend Ali Fuat Cebesoy's

memoirs, Mustafa Kemal had planned and written down the text of the National Pact far before taking action (Cebesoy 1966: 135). After the war, the priority was to secure the territorial integrity of the country based on the motto: "Peace at home, peace in the world".

### **Means**

Roosevelt and Atatürk exercised leadership through the combination of soft power and hard power. Both were strong intellects that could take the control in complex issues; they were not solely dependent on their aides. Yet, Roosevelt has been criticized for messy organizational methods with his "practice of playing aides off against another" (Greenstein 2004: 22). He had great political skills of bullying, buying and bargaining, which made him win four presidential and two gubernatorial elections. Although he was blamed for appeasement of Stalin, his earlier "international maneuvers" (Greenstein 2004: 23) gave a strong hand for the United States after 1941.

Both leaders had high inspirational skills but Roosevelt had shortcomings in "combin(ing) inspiration with feasibility" (Nye 2006: 174). Although Roosevelt was a great public communicator and he created a strong tie with Americans through his radio talks, known as fireside chats, he could not persuade them for an American involvement in Europe before 1941. He had a vision in foreign policy of interventionism but his ideals were exceeding his capabilities of getting this vision across the people.

Atatürk faced a similar challenge. Atatürk's vision was attractive to his followers during the Independence War but during the Revolution, risk outweighed realism since the transformation process disappointed some groups. Yet, he succeeded to combine inspiration with feasibility and overcame the reactions with a combination of communication skills and transactional skills. With his effective rhetoric and charisma, he made use of the pulpit all over the country and in the Parliament whenever a conflict arose. His political skills helped him getting allies from the opposition including some feudal landowners and Kurdish leaders. The young Republic's cautious foreign policy was based on a delicate balance thanks to his transactional skills.

Both men had a high level of contextual intelligence. Despite the fact that Roosevelt was not successful in convincing Americans for involvement in Europe's conflicts, already in 1938 at Munich he realized Hitler's ambitions. His following international maneuvers of using the rhetoric of

democracy to align with European allies and creating the lend-lease<sup>1</sup> helped him to adapt to the crises after Pearl Harbor. The "Arsenal of Democracy" discourse in which he connected his four-freedom<sup>2</sup> goals with the build-up of American arms production is an exceptional combination of hard and soft power.

Atatürk's contextual intelligence let him to adapt to complex flow of events especially after the Independence War when dealing with European powers. During the arduous negotiations of the Treaty of Lausanne, even though İsmet Paşa headed the Turkish delegation, it was Atatürk who shaped the flow of negotiations, and eventually achieved to get an agreement based on Turkish theses. With the words of Andrew Mango "the Treaty of Lausanne was the outcome of Mustafa Kemal's leadership of the forces of Turkish nationalism" (Mango 1999: 388). As an intellectual military officer during the war he used more hard power than soft and the other way around during the Revolution. He always made use of a combination, which indicates his contextual intelligence.

His foresight was a strong element of his intelligence. He had a clear view of events beforehand which brought him success on the war field during the Independence War. This vision also led him to foresee international events. Back in the 1930s he mentioned the need of a "Balkans Union" which he claimed would eventually "lead to a European Union" (Bektan 2004: 147). He was one of the first leaders to pronounce the idea of a "European Union" in the midst of the growing conflicts of the 1930s in the European continent.

Roosevelt had shortcomings in the ethics of his means. In several instances he lied as a last resort. Failing to convince the Americans for involvement in Europe, in September 1941 he falsely announced that a German U-boat fired first upon an American destroyer, Greer. The lie was to justify the "shoot on sight" policy, which would be an initial step for war in the Atlantic. Unfortunately, the Greer case "created a precedent for manipula-

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<sup>1</sup> Lend Lease Act of 1941 empowered the President to sell, lend and lease any defense article to allied countries in return for use of military bases. It was an intelligent step away from American non-interventionism by giving war supplies such as planes, tanks, guns, artillery, and ammunition to the British without them really paying for it.

<sup>2</sup> Roosevelt proposed four fundamental freedoms that should be enjoyed by all human beings: Freedom of speech and expression; Freedom of religion; Freedom from want and Freedom from fear.

tion of public opinion which would be repeated by later Presidents". (Wills 1994: 289) His use of FBI on covert actions raised doubts on his legitimacy, which also set a precedent for his successors. Yet, his most significant weakness was that he lacked courage; what Hemingway calls "grace under pressure" (Kennedy 2003: 1). In a political environment dominated with isolationists, anti-Semites and anti-Soviets he could not openly pursue his agenda on American involvement in foreign policy. It might be because he wanted to avoid any setbacks with his domestic program or he had plans for a third term. In any case, he lacked the balance of courage and prudence, which is one of the core features of a leader.

Atatürk had fought against the corrupt and privileged Ottoman state for the rights of the people. He sought legitimacy for every action he took. At the initial phase of the Independence War he gathered a National Parliament with representatives from all over the country against the Ottoman Sultan siding with the invaders. He refused proposals that arose in difficult times such as dissolving the Parliament and becoming the life-time Caliphate or President (Bayar, 1999: 29). However, he has been accused of using harsh methods against minorities during the Revolution. As a matter of fact, the nation-state building process is not a smooth one. Atatürk had to draw cultural boundaries for the Turkish identity at a time when all the other ethnic groups under the Ottoman Empire were fighting for their liberation. Yet, he pursued a political definition of identity. He managed to get the support of Kurds in the Independence War. He was harsh against those feudal landowners and religious sheikhs who were organizing revolts against the new regime with the fear of losing their former privileges. Yet again, even those who had harshly criticized his methods accepted the fact that his fight had been to create a secure and prosperous homeland for Turks.<sup>3</sup>

