

**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF APPOINTMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO THEIR  
PRIVATE AND SOCIAL LIFE**

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**Abstract.** The issue of working hours of TRNC Members of Parliament has become a constant matter in question in both written and visual media. The main task of the Members of Parliament is the legislation. Misconception might arise as it is considered that the Members of Parliament should be present two days a week in the general assembly only without considering the process they prepare for and spend time in committees. Contrary to common belief, the Members of Parliament have to spare long time for both committees and general assembly agenda and attend to the Parliament in related times. The aim of this article is to investigate the impact of the selection of 2014-2018 period Members of the Republican Assembly of TRNC as Members of Parliament to their private and family life. In order to determine the impact of the assignment of the Members of Parliament as of the year 2014 to their private and social life as well, a semi-structured interview form which was designed by the researchers was used and face-to-face interviews were made. The data analysis was performed through content analysis. Upon examining the findings, it was concluded that the Members of Parliament cannot allocate enough time for themselves and their families, cannot find time to take part in social activities, and this position aggravates their life.

The Members of Parliament face a number of problems in their family life due to the intensive work, furthermore, both their own life and their families' life is influenced negatively in this way. The fact that they cannot spare enough time for themselves and their children causes deterioration in family interaction and communication. Furthermore, they cannot sustain their relationship with their friends in social in a healthy way due to their busy schedule.

**Keywords:** Republican parliament, working hours of the members of parliament, family structure, social environment

**Introduction:** The Republican Parliament carries out studies within the framework of the Constitutional Law, related Legislation and Regulations regarding this bylaw. The legislative session is the period between two deputyship general elections, and it is valid for 5 years as long as it is not extended pursuant to the Constitutional Law or the elections are not renewed. According to TRNC Constitutional Law, legislative years are the period beginning at the first working day of October every year and ending at the first working day of October the next year. The Members of Parliament participate in the committees other days in case that they take charge in the general assembly two days a week (Monday and Tuesday) during that period. Article 137 of TRNC bylaw projects following the attendance to the General Assembly and Committee meetings, and keeping such attendance records in the Attendance Schedule. Any Member of Parliament who does not attend to the arranged meetings, either permitted or not, is deemed to be absent in such meetings or session and recorded as "absent without excuse or without permission". The Member of Parliament who declares an article to the President of the Assembly with a justified excuse is recorded to the Attendance Schedule as "permitted" in the session or meeting. The Presidency inscribes the Member of Parliament and Ministers as "officers" to the attendance schedule in the mentioned session or meeting for the Minister in the foreign mission with the Cabinet Decree and Member of Parliament in the foreign mission with the General Assembly and Presidency Council Decree on behalf of the Council.

The issue of working hours of TRNC Members of Parliament has become a constant matter in question in both written and visual media. The main task of the Members of Parliament is the legislation. Misconception might arise when it

is considered that the Members of Parliament should be present two days a week in the general assembly only without considering the process they prepare for and spend time in committees. Contrary to common belief, the Members of Parliament have to spare long time for both committees and general assembly agenda and attend to the Parliament in related times. The average daily time that Members of Parliament spend in the general assembly between the dates 2016-2017 is 3 hours. The Members of Parliament in the Economy, Finance, Budget and Plan Committee within the legislation year between the same periods worked for an average of 3 hours per day, while the Political Affairs Foreign Relations Committee worked for 2 hours and the Petition and Ombudsman Committee worked for 2.30 on average. They do not participate in the committees due to their busy schedule with regard to the ministry they administer. It can be pronounced that the Members of Parliament cannot allocate enough time to their families, provided that the periods they spend in civil society organizations and public activities are considered. It can be said that they face problems in allocating time for themselves as well as their families due to their intensive schedule.

The parliament has many functions in terms of family structure such as sexuality, reproduction, love and to be loved, protection, sheltering, being dependent-independent, self-realization, belonging, care and education of children, and transferring the properties to the next generations as well (Özgülven, 2014). It is an organization where particularly children gain life experiences, they develop feeling of confidence, they learn how to socialize, and they develop personality and characteristic features (Ertürk Kara, 2017).

