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IDEOLOGY OR ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM:  
DETERMINANTS OF PARTY CHOICE IN TURKEY FOR THE  
JULY 2007 ELECTIONS

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*Abstract*

The July 2007 general elections took place in an atmosphere of polarization around debates concerning the changing nature of the Turkish political regime. The election victory for the incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP) seemed to depend on two competing sources of influence upon voters in their choice for political parties. One was primarily long-term ideological orientations built on left-right self-placement, religiosity, and conservatism. The other was relatively short-term evaluations of government performance, especially on the economic front. This essay evaluates these two branches of influence upon voters' choice, using survey data collected before and after the July election.

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After a long and polarizing debate over the candidates, procedures, and implications of the election for the president of the Republican regime—which was established in 1923 upon strictly secularist principles—the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, TBMM), controlled by the ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), failed, in May 2007, to elect the eleventh president of the Republic. At the time, this peak of tensions could have been seen as a catastrophe that would end the momentous tenure of the AKP. The AKP had been in power since the general elections in 2002, when it received about 34 percent of the popular vote, placing it in a position to control just a few seats less than a two-thirds majority of the TBMM.<sup>1</sup> A few weeks before the election in mid-April 2007, the notoriously sensitive and interventionist military had become part of the debate when a tactless and unsigned decree criticizing the government for its allegedly Islamist stand on critical issues appeared on its official website. Almost contemporaneously, large protests were held in all major cities, and the legal basis for the presidential election was being challenged by the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), in the Constitutional Court. Facing increasing pressure from all sides, the AKP was forced to call for early elections about three and a half months earlier than originally scheduled.<sup>2</sup>

The resulting election seems to have ended most of the political uncertainties and debates concerning the political potency of the AKP. Given the strong commitment of the AKP to European Union (EU) membership for Turkey, the election also signified a renewed vote of confidence in membership negotiations with the EU. Despite incompatibilities with the ideational bases of the AKP, the EU ideals and more concrete policy devotions for further democratization in the country seemed to have found a rejuvenated commitment at the highest executive level.

The 2007 elections also mark a turning point in the long-lasting Kurdish conflict. Both the militarized secessionist movement in the east and southeast provinces as well as the ten percent threshold for parliamentary representation have over the last two decades played an

impeding role for representation of the “Kurdish identity” in Turkish politics. Although citizens of Kurdish origin can freely engage in politics, public service, business, and other walks of life in the country, any assumption of a distinct ethnic identity in the public realm and demands for its official recognition has been effectively curtailed within the Turkish polity. In the past the Kurdish political leadership, under the strong influence of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has a record of targeting civilian targets, chose to remain on the sidelines by running on a nationwide platform that effectively kept them out of the TBMM, for their vote share was nowhere near the ten percent threshold. In 2007 however, the Kurdish political leadership chose to run their candidates as independents, thus bypassing the threshold requirement. They won 20 seats as independents and therefore were able to form a parliamentary group in the TBMM.

Equally significant in this development is the fact that in the east and southeastern provinces where citizens of Kurdish origin constitute a dominant group, the AKP remained very competitive, effectively receiving more votes than the independent candidates supported by the ethnic Kurdish Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP).<sup>3</sup> Concurrently, the nationalists that were pushed below the ten percent threshold and thus out of the TBMM in the 2002 elections were also back above the threshold in 2007, with about 14 percent of the vote. The main opposition in the aftermath of the 2002 elections, the CHP, gained slightly more than its 2002 share to reach about 21 percent of the vote and maintain its main opposition role. However, given the high tensions before the elections, which seemed to favor the opposition, the CHP’s performance in the general election was well below expectations.

The second general election victory for the AKP is significant since it seems to depend on two competing sources of influence upon voters in their choice for political parties. One is primarily long-term ideological orientations built on left-right self-placement, religiosity, and conservatism. The other is relatively short-term evaluations of government performance, especially on the economic front. Below, these two branches of influence upon voters’ choice are evaluated, using survey data collected before and after the July 2007 elections.

## I. IDEOLOGY VERSUS ECONOMIC PRAGMATISM?

The two competing hypotheses about the shaping of voter decisions in 2007 are rooted in two major features of Turkish politics in the post-1980 coup period. The first is the relatively recent phenomenon of the collapse of the traditional center-right and its concurrent replacement by the parties of the pro-Islamist electoral tradition that forms the intellectual and organizational backbone of the AKP. This collapse is strongly linked to continual failure on the economic front by the governments under the control of the center-right parties. The second is a relatively much longer-term development of a dual nature in Turkish society, setting the “peripheral” forces of the rural and relatively more religious, conservative masses against the “center” bureaucracy and its supporters among relatively less religious and socioeconomically better off segments of Turkish society. Serif Mardin’s center-periphery framework is a subtle and long-term sociohistorical depiction of Turkish society.<sup>4</sup> During the Ottoman period, the center controlled the imperial house and its various coalitions. Its essential political nature remained unchanged during the Republican period, especially with regard to the various ways in which it related to the periphery and dominated the political scene.<sup>5</sup>

The “center” is culturally more self-confident and effectively controls the state and its political apparatus. The primary social groups comprising the modern-day reflections of the “center” are the quasi-autonomous bureaucracy, especially of the security circles; various layers of mostly state-dependent businesses; and the various branches of the intellectual community and academia.

The central elites shaped the social and economic reforms in the early decades of the Republic, almost in negligence of the opposition by the peripheral forces. The periphery’s rise began with free elections in 1950. Competitive party politics irrevocably gave incentives to the political elites aspiring to appeal for the support of the periphery, for provision of primarily their pragmatic economic demands in the early decades within clientelistic networks. However, more subtle cultural and ideological demands were also heard and given priority in the policy agenda. Such demands eventually were responsible in shaping the rising electoral appeal of Islamist movements with a political agenda. After more than three

decades of electoral maneuvering, the pro-Islamist tradition managed to exploit the failure of the center-right-wing to raise its electoral support to winning positions in the mid-1990s. In 1995, the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) became the first party with a pro-Islamist background to capture the largest share of popular vote. However, their coming to power as a coalition with the True Path Party (Do ru Yol Partisi, DYP) resulted in rising tensions with the centrist elites and especially the military. The eventual outcome was the so-called February 28 process, which marked a continual oversight by the military over the civilian government policies that were somehow linked to the secularist principles of the Republic. The February 28, 1997 meeting of the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, MGK) marked the beginning of the so-called “process,” which witnessed the issuance of a list of demands by the military members of the MGK from the civilian government. As a consequence of this very meeting, the RP-led coalition had to leave office and was replaced by a more centrist minority coalition government. However, it would be wrong to assume that the civilians had verbatim followed the military’s orders at any point in this process. Although the military continuously insisted in subsequent MGK meetings and on other occasions that their infamous list of demands issued on February 28 was not being followed by the civilians, their reproach remained mostly unanswered.

Among the most important consequences of this “process” is the reshaping of the pro-Islamist political movement by the younger generation of political entrepreneurs led by the ex-mayor of Istanbul, Tayyip Erdoğan, whose strong pro-Islamist credentials did not impede him from taking on a remarkable reformist political agenda first within the pro-Islamist tradition and then within the larger Turkish polity. First his close political confrere, Abdullah Gül, challenged the old-generation pro-Islamist cadres in the first party congress of the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) in May 2000, when he lost to the old-generation candidate, Recai Kutan, by a small margin. However, this proved only to be a temporary setback. In August 2001, the younger generation’s revolt against the older generation led to the founding of the AKP under Erdoğan’s leadership. Erdoğan and Gül led the party into the early elections of November 2002, in which they gained a dominant majority in the TBMM. The AKP government continued

the EU adjustment reforms with unprecedented determination.

This transformation of the pro-Islamist camp gave rise to a paradoxical development in its secularist counterpart, which grew increasingly skeptical of the democratization reforms entailed in the EU membership project of the past decade. In this new phase of political competition, the “center” remains threatened by the democratic demands from the periphery, with their newly adopted EU standards. This has been manifested most in the debates about the ethnic and cultural rights of citizens of Kurdish origin. The liberalization debates around the ban on women wearing the Islamist turban participating in higher education, however, has not been received favorably by the strictly secularist European Court of Human Rights and remains an issue supported primarily by the AKP. The military as the natural protector of the Kemalist Republic constitutes a crucial element in the alliance that forms the “centrist” coalition. Although this rhetoric of the protector of the Republic takes on an undemocratic tone, it also reflects a natural extension of secularist reactionism during the AKP era.<sup>6</sup>

Historically, the “periphery” remains a frequently uncontrollable and hostile mass of heterogeneous character. The heterogeneity is primarily a consequence of cultural differences within the “peripheral” tradition. The peripheral coalition is most powerful in the rural as well as in the newly urbanized segments of society and includes a rich variety of sectarian groups of primarily Sunni origin, as well as non-Turkic ethnic groups. Historically, these peripheral groups were the source of defiant opposition to the new regime and its modernization reforms in the early decades of the Republic, with ethnic as well as religious bases.

At no stage in Republican electoral history have the “centrist” parties formed the largest and most dominant group. In fact, with the exception of short-lived coalition governments, the representatives of the “centrist” coalition have not been in power over almost six decades. However, the establishment has always felt that centrist and founding principles of the Republic have strong backing, even among the challengers of the “center” in the periphery. Moreover, the elite establishment, with its centrist cultural and ideological convictions, has always remained untouched and unchallenged, even when the peripheral representatives came to power.

Both ideologically as well as functionally, the “center” has developed a privileged status that has been mostly autonomous, untouched, and unchallenged throughout the multiparty era. In other words, the ideological dominance of the center over the “peripheral” political representatives has constantly been reassuring that its core principles would never be challenged while also guaranteeing that its social and economic status remained aloof from rapid developments in Turkish society.

However, Turkish modernization gained increasing momentum during the 1980s, when import substitution-led economic growth strategy was abandoned in 1980, and a market-led economic liberalization program was initiated. As a consequence, the privileged status quo of the “centrist” coalitions has lost their upper hand in Turkish society and politics. This new liberalization program was first governed by the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP), and the pro-Islamist branch of the periphery’s original reaction was at best lukewarm, if not completely rejectionist. However, as the liberalization program became more deeply rooted, the constituent social groups of a new and increasingly more conservative middle class began to search for a new political establishment that could best respond to their needs and demands. The parties following the ANAP and those with older peripheral roots simply failed to meet this challenge and to respond to mass priorities. As their failure became more and more apparent in consecutive elections, the electorate first remained fragmented and highly volatile. Following two terms of single-party government by ANAP, the establishment parties suffered continual electoral decline for nearly two decades after the 1980 military coup. The rise of the pro-Islamists coincided with their total electoral collapse in the 2002 election and thus forms the very root of uneasiness among the “centrist” establishment.