He avoided humiliation of other nations even at war times.<sup>4</sup> His words for the Anzacs who fought in Gallipoli indicate his universalism: "You the

<sup>3</sup> Harold Armstrong's "Grey Wolf: An Intimate Study of a Dictator" is one of those studies that ruthlessly criticize Atatürk. Yet, the author does not discount the leadership qualities of Atatürk (Yılmaz, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> A well-known story demonstrates how he avoided humiliation of other nations: On the day İzmir was captured back from Greeks, a great crowd welcomed Atatürk at the gate of the Governor's office. Entering into the building he saw a Greek flag spread like a carpet on the floor. He asked the reason why the flag was there. People said King Constantine when entering into the same building had walked on the Turkish flag. Atatürk refused to walk on it and ordered its removal. "That is the symbol," he protested, "of a country's independence". Kinross, 1964, p.367.

mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well" (Çağatay 1983: 188). He was one of the leaders of his ages respected by leaders all over the world. In 1934, the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>5</sup>

### **Consequences/Outcomes**

The third dimension of leadership is the effectiveness and ethics of the outcomes of the leader's objectives. Roosevelt had put his stamp on the political, institutional and social transformation of the country. He made use of the war and transformed the American foreign policy into a more interventionist character accompanied with global institutions that would be effective for the rest of the century. Fortunately, the flow of the events had helped him. He might not have reached the same outcomes, hadn't the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and hadn't Hitler declared war on the United States.

Atatürk was more determined. Under great internal and external pressure he led the Turks to achieve self-efficacy by transforming them from a religious community to a nation. Gökberk refers to the reforms of Atatürk as the creator of a new human being (Gökberk 1986: 303). The name granted to him by the nation reflects the success of the transformation; "Atatürk": the father of Turks. His foreign policy based on the motto of "Peace at home, peace in the world" proved to be a success. Turkey succeeded to observe Atatürk's legacy in crossroads of instability and risk including the Second World War reaching Greece, the nearby communist threat of the Cold War, the succeeding clashes in Balkans and the ongoing wars and conflicts in Middle East.

Roosevelt's means might have not been very ethical or he might have been fortunate, but the consequences served both the Americans and other nations. Through his foreign policy, United States, as the "Arsenal of Democracy", once again saved Europe. His legacy has been a new world order with growing role of international institutions. Atatürk's both foreign policy and public policy were bound to strict principles. As the triumphant of the Independence War over European powers he could have been dist-

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<sup>5</sup> The nomination database of the Nobel Peace Prize: <http://nobelprize.org/nomination/peace/nomination.php?action=show&showid=2046>. Retrieved on December 18, 2007.



racted with regaining the lost provinces of the Empire in Balkans and Middle East. But he stayed faithful to the declared principles of the National Pact. After the proclamation of the Republic, he focused on successive reforms to empower the nation through scientific and educational progress based on the philosophy of enlightenment. Both Roosevelt and Atatürk were great educators of their followers. Atatürk was the headmaster of the country who replaced Arabic scripts with Latin alphabet. His philosophy was based on the dictum "science is the only true guide in life" (ASD II, 1952: 197). He nominated two groups as his successors: teachers and the youth.

An acid test of outcome "is the lasting effect on followers of the inspiration or vision that leaders expound" (Nye 2006: 165). Americans remember Roosevelt as the President who led the nation in two great sufferings of the 20th century: Great Depression and Second World War. He has been ranked as the greatest president of the century.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, the inspiration of Atatürk is still alive for millions of Turks. He became more than a political figure; he is the father/hero/headmaster for millions. Westerners generally criticize the Turkish state of creating a personality cult of Atatürk. However, part of this attachment comes from the people. Volkan and Itzkowitz explain the psychological process experienced by the Turkish nation which created the "immortal Atatürk." (Volkan & Itzkowitz 1986: 344) His portrait is in the house of millions of Turks. Every year, on the anniversary of the day and time of his death (November 10, 9:05 am) life literally stops and people observe a minute of silence in remembrance of his memory. In 2007, only on the November of 10th, 550.000 people visited his mausoleum in Ankara.<sup>7</sup>

### Conclusion

After all, "leadership is about disappointing your people at a rate that they can absorb" (Linsky, 2007). It is so, because the change leadership brings "asks (people) to take a loss, experience uncertainty and even express disloyalty to people and cultures" (Heifetz & Linsky 2002: 30). Roosevelt had been an effective leader at the times when he relentlessly pur-

<sup>6</sup> C-SPAN Survey of Presidential Leadership, March-December 1999. <http://www.american-presidents.org/survey/historians/performance.asp>. Retrieved on December 20, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Official web site of Anitkabir, Atatürk's mausoleum. [http://www.tsk.mil.tr/anitkabir/guncel/faaliyetler/gunluk\\_ziyaretcisi/2007/kasim2007.html](http://www.tsk.mil.tr/anitkabir/guncel/faaliyetler/gunluk_ziyaretcisi/2007/kasim2007.html). Retrieved on December 17, 2007.

sued the "New Deal" policies against the interests of the establishment. However, even though eventually he transformed the United States foreign policy, there have been shortcomings in the effectiveness and ethics of his initiative taking, especially in convincing the public for an American involvement in Europe before the Pearl Harbor attack. Atatürk, on the other hand, is probably one of those few leaders in history who fits in this definition. Ending an Empire of more than six centuries old with a deeply rooted political culture and social reality, he disappointed many who had been shaken by the pace of change. But his effectiveness and ethics gave him the courage to open a new era for Turks. That was probably what Hemingway had meant with "grace under pressure".

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