The families in which children's economic and physical needs are met, positive emotional relationships are experienced with spouses and children, and there is a coherent solidarity are defined as healthy families. The definition of a healthy and good family may vary based on the time and social environment. What is important is that the family could adapt to both internal and external conditions (Özyürek, Tezel Şahin, 2017).

People may be under a busy schedule by virtue of the position they have or as a matter of their professions. People may neglect their spouses and if any, children involuntarily and unwittingly due to the busy schedule. The important point here is to be able to allocate quality time for both themselves and their families in this busy process. The reason is that the interaction and communication of the related person with his/her family may be interrupted due to the busy schedule. It is very important that the time spent with the family should be used actively and in a quality manner in order to block such loss. Protecting the family is the primary task against negative results that might arise from outer factors. Besides this, people should allocate time for themselves for their own health and happiness, and they should not be hindered from the social relations (Şendil & Kızıldağ, 2005).

Social environment is the indispensable interaction network of life. There is the possibility of discussing on mutual solidarity, sharing, confidence, political and actual issues in such an interaction. Individuals get relaxed and become happy, finding a chance to express themselves by means of social relationships. It is possible to assert that a set of knowledge can be obtained within the framework of the social relationships in terms of political behaviours. The impact of social relations with friends to political behaviours, working hours in that occupation, political views of friends and their endeavours for directing others for political preferences are deemed to be important factors. Besides that, the related person should maintain social relations and should be accepted by the community for mental and physical health even after reaching that official position, that is, after being elected as a Member of Parliament (Doğan, 2014).

#### **Aim of the Research**

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of the deputyship to the private and social life of 2014-2018 period Members of Parliament of TRNC Republican Council after they are elected.

#### **Method:**

The research design, study group of the study, data collection tools, period of the research and methodological information regarding the analysis of the data collected are included in this section.

#### **Research Model**

Case study is used in this research among qualitative research designs. Case study and the factors regarding a situation (environment, individuals, cases, periods, etc.) are investigated through an integrative approach, and this is an approach focusing on how they influence the related situation and how they are influenced by it (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2013).

The method is believed to be appropriate to use it due to some reasons such as interview, numerical analysis, namely digitizing, increasing the reliability of the research, reducing bias, allowing comparison between themes and categories emerged. For this reason, the qualitative data is provided in tables being degraded to percentages. Furthermore, views of the participants are tried to be given in every aspect.

#### **Study Group**

The study group of this research consists of 50 Members of Parliament serving for the Parliament of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 50 Members of Parliament serving for Republican Parliament.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

Semi-structured interview form which was designed by the researchers was used in this research to investigate the effect of the deputyship to the private and social life of 2014-2018 period Members of Parliament of TRNC Republican Council after they are elected.

### Data Collection

The interviews made were completed as taking some notes in order that the participants could overcome their fear of being deciphered and feel comfortable. Thus, the individuals participating in the study were directed to answer reliably. Besides that, names and surnames of the participants were concealed and their rights of privacy were respected.

### Data Analysis

The data was analysed through content analysis in this study. While making content analysis, firstly the interviews were transcribed and prepared in order to be analysed by the researcher.

### Findings and Interpretations:

The analysis of sub problems that are expected to be analysed accordingly with the research problem is included in this section. Analyses of these problems are based on the findings that are obtained as a result of the questions asked to the Members of Parliament.

**Table 1.** Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Their Spouses

Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Their Spouses Partners	f
Allocating very short time	
Allocating no time	13
Allocating enough time	11
Having no spouse/partner	1
Total	50

As it can be seen in Table 1, 50 answers were taken from the Members of Parliament for the question “Do you think that you allocate enough time for your spouses?”. Out of the replies of the Members of Parliament were 11 “allocating enough time”, 13 “allocating no time”, and 25 “allocating very short time”. One of the Members of Parliament did not reply to the question having no spouse/partner.