A major factor in this swift radical shift in the relative powers of the parties across the ideological spectrum came following the 1980 military regime that effectively destroyed the partisan alignments of the preceding decades. The military regime of 1980 banned the political parties and leaders of the earlier decades from active politics. However, four years after the first post-coup election in 1983, all the parties of the chaotic 1970s had

been re-established under their old leadership. Within a decade, it became clear that the electoral balance of the 1970s had shifted in favor of the once marginal parties of the Islamist tradition, resulting in the decline of the center-right. The left managed to retain nearly one-third of the vote but lost its distinctly leftist ideological twist of the 1970s. While the right-wing establishment of ANAP and the DYP lost credibility due to corruption scandals, the once marginal pro-Islamist elements within the peripheral tradition slowly gained ground. Following what is called the “post-modern coup” of February 28, 1997, when the military commanders forcefully made demands on the civilian government during a meeting of the MGK and the RP was forced out of government without the direct use of arms, the new-generation Islamists founded the AKP, parting ways with the older generation’s leadership of the RP, which had continued as the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi-FP). Eventually, both the RP and the FP were closed down by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that they were against the secularist principles of the Republic.

This experience of continual conflicts and eventual party closures left its mark on the new cadres of the AKP, which adopted a much more flexible and cooperative political style. This allowed them to engage politically with the secularist establishment, the military, and business circles. Although limited in scope, this engagement allowed them to come to power and, more importantly, to govern. The ability to govern is what distinguishes the AKP from its pro-Islamist predecessors.

The 2002 election followed a series of devastating crises that required immediate response from the executive office. Such expectations were never effectively met by the ruling coalition governments. First, in 1999, two earthquakes hit the country’s most developed provinces, Istanbul and Kocaeli. Despite their wealth and economic development, these provinces were unable to respond to the urgent needs of the suffering masses after the devastating earthquakes. Then the economic crisis of 2001 resulted in unprecedented high unemployment among the urban, white-collar communities. The resulting deep alienation of the masses from the parties of the ruling coalition emerged with ruinous impact in the 2002 elections.

In 2002, the AKP was able to convince voters that they could perform better than their mostly “centrist” competitors. As a consequence of the

historic failures of the right-wing peripheral establishment, the AKP captured about one-third of the popular vote but a clear majority of parliamentary seats, since only one other party, the CHP, was able to pass the ten percent threshold and gain parliamentary representation. Thus, for the first time since the early 1980s, the AKP came to power alone, controlling a comfortable majority in the TBMM. Such a firm grasp over executive power increased fears by the “center” establishment that the Islamist periphery was about to take over the Republican regime and perhaps slowly turn it against secularist principles, building a new regime on non-Kemalist principles.

The sources of such fears can be found within the self-isolationist cultural nature of the “center.” Over the last two decades, the peripheral forces of Islamist background, as well as those of Kurdish ethnicity, have increasingly challenged the “centrist” status quo, both inside and outside the parliamentary political arena. While the “center” increasingly shrank from an electoral perspective and isolated itself within the rhetoric of bureaucratic circles, the Islamist periphery adopted new strategies and expanded its sphere of influence. The Kurdish ethnic resistance first adopted a militarized strategy but altered its strategy after the capture of its leader in 1999 and the changing international climate, especially following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. As a result, in 2007 it for the first time supported independent candidates for parliament.

Thus, the “center” of the Turkish polity found itself increasingly under pressure from the ethnic and Islamist “periphery,” which for the first time is strongly represented in parliament. This undeniably marks a turning point. For some, this is a turn for the better, since it clearly reflects increasing representation of a larger-than-ever electoral constituency in Republican institutions via competitive elections. For others, this is the beginning of the end of the Republican institutions, which have opened themselves up for a takeover by the Islamist and separatist Kurdish forces. The latter in particular are seen to be acting with greater audacity since the establishment of the de facto Kurdish political entity in northern Iraq following the U.S.-led invasion and in the context of the EU adjustment reforms required for Turkey to meet the Copenhagen political criteria.

*The Immediate Election Context*

The sensitivity over the presidential election did not only reflect a deep cultural cleavage separating the secularist “center” from the increasingly more religious and Islamist periphery; it also represented a clear struggle to capture the political arena from ailing “centrist” political parties and to prove to the masses that a new party of the “periphery” can also govern the country. Given its success in the economic sphere, by early 2007 the general election seemed almost impossible for the AKP to lose. However, by early June, following the presidential election debacle with military’s involvement and large protests in urban areas, the situation seemed to have dramatically changed to allow confident prediction of the outcome.

The whole campaign period can be briefly summarized as an attempt by the “centrist” circles to defend their social and political turf, if necessary by scare tactics. Meanwhile, the incumbent representatives of the periphery maneuvered with the aim first, of holding on to their core constituency and second, of expanding it further against their competitors from the same peripheral electoral traditions. Some bureaucratic, secularist civilian circles, as well as some of the parties rooted in the peripheral movements, coalesced within the “center” against the incumbent AKP. The latter depended heavily on its successful performance, especially in the economic sphere. After the strange debacle of the presidential election, it slightly adopted a rhetoric of the wronged and oppressed. This light dose of underdog rhetoric was necessary since a bolder tone would signal clumsiness on the part of a dominant parliamentary force such as the AKP.

The most important development shaping the election strategy of the “centrist” coalition was the protest meetings or the so-called “republic rallies.” Millions of protestors marched in all major cities, promoting a demand for protection of secularist principles against infringements—imagined or real—by the ruling government. It is difficult to analyze the constituent groups of these protest meetings. However, given the election results and some data collected in their aftermath, it is not possible to claim that these meetings had a nationwide appeal.<sup>7</sup> It seems that the driving force behind these meetings came mostly from the urban, economically stagnant middle class, especially women and Alevi groups.

The protestors claimed that the long-term viability of the secular regime was being threatened by the AKP government, which aimed to capture all the institutions of the Republican regime and eventually to transform them into a new, less strictly secular—if not wholly Islamist—regime.

The main debate was thus about the nature of the regime. Very little else concerning the negotiations with the EU, poverty alleviation, or policies towards Iraq and the northern Iraqi Kurdish authorities was talked about in the campaign. Some attention was drawn to alleged corruption in the AKP government, but even these allegations did not capture much attention. Besides the threat to the Republican regime, the two most important campaign issues were unemployment, which had not gone away despite persistent economic growth, and the terror and national security related to the militarized action by the separatist insurgents in east and southeastern Anatolia. The loss of lives to ethnic terror was on the rise, turning the public against the AKP government but also spreading a feeling of insecurity and isolation, especially with the increasing allegations that the Kurdish separatist PKK was being protected and supported by the U.S. forces in Iraq. The EU reform and negotiation process had effectively stopped. The country was becoming politically polarized and increasingly alienated from the West.

Given high growth and low inflation, the government's overall performance was comfortable. Persistently high unemployment was primarily due to a rapid increase in the labor force rather than to an inability to create jobs by the AKP government. Continual current account deficits due to the overvalued Turkish lira and high interest rates did not seem to worry the players in the Turkish economy much. International financial markets had abundant funds to finance this deficit with high real returns in the Turkish money markets.

The rise in PKK-related terror seems to have fueled the National Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP)'s organization and mobilized its constituency. This nationalist rejuvenation was most significant in the western provinces where the MHP has not traditionally done well. The continued conflict also seems to have pushed some segments of Kurdish-origin votes in the east and southeast towards the AKP. Despite some negative impact due to terror losses, among all the

competing parties the AKP had the highest credibility in terms of finding any kind of solution to the conflict.<sup>8</sup>

Entering the electoral campaign the expectation was that threats to secularism or the presidential election debacle would be used intensively by the parties. However, both issues were very divisive. The debate about threats to secularism and the protest meetings had the potential to alienate conservative circles. The presidential election issue could only help the AKP win votes by the party claiming that they were the wronged underdogs. The right-wing party establishment was trying to appeal to the AKP's conservative constituency and did not dare touch these issues much. Staying alone on this matter, the CHP campaign was ineffective in expanding its vote on the basis of these issues.

## II. HYPOTHESES AND DATA

Several hypotheses underline the above discussion about the bases of party choice in the Turkish elections of 2007.<sup>9</sup> The first concerns pragmatic economic evaluations. Given the relatively successful economic performance of the AKP government during its tenure since the 2002 general elections, a reward mechanism is expected to be in effect. Two versions of the reward or punishment mechanism are to be tested below. One concerns the pocketbook as opposed to sociotropic evaluations, and the other concerns the timeframe of the evaluations. If the individual evaluations concern personal or family finances, the pocketbook version is at work. The sociotropic version exists when individuals' subjective judgments are made about the state of the whole country's economic conditions. Both the pocketbook and the sociotropic versions can be of retrospective as opposed to prospective nature. Given the expected shortsighted nature of these evaluations, only the past twelve months are used here, as opposed to the future twelve months, in both pocketbook as well as sociotropic evaluations. It is expected that those individuals who possess positive evaluations of government economic performance for the retrospective or prospective pocketbook or sociotropic evaluations should be more inclined to vote for the incumbent AKP instead of the opposition.

Given the ideological influences within the center-periphery framework, it is expected that not only the conventional left-right

ideological self-placements but also similar stands along various religiosity or conservatism scales are significant in shaping the vote choice. The more an individual reflects peripheral ideological orientations by displaying relatively more religious or conservative stands, the more he or she should be inclined to vote for the parties of the periphery as opposed to the parties of the center. As such, the AKP and the MHP should benefit from rising right-wing, conservative, or religious tendencies, at the expense of the CHP.

Distinct peripheral characteristics of ethnic and sectarian natures should also have significant influences. Alevism, for instance, should raise the likelihood of a vote for the CHP, while Kurdish ethnic background should push individuals more towards the AKP and the independent candidates of the Kurdish DTP.

Controlling for various demographic elements, it is expected that generational differences should play a significant role in differentiating party constituencies. Similarly, differences between men and women and between relatively rich and relatively poor voters are expected to be significant in shaping party constituencies.

The Appendix below contains the operationalization details of all variables used in the analyses. The data was obtained from the Turkish election panel survey. The first wave of the panel was conducted in late June and early July 2007, prior to the July 22 elections, and the second wave was conducted in August-September 2007.<sup>10</sup> The dependent variable for party choices is obtained from the reported party choice in the first wave.<sup>11</sup> The nature of the panel design is such that in the second wave of interviews some respondents reached in the first wave could not be reached in the second wave. The first wave allows the obtaining of vote intentions. The realized vote choice is only obtained in the second wave. While in the first the uncertainty about the election outcome continues, in the second the results of the election are known. Accordingly, in the second wave there is a tendency among the respondents to report their vote choice in the election in favor of the perceived winners or the larger parties.

Table 1 reports the correspondence of the vote intention in the first wave and the reported vote choice in the second. What is observed here is that the AKP constituency captured in the pre-election wave remains

Table 1. VOTE REPORTED IN PRE- AND POST-ELECTION WAVES

Pre-election intention	Post-Election Reported Vote Decision					
	AKP	CHP	MHP	Independents	No Response	
AKP	91	1	1	1	5	100
CHP	12	69	6	1	12	100
MHP	11	3	75	1	9	100
Independents	27	7	0	57	10	100
Undecided	40	14	10	3	33	100
	60	14	12	3	11	100

Pre-Election vote intentions after using post-election declarations of those who were undecided in the first wave about their party: AKP 47%; CHP 15%; MHP 9%; Independents 3%; Undecided 9%; No response 17%.

committed to their pre-election declarations. Ninety-one percent of the first wave declarations for the AKP are reportedly realized at the ballot box as vote choice, and only about five percent of the same group refuses to declare their vote choice in the second wave. However, for the CHP only 69 percent declare a realized vote choice that corresponds to their pre-election intentions. For the MHP, this proportion is about 75 percent, and for the group of independents only 57 percent. Refusals in the second wave for the CHP, MHP, and independent voters tend to be about twice the rate obtained for the AKP voters, suggesting a relatively greater degree of uneasiness to reveal their vote choice after a clear dominant AKP vote in the election. Practically, this loss of responses due to the two-wave nature of the panel interview design is remedied by using the post-election declarations of the undecided voters in the first wave. This way, about five percent of the sample lost as undecided in the first wave can be gained by using the declarations in the second wave. The resulting sample distribution of party vote that forms the basis of the dependent variables used in the ensuing analyses is also reported in Table 1. It is observed here that the sample under-represents the CHP and the MHP constituencies by a small margin but almost perfectly reflects the share of the AKP vote among those for whom there are party choice responses. As will be noted below in greater detail, the group of supporters for the independent

candidates is also smaller than their realized shares in the total national vote. However, the demographic nature of this constituency conforms to expectations.

A two-step procedure is followed in order to differentiate the demographic bases of electoral support from more subtle ideological bases of support. First, analyses with only demographic variables are provided. As a second step, a number of variables that help control for ideological orientations, family socialization into politics, and preferences for critical issues on the public agenda are added. The first step in this analysis focuses on demographic characteristics over which respondents carry little or no effective control. In other words, no voter gets to choose his or her sex, age, ethnic, or even sectarian background. The fact that one is at a given level of education is to be taken for granted over the short run. Similarly, the fact that one is unemployed may have very little to do with what one does over the short run to find a job. As such, descriptive analyses as to where each party constituency is likely to reside among the body of voters are provided. The results of this first stage of analysis are provided in Table 2.

Logistic regression is used throughout these analyses.<sup>12</sup> The dependent variable can only have two values or categories, such as vote for a given party (the “success” category coded as 1) or vote for the rest or either one of the other parties (coded as 0). The results reveal the extent to which the individuals that are described by the independent variables are likely to be in the category of interest (vote for a particular party) as opposed to the others while holding all other independent variables constant. For example, in column 1 of Table 2, all non-AKP voters (coded as 0) are treated separately from AKP voters (coded as 1). The figures indicate the odds ratios, which indicate how more or less likely an individual is to vote for the AKP as compared to any other party. A ratio less (greater) than 1 indicates that the likelihood of voting for the reference category parties is greater (smaller) than the likelihood of voting for the AKP. Accordingly, negative impact upon likelihood of voting for the “success” category is reflected by an odd ratio value less than unity. A positive impact results in an odds ratio value that is greater than unity. All such evaluations in the changes of likelihood in response to changes in the independent variables are evaluated in comparison to the reference

Table 2. PARTY DIFFERENCES BY TO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Odds ratios (Exp(B))	1	2	3	4
	AKP vs Other	CHP vs Other	MHP vs Other	Indep's vs Other
Age	0.98	1.04	0.99	0.98
Women=1	1.02	1.70	0.43	0.45
Education	0.68	1.79	1.09	1.06
Urban=1	1.01	0.82	0.86	2.00
Unemployed=1	1.29	0.54	1.08	1.19
Alevi=1	0.53	3.96	0.62	0.41
Kurdish=1	1.33	0.52	0.11	15.17
Constant	11.18	0.00	0.23	0.02
Model Summary				
-2 Log likelihood	1847.4	1189.0	947.5	324.6
Cox & Snell R Square	0.06	0.09	0.04	0.06
Nagelkerke R Square	0.08	0.15	0.09	0.24
Overall correctly predicted %*	61.0	83.0	88.5	96.7
Correctly predicted occurrence %*	79.7	10.0	0.0	0.0
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (Sig.)	0.42	0.35	0.44	0.48
N=	1413	1413	1413	1413

\* Significance at .05 printed in bold.

category defined by the independent variables. For example, in Table 1 the odds ratio for the Alevi dummy variable is 0.53 under the first column comparing the AKP with the rest of the parties. This indicates that holding all other independent variables constant, an Alevi voter's likelihood of voting for the AKP is only 53 percent of the likelihood of a non-Alevi voter to vote for the AKP. <sup>13</sup>

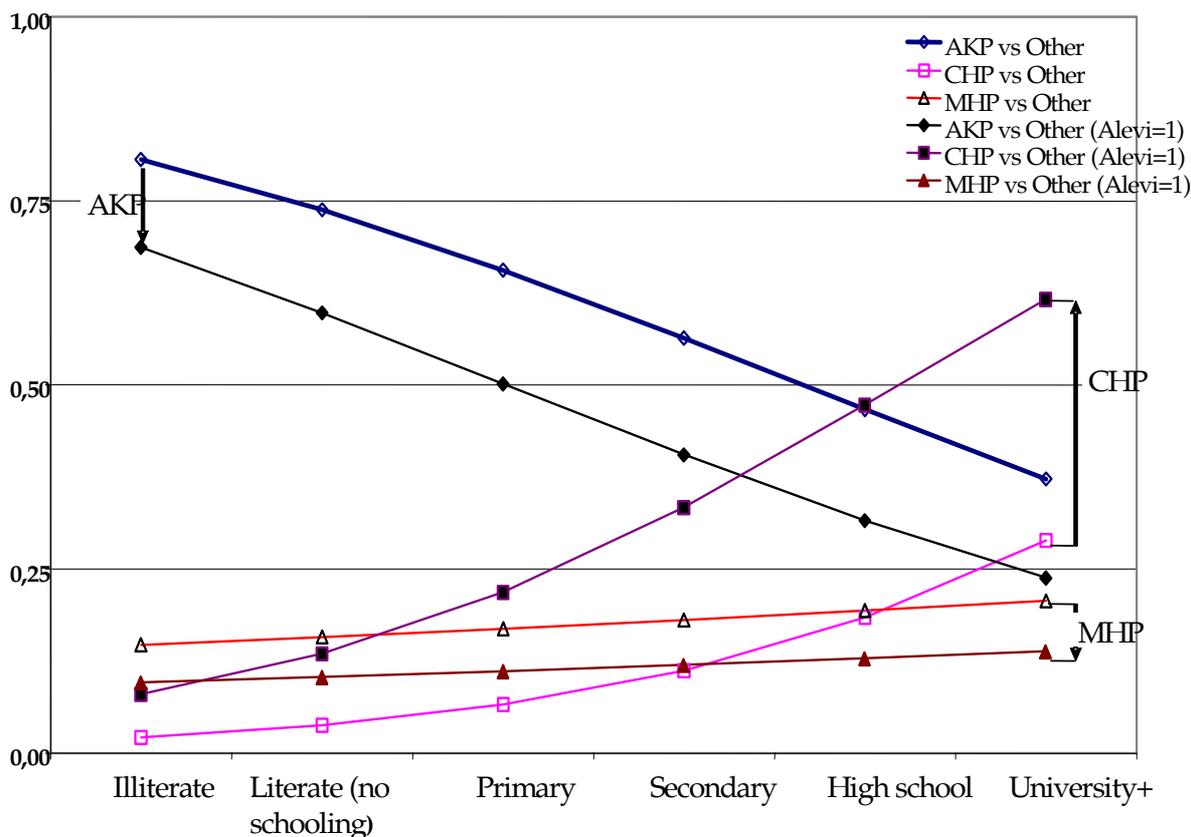
Several patterns are worthy of note here. Older voters tend to be more likely to be CHP voters while younger voters are more likely to vote for independent candidates. Every decade added to voters' age renders them nearly forty percent more likely to be CHP voters as opposed to any one of the other parties. Aging seems to have no significant impact upon neither the MHP nor independents. The urban-rural divide or unemployed status seems to make no significant impact upon the likelihood of vote for any one of the party constituencies. While sex difference is not significant

for the AKP, women tend to favor the CHP, while men are more likely to vote for the MHP and the independents than women are. Similarly, increasing education level decreases the likelihood of voting for the AKP but increases the likelihood of voting for the CHP. Alevis are slightly less than twice as likely to vote for a party other than the AKP. However, an Alevi is nearly four times more likely to choose the CHP compared to another party. Kurdish background seems not to be a significant factor determining vote for the AKP after controlling for other demographic factors. It reduces the likelihood of voting for the CHP and MHP considerably while making the likelihood of voting for an independent candidate nearly fifteen times more likely compared to other parties.