**Table 2.** Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Their Children

Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Their Children	f
Allocating no time	22
Allocating enough time	19
Having no children	4
Allocating very short time	3
No difference	2
Total	50

As it can be seen in Table 2, 50 answers were taken from the Members of Parliament for the question “Do you think that you allocate enough time for your children?”. Out of the replies of the Members of Parliament were 22 “allocating no time”, 19 “allocating enough time”, 3 “allocating very short time” and 2 “no difference”. 4 of the Members of Parliament did not reply to the question having no children.

**Table 3.** Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Themselves

Time Allocation of TRNC Republican Parliament Members for Themselves	f
Allocating no time	23
Allocating very short time	19
Allocating enough time	8
Total	50

As it can be seen in Table 3, 50 answers were taken from the Members of Parliament for the question “Do you allocate special time for yourself?”. Out of the replies of the Members of Parliament were 23 “allocating no time”, 19 “allocating very short time”, and 8 “allocating enough time”.

**Table 4.** State of TRNC Republican Council Membersin terms of Sustaining Primary Occupations

State of TRNC Republican Council Membersin terms of Sustaining Primary Occupations	f
Not being able to sustain their occupation	32
Being able to sustain their occupation partly	14
Being able to sustain their occupation	4
Total	50

As it can be seen in Table 4, 50 answers were taken from the Members of Parliament for the question “Could you sustain your main occupation after being elected as a Member of Parliament?”. Out of the replies of the Members of Parliament participating in the research were 32 “not being able to sustain their occupation”, 14 “being able to sustain their occupation partly”, and 4 “being able to sustain their occupation”.

**Table 5.** Views of TRNC Republican Council Membersregarding the Advantages of the Deputyship Position

Views of TRNC Republican Council Membersregarding the Advantages of the Deputyship Position	f
Challenge of life	42
Having no difference	8
Total	50

As it can be seen in Table 5, 50 answers were taken from the Members of Parliament for the question “Did you benefit from the facilities of being elected as a Member of Parliament?”. Out of the replies of the Members of Parliament were 42 “challenge of life”, and 8 “having no difference”.

The analyses of the questions posed to the Members of Parliament in the above tables are given as frequency value. Detailed replies to some questions that were asked to the Members of Parliament are given below.

The detailed replies to the question “how the attitudes of your social circle changed after being elected as a Member of Parliament” are provided as follows:

*“No change occured regarding my human relations either before or after being elected as a Member of Parliament. That is, this new position did not change my personality or character at all, and of course no one around me changed his/her behaviours towards me at all.” (M1)*

*“Nothing changed in my social circle. They only were proud of me, yet some people who I am not very close with began to call me “sir” but I corrected them anyway.” (M3)*

*“I was a teacher before I became a Member of Parliament and my profession used to be esteemed remarkably in 1980s. That is why that respect remained the same when I became a Member of Parliament. It neither decreased nor went down.” (M2)*

*“Behaviours of some people towards me changed after I became a Member of Parliament. Some people who I was not very close with before or who did not like me (laughs) started to call either for business or for a promotion. Of course, this proves that people are selfish.” (M5)*

The detailed replies to the question “how the stress arising from this position influences your family and private life” are given as follows:

*“Deputyship is very important responsibility. You may break some people’s heart while you are making others happy. So, this affects me psychologically. I find it difficult when people have more expectations from us.” (M3)*

*“I was a little negligent towards my family. You can work within the day in any ordinary job, but there is no difference between day and night for the Members of Parliament. That is why I had to leave my family alone so many nights. Consequently, I sometimes had problems with my family in this regard.*

*“I try to overshadow my family life by politics as far as possible. As a woman, it is not valid for all women but I try to be at home at nights. I give my priority to stay with my family and children at nights. Family structure is very important; our primary task is to bring up our children for the future so that we can make quality investments for the future. I do politics through my studies within the parliament, my speech in the seat, my studies in the committee and the contacts I make during the day.” (M1)*

The detailed replies to the question “if you were doing this profession in another country, how this would influence your private and family life” are given as follows:

*“Our family life would not be affected much in my opinion, if we were doing it in a big country. Because it would be impossible to walk about from a village to another, from a district to another. We could spend much time at home.” (M2)*

*“Substantially, it would be pleasant to do politics. The European Parliament is boring to me. If we could change the culture here, that is, if we can focus more social issues than individualism it will become much more amusing. However, having advisors would ease our job. Yet, anyone who wants can allocate time for themselves and their families. (M3)*

*“This position would be different in another country, we need to be intimate as a matter of our culture; yet, your policy is mentioned in another country and you have assistants. You have more chance to spare time for your private life. We have to visit regions and homes especially during election process.” (M5)*

#### **Discussion, Results and Suggestions:**

The results obtained from the research are given as follows:

It was reached to quite good results upon the evaluation of the views of Republican Council Members regarding the effect experienced after they take up their position to their private and social life. Accordingly, it can be seen that the Republican Council Members could allocate very short time for their spouses in their private and social life among their intensive works after a certain time upon being elected. Altındal (2007) defines the politics in his research as a social phenomenon became active within time different processes in human life.

Based on another finding obtained from the research, the Republican Council Members stressed their opinions that the shares are insufficient regarding the time they allocate for their children and themselves after a certain time upon being assigned to the deputyship position. At the same time, most of the Members of Parliament serving in this position stated views on the negative aspects rather than positive ones. Giray and Ergin (2006) stated that the works of individuals influence their life in parallel with the results of the research. Besides this, that the Members of Parliament spend most of their time in the council shows they have problems in fulfilling their parental roles.

It was concluded from the research that the Republican Council Members stated their views in the direction that they cannot spare time for themselves. It can be seen that their long stay in the council as a result of their position restrains them from being socialized. They also pointed out that they have problems with their families sometimes. Çakıcı, Özkan and Akyüz (2013) indicated that working long hours and extreme work load would have negative results and consequently affect negatively individuals and their relations with their families and friends as well. Furthermore, Özdevecioğlu and Doruk (2009) stressed that intensive work would affect the life of individuals and their families as well and decrease their happiness due to the intensive workload in their position.

Also, it was concluded from the research that most of the Republican Council Members stated that they have difficulties in sustaining their main occupations after being elected. It is also important that they take action regarding what to do about the problems that the community faces listening to them besides spending time in the council in order to fulfil their tasks arising from their position. It can be seen that they have difficulties in sustaining their main occupations due to conducting studies for contributing to their development and advance which will maintain the prosperity of the society as well.

The research includes the views of the Republican Council Members that being a member of parliament makes their life difficult and does not bring advantages to them. They stressed that they have problems in allocating time for themselves and their families especially. They indicated that they have difficulties in socializing with their friends. The research of Yılmaz (2009) pointed out that the time allocated for business life is effective in socializing process. They expressed that they experience psychologic effects of this situation while pointing out that they have difficulties in sustaining their private life as most of their daily life is spent on political issues and the related activities. It was concluded from the research that family relations of the Members of Parliament is damaged and they feel stressed too.

Based on the conclusions from the research, the suggestions are provided below:

- After the Members of Parliament are assigned, they have to make a balance between their tasks and family relations. A Member of Parliament should create time surely so as to make this balance. Flexible working system to be developed in the council and social activity plans can be suggested to them.
- The Members of Parliament should make the balance of their duties in the council after being elected. Moreover, they need to differentiate between their works nested with their own works but different from the ones belonging to the council.
- The Members of Parliament can get social support in terms of the stress and problems they experience due to not being able to allocate enough time for themselves because of the responsibilities regarding their positions.
- They can get help from support programs that may ensure the coherence between their family life and business life.
- The Members of Parliament should not concentrate on answering to and fulfilling everyone’s need as a perfectionist, but they need to think about their own mental health and family life health.

It can be seen that the life Members of Parliament who spend their most of their time in politics is limited in this situation and affects the tranquillity of family life. In this regard, it can be recommended to them to act flexibly and find solution that will make a balance between their own occupations and sustaining their position after being elected.

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