The nonlinear nature of the likelihood estimates for different parties within the logistic regression framework reveals interesting patterns. Figure 1 below focuses on just one of these and shows the interaction of Alevism and the level of education upon the likelihood of voting for different parties.<sup>14</sup> The nonlinear nature of the progression of the likelihoods is clearly apparent in the picture. As the level of education rises from the lowest level of illiterates up to the highest level of university graduates, the likelihood of voting for the AKP declines slowly at first and increasingly faster as the level of education rises. The likelihood of a CHP vote increases slowly at first and faster afterwards as levels of education approach the peak. After controlling for all other demographic factors, a non-Alevi remains more likely to be an AKP voter compared to all other parties, even after raising the level of education to its peak.

However, when Alevism is added into the picture, significant shifts are observed not only in the levels of likelihood of voting for different parties; the relative standings of these likelihoods are altered significantly after certain levels of education. For example, prior to secondary school the likelihood of voting for the AKP remains dominant over all others but continuously declines, while likelihoods of voting for other parties rise. At the level of secondary school, the likelihood of voting for the AKP and CHP are almost equal for Alevis after controlling for other demographic factors. For high school, university, and beyond, the likelihood of voting for the CHP by an Alevi is considerably higher than it is for the AKP or any other party. In other words, level of education without Alevism does not seem

Figure 1. ALEVISM AND THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON PARTY CHOICE\*



\*Taking only demographic factors into account.

to give the CHP any significant advantage in the eyes of voters. Among the Alevis with relatively low levels of education, the CHP also does not seem to have an advantageous position. Only after secondary school and beyond does the CHP dominate the vote likelihoods among Alevis. From an optimistic perspective this may be taken as a sign that among the largest and relatively lower education groups, sectarian differences do not seem to provide a significant cleavage among the parties or change their relative standings in the eyes of voters. Only after the approximately 11 years of schooling that allow a typical Turkish voter to graduate from high school do sectarian differences change the relative rankings of the parties and give the left-leaning and strictly secularist CHP a relative advantage over the others. From the perspective of the CHP, this may not be such good news since these relatively high levels of education even among the Alevi community may not be large enough to give the party a boost in the polls.

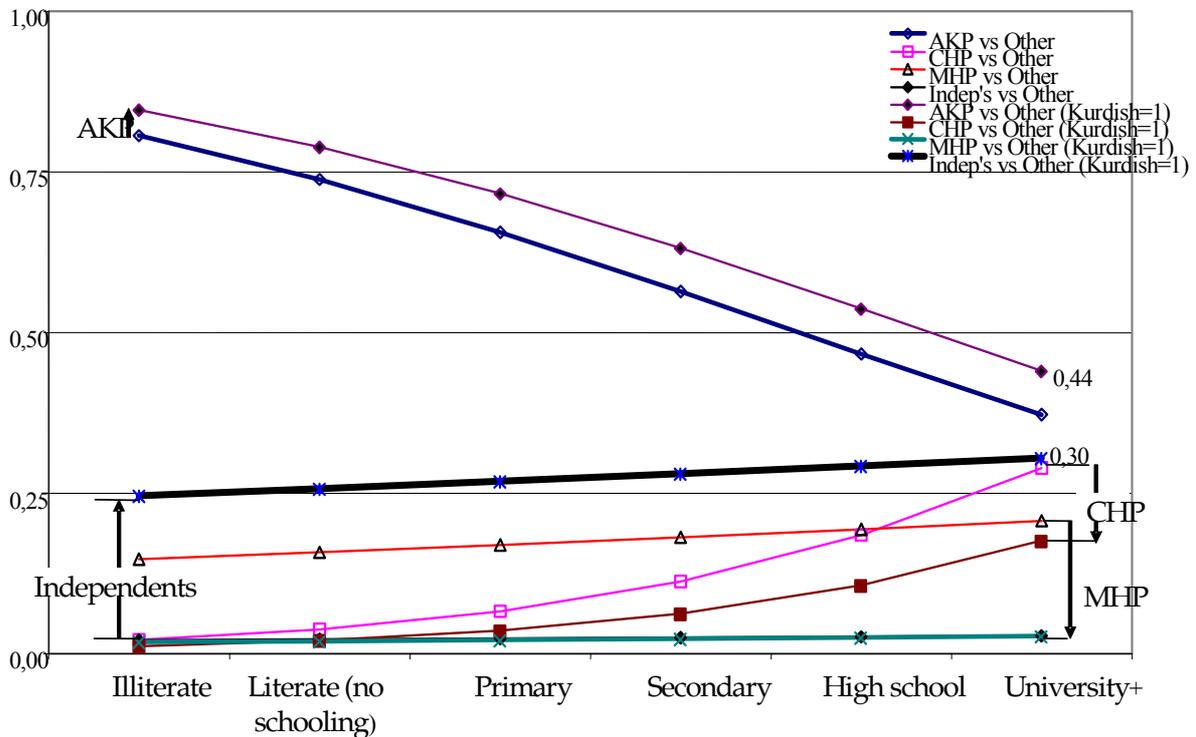
A similar simulation exercise taking into account the impact of Kurdish background on the likelihood of vote for different parties

reveals that likely rank ordering of the parties remain largely the same as before taking this background information into account. Figure 2 shows that the likelihood of vote for the AKP increases slightly in a non-linear fashion for all levels of education. Impacts in opposite direction are observed for the CHP and MHP. A typical voter below high school education with Kurdish background is less than 7% likely to vote for the CHP. Likelihood to vote for the MHP remains below 3% for all levels of education. For the independent voters an impact of opposite direction is observed when we introduce Kurdish background. While vote for independent candidates is less than 3% for all education level for non-Kurdish background voters, this likelihood increases above 25% for all education levels. However, even those with Kurdish background are considerably less likely to vote for the independents compared to the incumbent AKP which is 44% likely to receive a vote from the highest level of education with Kurdish background compared to only about 30% likelihood to vote for the independents.

Expanding the demographic model by adding economic evaluations, ideological positions, socialization effects of parental party choices, and issue preferences produces the models reported in Table 3.<sup>15</sup> The analyses in Table 2 only differentiate one party from the whole of the rest of the parties. In order to compare party choice between one party and just one other party Table 3 also includes comparisons of different party pairs.

After taking into account economic evaluations, ideological and issue positions, and partisan family background it is seen that the influence of demographic variables changes significantly for only Alevism which ceases to be significant after controlling for economic evaluations, ideological positions, socialization effects of parental party choices, and issue preferences. The impact of Kurdish ethnic background remains the same. The impact of age upon the likelihood of support for the AKP is still significant but at a smaller magnitude, suggesting that younger voters are more likely to vote for the AKP than older generations. The CHP continues to receive votes of older generation voters compared to all their major competitors as well as to the MHP. Women are more likely than men to vote for the CHP, as compared to the rest of the major parties in the system. Similarly, when compared to the MHP women tend to be more likely to

Figure 2. KURDISH BACKGROUND AND THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION  
ON PARTY CHOICE\*



\*Taking only demographic factors into account.

support the AKP, and women tend to prefer the CHP over the MHP. In other words, after a larger set of control variables the differences between men and women voters remain. While the CHP maintains an advantage over the rest of the major players in the party system, the MHP tends to be favored more by men rather than by women. The AKP does not seem to have a significant advantage between male and female voters. However, compared to the MHP, the AKP still possesses an advantage in attracting women's votes.

The impact of education upon party choice also remains predominantly the same. The AKP continues to enjoy a higher likelihood of support among less educated voters, while the CHP tends to receive the votes of the more educated. The impact of Kurdish ethnic background upon party choice remains stable after enlarging the control variables. The likelihood of voting for the CHP and the MHP is lower among voters with a Kurdish background as compared to those who do not have such an ethnic background. The likelihood of voting for an independent candidate is higher among those with a Kurdish background compared to the rest of the major players in the party

system. It is also worthy of note that in a comparison of the AKP with only the independents, it is observed that independents possess a considerable advantage among those of Kurdish ethnic background. In other words, after controlling for the influences of other demographic factors, economic evaluations, family socialization, and ideological and issue preferences, the AKP does not seem to control an advantageous standing among the citizens of Kurdish ethnic background as compared to those who are of non-Kurdish background. This is counterintuitive since by solely looking into geographic vote distribution and the success of the AKP in the east and southeastern Anatolian provinces where citizens of Kurdish ethnicity are most likely to reside, one may be led to conclude differently. However, micro-individual level evidences at two stages of analyses refute these expectations. After controlling for different explanatory variables, the likelihood of voting for the AKP does not seem to possess a significant advantageous standing among those with Kurdish ethnic background. In other words, voters of Kurdish and non-Kurdish background with the same demographic characteristics who hold the same economic evaluations, the same ideological positions with the same level of religious practice, the same parental partisan background, and who possess the same issue preferences will not be more or less likely to be an AKP voter as opposed to another.

It is also observed that family socialization or partisanship influence is significant for six of the eight party choice comparisons in Table 3. For example, mother's center-left partisan commitment as reflected by her vote for the center-left parties renders the likelihood of voting for the AKP as opposed to other parties less likely (odds ratio of 0.5). Similarly, a center-left partisan background for the mother of the respondent makes the likelihood of that respondent voting for the AKP as opposed to the MHP less likely. In other words, mother's center-left partisan background seems to push the voters away from the AKP. However, a center-right background has the opposite impact of pushing the voters towards the CHP as compared to the rest of the major players as well as solely to the MHP after controlling for the influences of all other independent variables. Fathers' partisan background of similar nature, however, has influences in the opposite direction. A mother and a father with a center-

Table 3. LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF PARTY CHOICE 2007

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	AKP	CHP	MHP	Indep's	AKP	AKP	AKP	CHP
	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs	vs
Odds ratio (Exp(B))	Other	Other	Other	Other	CHP	MHP	Indeps	MHP
<i>Demographic Variables</i>								
Age	0.99	1.04	0.99	0.98	0.95	1.00	1.00	1.03
Women=1	1.18	1.64	0.51	0.50	0.48	1.90	1.46	2.08
Education	0.71	1.54	1.14	1.02	0.49	0.74	0.74	1.16
Alevi=1	1.31	0.89	0.72	0.32	1.30	1.62	3.04	0.67
Kurdish=1	0.85	0.47	0.17	14.00	0.88	4.10	0.07	1.89
<i>Economic Evaluations</i>								
Retrospective pocketbook	1.20	0.97	0.86	0.82	1.18	1.25	1.22	1.07
Retrospective sociotropic	1.36	0.84	0.82	0.90	1.31	1.43	1.51	0.92
Prospective pocketbook	0.91	1.06	1.07	1.15	0.94	0.86	0.84	1.01
Prospective sociotropic	1.31	0.89	0.84	0.91	1.25	1.33	1.23	1.04
Life satisfaction (0-10)	1.09	0.97	0.91	0.98	1.06	1.15	1.06	1.04
<i>Ideological Positions</i>								
Left-Right self-placement	1.27	0.57	1.31	0.76	2.02	0.92	1.48	0.54
Religious practice index	1.22	0.83	0.99	0.96	1.45	1.23	1.15	0.77
<i>Partisan Family Background</i>								
Mother's p. (Center-right)	0.89	3.16	0.57	2.58	0.37	1.45	0.21	5.19
Mother's p. (Nationalist)	0.96	0.41	1.22	0.77	1.89	0.60	1.63	0.38
Mother's p. (Center-left)	0.50	1.46	1.84	0.40	0.99	0.37	0.89	1.19
Mother's p. (Islamist)	2.20	0.28	0.35	0.35	8.99	3.58	2.67	0.88
Father's p. (Center-right)	1.96	0.26	1.25	0.44	4.64	1.11	5.97	0.21
Father's p. (Nationalist)	0.53	2.83	1.09	1.19	0.38	0.98	0.54	2.52
Father's p. (Center-left)	1.42	2.52	0.33	0.55	0.42	2.89	3.09	3.11
Father's p. (Islamist)	1.52	0.27	0.96	2.17	6.94	1.18	0.68	0.08
<i>Most Important Issue</i>								
Terror	0.87	1.11	1.34	0.95	0.89	0.68	1.05	0.69
Kurdish problem	0.39	0.43	2.38	4.88	0.77	0.36	0.18	0.15
Shari'a based state	1.71	0.38	0.48	1.29	3.22	1.83	1.12	1.10
<i>Model Summary</i>								
Constant	0.01	0.97	0.45	0.97	0.08	0.09	0.11	7.20
-2 Log likelihood	1254.3	692.5	784.1	276.3	445.7	584.7	206.0	289.1
Cox & Snell R Square	0.38	0.36	0.15	0.09	0.49	0.26	0.17	0.47
Nagelkerke R Square	0.51	0.59	0.29	0.36	0.74	0.44	0.49	0.64
Overall correctly predicted %*	79.1	90.4	90.3	97.5	91.7	87.8	96.0	84.8
Correctly predicted occurrence %*	83.9	63.7	22.7	27.7	95.9	97.3	99.4	89.2
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test (Sig.)	0.75	0.65	0.81	0.11	0.80	0.44	0.02	0.50
N=	1413	1413	1413	1413	1057	969	853	414

Significance at .05 printed in bold.

right partisan background renders the likelihood of their offspring more likely to vote non-CHP (father's impact [pushing the vote towards the other parties with an odds ratio of 3.84] will dominate the mother's [pushing the vote towards the CHP with an odds ratio of 3.16]). Comparing the CHP with only the MHP, however, it is observed that the mother's center-right partisan background's impact is more dominant (pushing the vote towards the CHP with an odds ratio of 5.19 as opposed to the father's pushing the vote towards the MHP with an odds ratio of 4.76). In other words, when mother and father both have a center-right partisan background, their offspring is more likely to vote non-CHP as opposed to other major players and CHP as opposed to the MHP.

A similar evaluation for mothers and fathers having a center-left partisan background reveals that in comparing the AKP with only the MHP, the offspring is more likely to vote for the AKP following his/her father's dominant influence. Fathers' center-left partisan background alone also pushes their offspring more towards the CHP and away from the MHP as compared to the rest of the major players in the system. In other words, a center-left partisan background for their parents pushes voters away from the MHP.

A noticeable pattern is also that neither the mothers' nor the fathers' nationalist or Islamist partisan background seems to have any significant influence upon their offspring's party choices. This may be due to the fact that parents of such partisan background comprise only between six to nine percent of the sample, too small a group for a meaningful judgment. It may also concurrently be a reflection of the fact that the once large and dominant center-left and right party constituencies are undergoing a major transformation in their partisan bases. As such, parents' from these centrist partisan backgrounds are more likely to exert some influence upon party choices of their children at turbulent times of partisan realignment.

Positions on two issues appear to have significant influence upon party choice. One involves the group of voters who see the Kurdish problem as the country's most important problem and the other is comprised of voters who approve of a Shari'a-based religious state in the country. The group of voters who choose terror as the country's most important problem appear to have no differentiating influence upon party

choice. The group of voters who choose the Kurdish problem as the most important problem of the country comprises about five percent of the sample, and its members are about 2.4 times more likely to vote for the MHP as opposed to others, while for the same group, voting for the non-AKP parties is more than 2.5 times likely ( $1/0.39=2.56$ ), as compared to likelihood of voting for the AKP. The issue position advantage in favor of the MHP becomes more apparent when only the comparison of the AKP versus the MHP choice is considered, where voting for the MHP is more than 2.7 times likely ( $1/0.36=2.78$ ) as compared to the likelihood of voting for the AKP among this group that includes the “Kurdish problem” in its list of most important problems for the country. A similar advantage of the MHP also exists when the party choice is only between the CHP and the MHP, and the likelihood of a MHP vote is 6.66 times more likely ( $1/0.15=6.66$ ). In other words, the perception the “Kurdish problem” as one of the most important problems of the country works in favor of the MHP as compared to the AKP and hurts the AKP against all, but especially the nationalist MHP.

Another issue preference that has significant impact upon party choice is concerned with approval of a Shari’a-based religious state in Turkey. This group of voters who approve of a Shari’a-based religious state in the country comprise about 13 percent of the sample, and their likelihood of voting for the AKP as compared to all other major players (odds ratio 1.71) or only the CHP (odds ratio 3.22) is significantly higher. However, it is worthy of note that party choice between the AKP and the MHP or independents are not significantly influenced for this group who approve of a Shari’a-based religious state in Turkey.<sup>16</sup>

Evaluation of the impact of ideological positions is included in party choice equations via two variables. One is through self-placement along the conventional left-right scale. The other is through an index of subjective religious commitment that uses reported frequency of religious worship or practice as its basis. This index shows a linear increase as the subjective reported frequency of religious practice increases (see Appendix for details).

It is seen that as an individual moves toward the right end of the conventional left-right scale he or she is more likely to vote for the AKP as

compared to all its competitors except the MHP. That is to say that as there is movement along the left-right ideological self-placement scale, the likelihood of voting for the AKP as opposed to the MHP does not change after controlling for the influences of the other independent variables. This suggests that ideologically the AKP and the MHP are very similar when keeping the other independent variables constant. However, a similar movement to the right-end of the ideological spectrum makes the likelihood of voting for the CHP and independents decline significantly. A movement to the right end of the ideological spectrum reduces the likelihood of voting for the CHP in comparison to the MHP as well. In other words, movements along the left-right ideological spectrum as perceived by the respondents themselves make their likelihood of voting for the parties change in an expected manner. That is, when an individual moves to the right (left) he or she becomes more likely to vote for a right (left)-wing party such as the AKP or the MHP (the CHP) after controlling for the influences of the other independent variables.

Increasing subjective religious commitment or frequency of reported religious practice raises the likelihood of voting for the AKP as compared to all its competitors except for the independent candidates. This suggests that the constituencies of the independents and the AKP are similar when it comes to subjective religious commitment or reported worship practice. Similar increases in the frequency of religious worship practice decreases the likelihood of voting for the CHP as compared to the rest of its competitors, as well as to the MHP alone. However, increasing reported frequency of religious practice does not influence the likelihood of voting for the MHP or independents as compared to the rest of their competitors. Similarly, increasing frequency of religious worship practice does not influence the likelihood of voting in favor of the AKP in comparison to the independent candidates.

The last group of evaluations concerns the government's performance in the economic sphere. Retrospective and prospective evaluations are obtained from a sociotropic perspective where the respondent is asked to make judgments about the Turkey's conditions in general as opposed to a pocketbook perspective, where judgments are asked about the nature of the family's economic condition. All these evaluations are obtained on similar

zero to ten (11-point) scales. Figure 3 and 4 provide mean evaluation scores for all four of these economic evaluations for the whole sample as well as for different party constituencies.

When we look at Figure 3 showing the nation-wide sample averages we see no significant pattern other than a slight positive tendency in average evaluations. Retrospective pocketbook or sociotropic evaluations are slightly less favorable compared to prospective evaluations of both types. However, when we focus on different party constituencies and their evaluations in a comparative setting we see significant patterns.

What is striking in Figure 4 is the marked partisan divide in average judgments. On all four, the AKP constituency is well above the countrywide average while the opposition mean scores are all below. Another striking pattern is that AKP voters have the highest evaluations for sociotropic versions of the questions both retrospectively as well as prospectively while the opposition parties differ in terms of time horizon for their evaluations. For all three opposition parties/independents, future-oriented evaluations are on average better

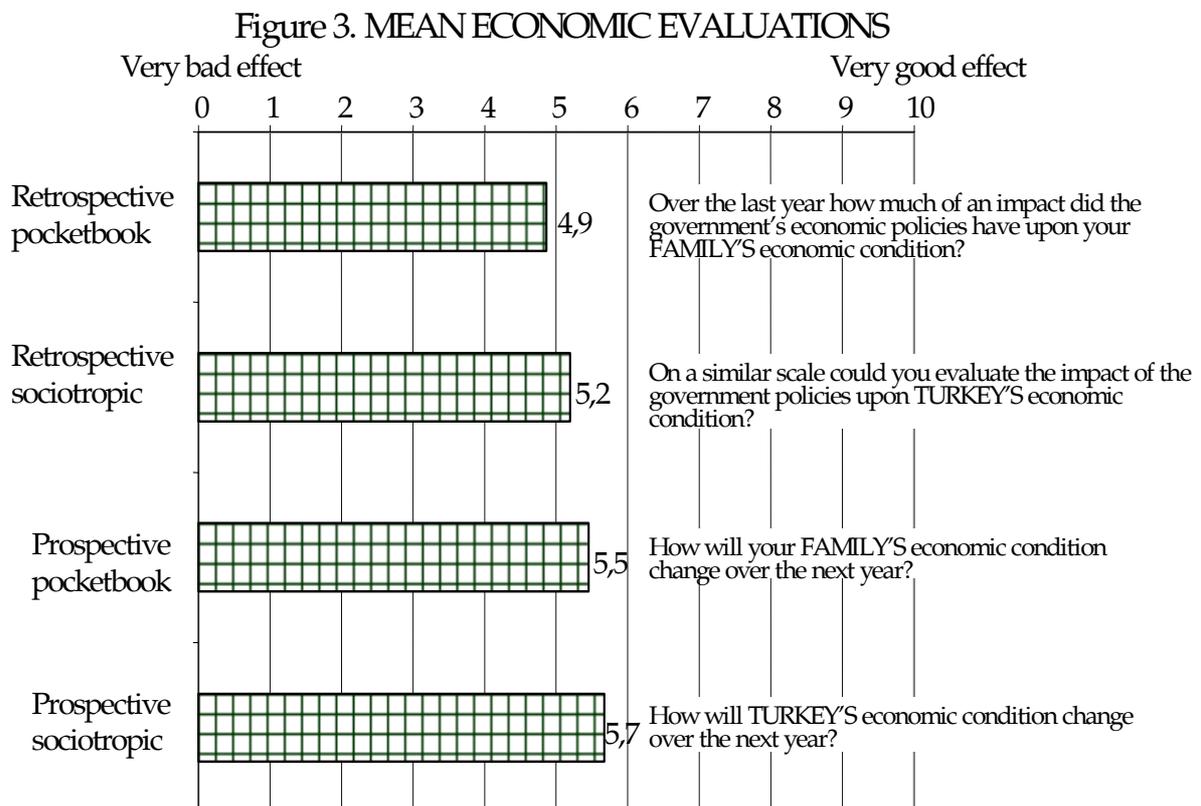
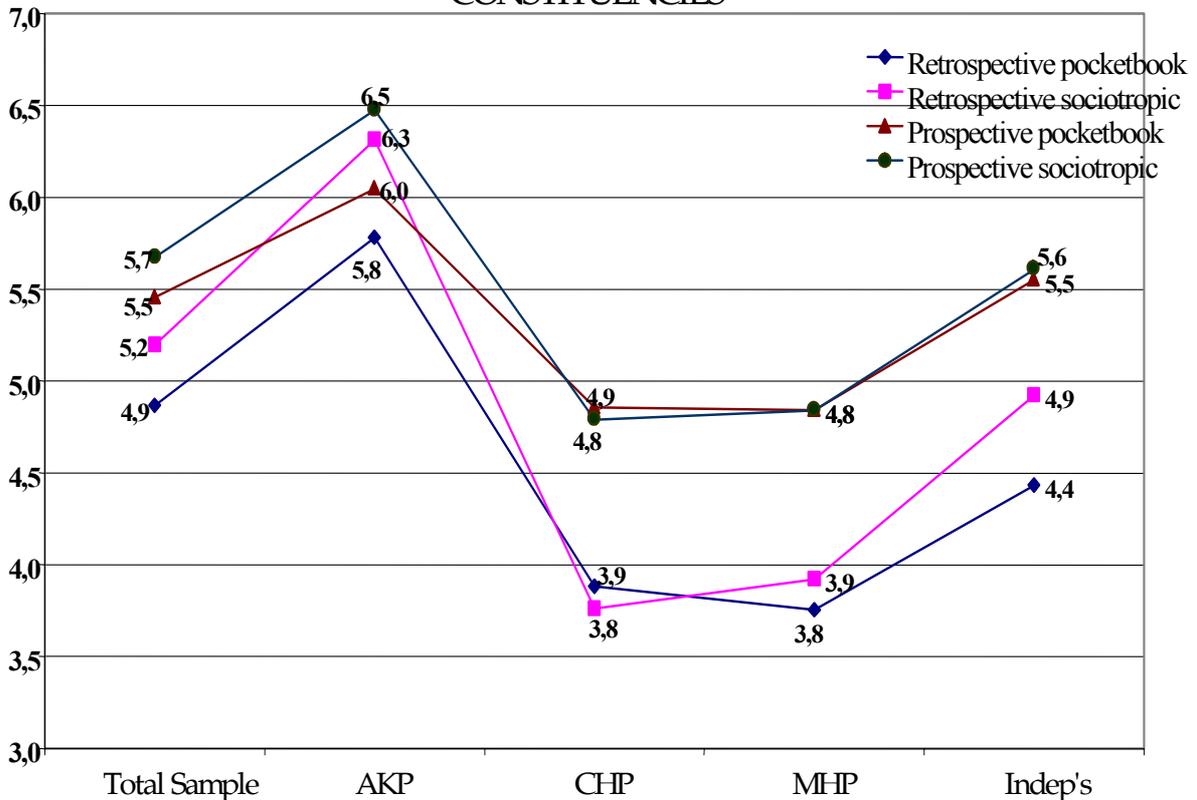


Figure 4. MEAN ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS, POLITICAL PARTY CONSTITUENCIES



than retrospective ones. While for the left-leaning CHP the pocketbook and sociotropic versions are about the same, for the MHP and supporters of independent candidates, the sociotropic version persistently reflects better evaluations.

The most persistent significant impact is observed for the retrospective sociotropic evaluations followed by prospective sociotropic ones. Prospective pocketbook evaluations are insignificant in differentiating all party constituencies. Prospective sociotropic evaluations seem to matter for primarily differentiating the AKP from its competitors—except the independents. Deteriorating evaluations increase the likelihood of support for the opposition while ameliorating ones help the incumbent AKP in all comparisons where prospective sociotropic evaluations are significant. It is striking to observe that the CHP and independent candidates' support depend the least upon economic evaluations. For the CHP, only retrospective sociotropic evaluations have a significant and negative impact. No significant influence from the economic evaluations is observed for the independent candidates.

A summary evaluation for performance evaluations can be observed for the life satisfaction evaluations. It is observed that improvements in these help the incumbent and only hurt the MHP in opposition. Support for the CHP and independent candidates is not significantly influenced by this variable. Although the focus upon ethnic identity politics by almost all independent candidates renders this finding understandable for their case, the insignificance of economic evaluations for three out of four different types of evaluations is curious for the case of the CHP. This may be a blessing for times when economic evaluations are on average on the positive side, since then at least no significant loss of electoral support will be incurred. However, if this is a sign that the CHP constituency is not differentiable from the rest in terms of differences in economic performance evaluations, it becomes more dramatic and significant to understand the nature of the left-wing constituency, especially at times when economic conditions may not be rosy.

A question of particular significance for understanding the nature of Turkish electoral democracy concerns the relative magnitudes of ideological as opposed to pragmatic economic evaluations upon party choice.<sup>17</sup> The simplest way of evaluating the relative importance of these two groups of variables is by checking the magnitude of their impact upon the odds ratio of support for different parties. It is observed, for example, that for the case of the AKP when economic evaluations are significant in shaping party preference at least one of these has its odds ratio magnitude larger than variables reflecting ideological predispositions. However, the nonlinear nature of the logistic regression may lead to a misleading conclusion, depending upon where other independent variables might be for the average respondent. To bypass these difficulties, various scenario evaluations are conducted. One such exercise that is particularly rewarding is reported below in Figures 3, which shows the likelihood of voting for the AKP for the whole range of values that correspond to two of the most persistently significant variables—that is, the retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations and the left-right self placement at two different levels of education, the first one for the illiterate group and the other for university graduates.

Besides the effective nonlinearity what is striking in these pictures

Figure 5. Likelihood of Vote for the AKP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations

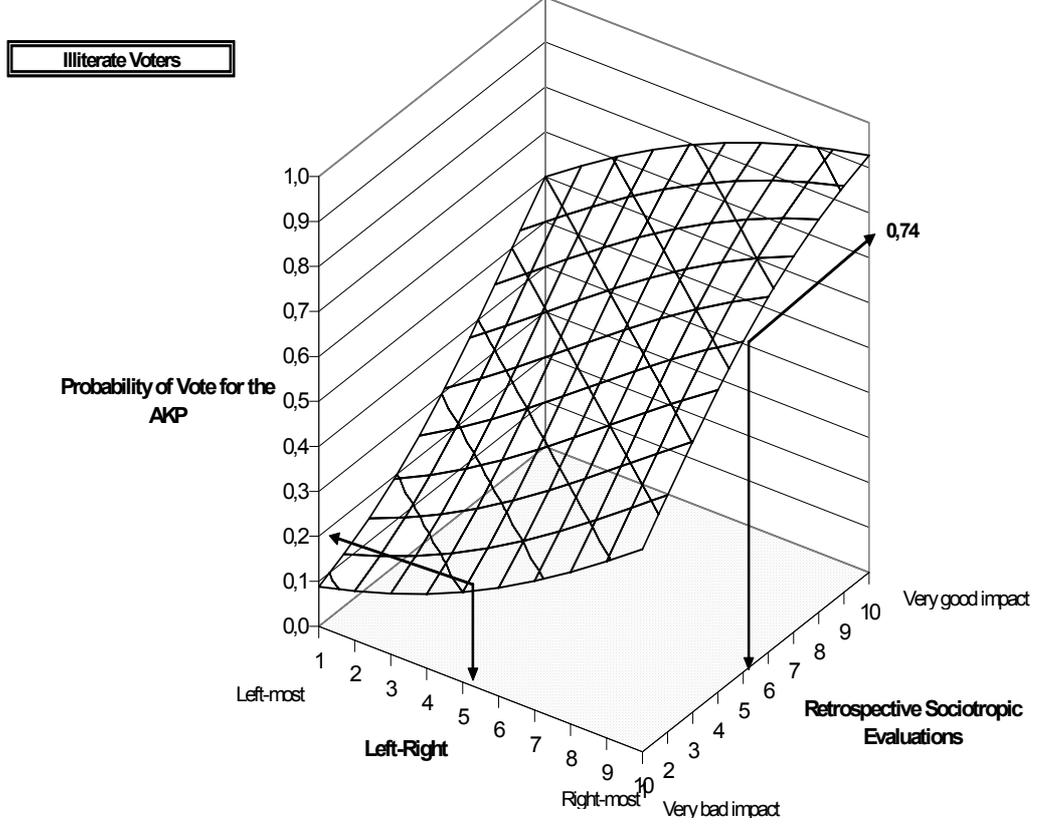
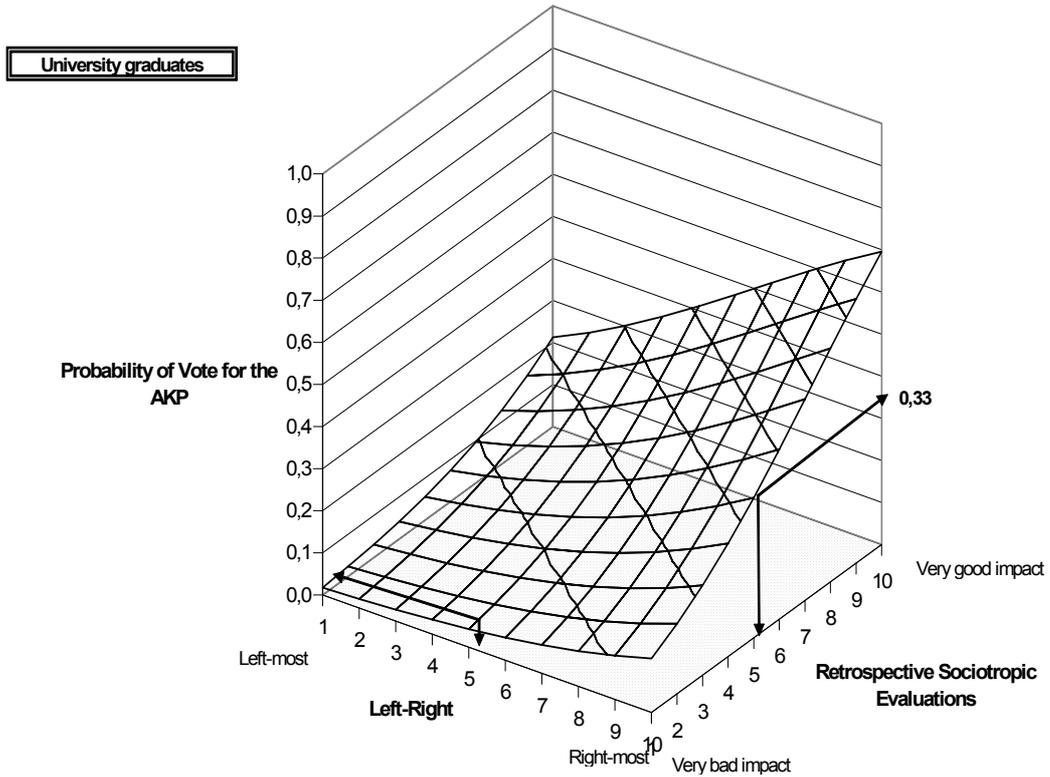


Figure 5. Likelihood of Vote for the AKP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations



concerns the influence of education level in mediating the impact of left-right ideology and retrospective sociotropic evaluation upon the likelihood of voting for the AKP. For the illiterate group, it is observed that someone who positions himself at the left-most position (1) and also gives a low retrospective economic evaluation of 1 is only about ten percent likely to vote for the AKP.<sup>18</sup> By keeping this individual at the left-most position and increasing his retrospective economic evaluations from 1 to 10, it is observed that his likelihood of voting for the AKP rises to about 60 percent. A similar evaluation for the university graduates group shows that the most leftist male voter with a low (1) sociotropic economic evaluation starts from about a two percent likelihood of voting for the AKP (about one-fifth of the likelihood of the comparable illiterate voter, who is ten percent likely to vote for the AKP) and slowly rises to about 21 percent likelihood (slightly more than about one-third the likelihood of a comparable illiterate voter). Tracing the impact of ideological shift from the left-most to the right-most at the highest level of sociotropic evaluations (10) for the university graduates, it is observed that the likelihood to vote increases from about 21 percent to about 70 percent (about three-fourths the likelihood of the comparable illiterate voter, who is 93 percent likely to vote for the AKP). Comparing the two likelihood surfaces of voting for the AKP for the illiterate and university graduate groups, it is observed that ideology is more constraining for the higher education group than it is for the lower education group, whose members are more under the influence of their subjective sociotropic economic evaluations.

A typical illiterate individual in the middle of the ideological spectrum (at 5 on left-right scale) and at the undecided middle point of the retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations (at 5 on the scale) is about 46 percent likely to vote for the AKP. Any movement from that midpoint towards the right of the ideological spectrum quickly increases his likelihood of voting for the AKP to above 50 percent. A similar tipping point for university graduates towards more than 50 percent likelihood of voting for the AKP comes at a much later stage of positive economic evaluations (8-9 on the retrospective sociotropic evaluations scale) only for individuals at the right-end of the left-right ideological spectrum (8-9 on the left-right scale). In other words, while the illiterate non-Alevi and non-

Kurdish males of about 35 years of age with parents who had voted for the center-left parties in the past become more likely to vote for the AKP than for any one of their competitors when they pass the midpoints on the left-right scale towards the right-end and come to evaluate the government's performance in the past year for the whole country more and more favorably. A similar switch towards the AKP comes at a much later stage of right-wing ideological predispositions and positive retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations for university graduates.

Similar simulations for the likelihood of vote according to the above reported estimates are obtained for the CHP as well as the MHP. For the CHP the impact of ideology is much more significant for the university group compared to the lowest level of education. For example, in order to observe a likelihood of vote for the CHP higher than 50% at the lowest level of retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations we see that the individual has to place him or herself at 3 or below on the left-right self-placement scale. In other words, despite very favorable negative evaluations about the state of the economy we see that unless voters are also ideologically opposing the AKP their likelihood of vote for the CHP is not above 50% likelihood. As retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations get better the likelihood of vote for the CHP rapidly declines to insignificant levels.

However, for the group of university graduates we see that the influence of ideology remains more effective. For example at the lowest level of retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations a typical individual remains more than 50% likely to vote for the CHP even if he or she picks a point up to 7 on the left-right scale. So, he or she need not be ideologically close to the CHP but would still approach the CHP positively likely to vote. Nevertheless we continue to observe that as retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations get better even at the highest level of education the likelihood of vote for the CHP drops below 50% very quickly beyond the level of 7 on the left-right scale. For example at the mid point of the left-right scale if an individual has the lowest retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations his or her likelihood of vote for the CHP is slightly above 70%. As this individual's economic evaluations ameliorate his or her likelihood drops below 50% and reaches the lowest level of about 43% at the highest level of economic evaluations.

Figure 6. Likelihood of Vote for the CHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations

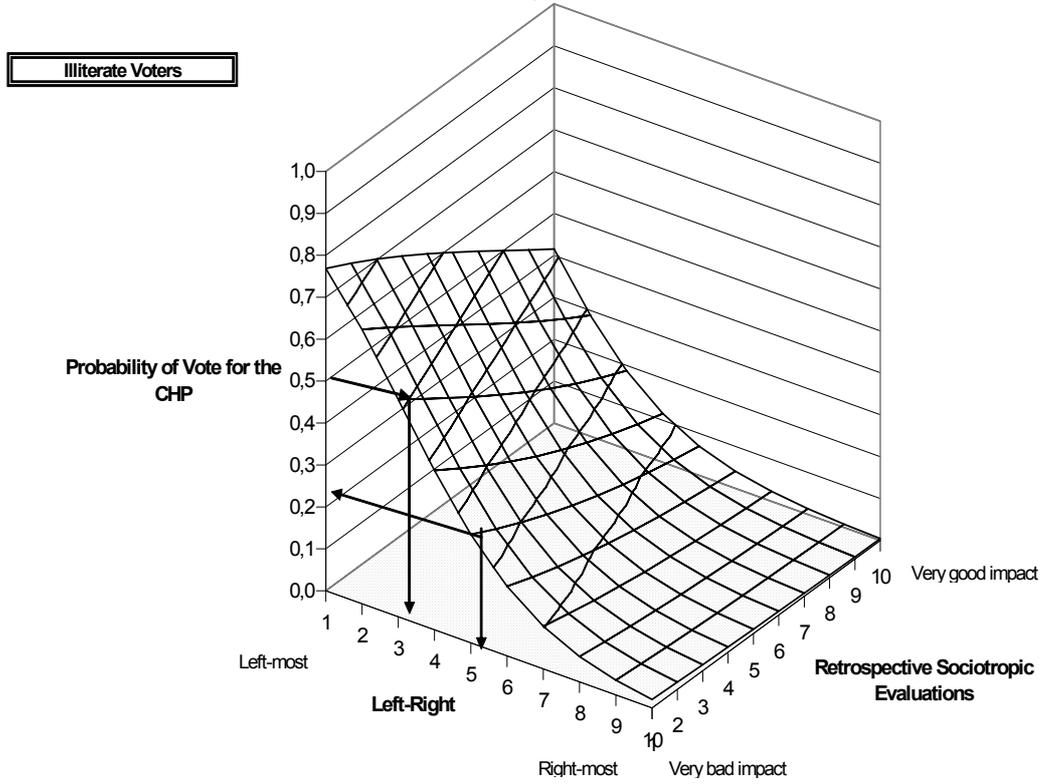
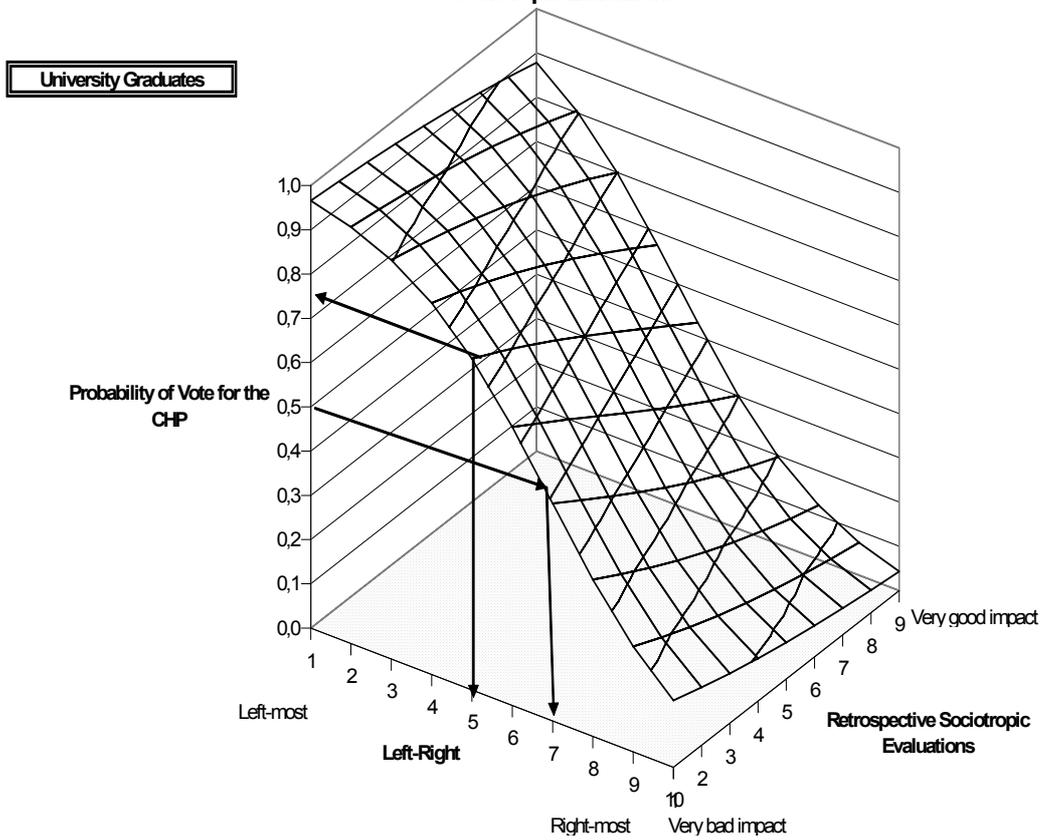


Figure 6. Likelihood of Vote for the CHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations



When we look at the picture of simulation results for the MHP we observe that its likelihood of vote never rises above 50% for any combination of ideological position and economic evaluations. For the illiterate group, even at the far right end of the left-right spectrum and at the lowest possible economic evaluation, we see that the likelihood of vote for the MHP rather than any other party is about 35%. The same position for a university graduate raises this likelihood to about 50%. However, for all other combinations we observe less than 50% likelihood to pick the MHP compared to all other parties.

An interesting comparison is to set the AKP as opposed to only the MHP rather than the rest of the whole electorate. Figure 8 shows such comparisons for the illiterate and university graduates group. We see that the AKP's vote likelihood at the lowest economic evaluation level is above 50% up to about the mid-point of the left-right scale. Right of the middle with low economic evaluations seem to shift voters towards the MHP. However, even at the lowest economic evaluations and the right-most position we see that typical voters are about 44% likely to vote for the AKP. As their ideological positions move towards the middle their likelihood quickly rises above 50% in favor of the AKP and away from the MHP.

The impact of education in strengthening of the ideological predispositions become clearer when we look at the university graduates group comparing only the AKP and MHP. Among the university graduates the surface of the likelihood of vote for the AKP is such that as economic evaluations get better university graduates at all ideological positions become more likely to vote for the AKP compared to the MHP. This is similar to the lowest education level of illiterates but much more pronounced. However, as university graduates move from left to right at all economic evaluation levels we also observe that they become less likely to vote for the AKP compared to the MHP. In other words, controlling for the economic evaluation levels, shifting ideological positions from left to right render university graduates less likely to vote for the AKP and more likely to vote for the MHP.

We see that for points below 3 on the retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation scale, the likelihood of vote for the AKP compared only to the MHP is always below 43%. This suggests that these individuals

Figure 7. Likelihood of Vote for the MHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations

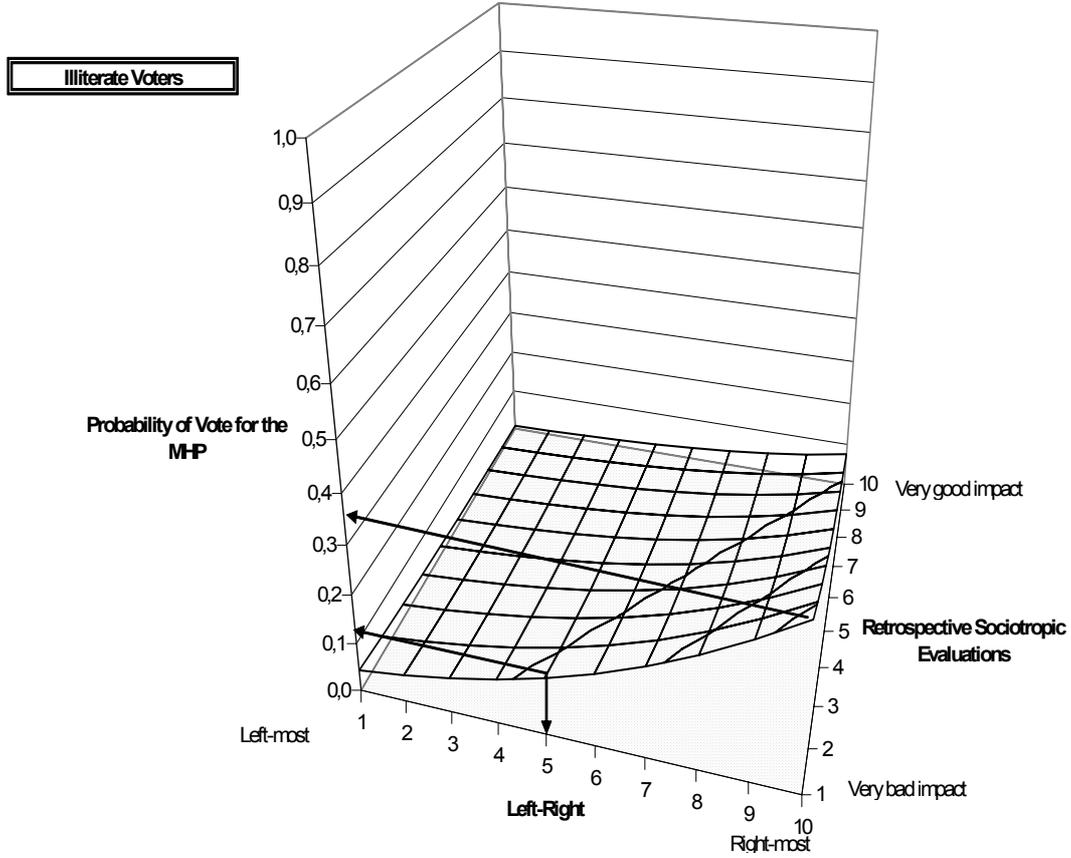
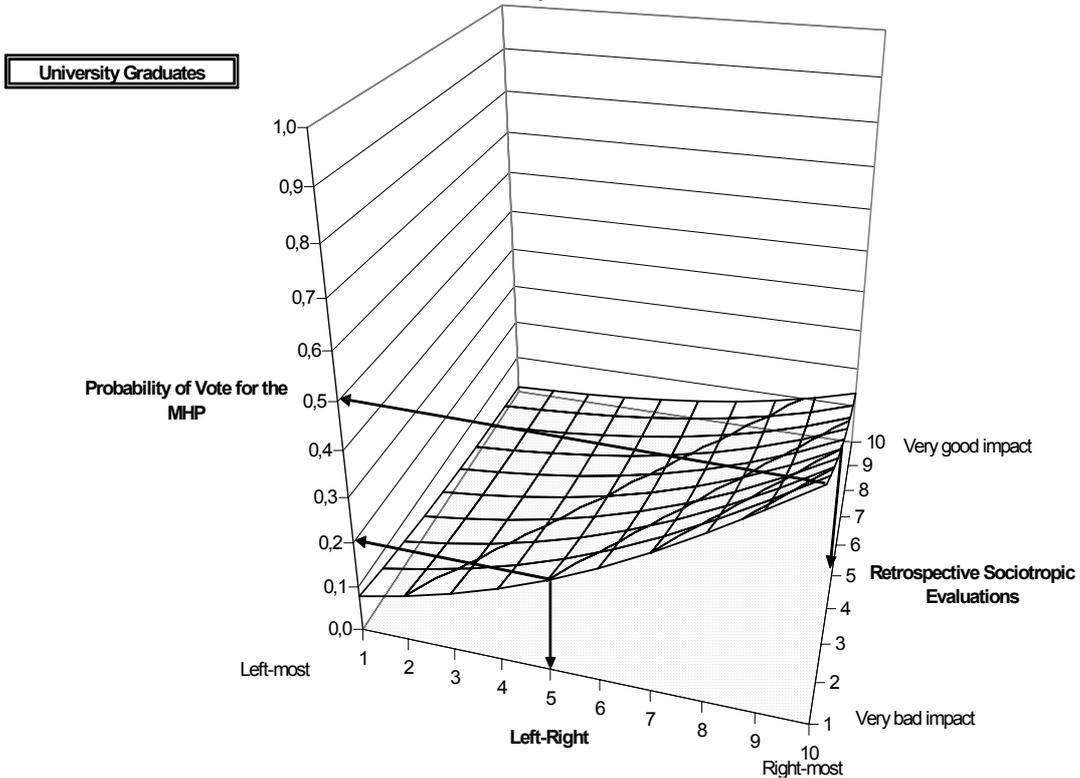


Figure 7. Likelihood of Vote for the MHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations



are more likely to vote for the MHP rather than the AKP after controlling for all impacts of the other variables in the model. At the highest education level it seems like unfavourable economic evaluations renders people more likely to support the MHP compared to the AKP irrespective of their ideological commitments. This is not surprising since we do not expect much of a differentiation on ideological grounds for the AKP and MHP voters.

In a sense the shape of this surface of probabilities resemble the case of the illiterate group for the AKP compared to the rest of the electorate in Figure 5. Such a shape suggests that only with right-wing ideological predispositions coupled with low economic evaluations does the likelihood of support for the MHP rises above that of the AKP.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Several characteristics of voter profiles of major party constituencies arise from the above analyses of the July 2007 election in Turkey. First, it is observed that younger voters tend towards the AKP and older ones for the opposition parties. Women are more likely to vote for the CHP and not for the MHP. Keeping all else constant and comparing the AKP and the MHP, women tend to vote for the AKP. Hence it seems that the AKP has a distinct advantage among women over only the MHP, which is unable to appeal to women as compared to any other party. Education level is significant in differentiating party constituencies. All else kept constant, lower education groups tend to vote for the AKP, and higher education groups tend towards the CHP and the MHP. Among the identity variables, Alevism ceases to be significant when non-demographic variables are taken into account. Kurdish ethnic background seems to push voters away from the CHP and MHP and towards independent candidates. However, controlling for the influences of other variables such as left-right ideology, economic evaluations, and partisan family background, Kurdishness does not seem to render voters more likely to vote for the AKP. In other words, despite the AKP's apparent dominant position at the east and southeast Anatolian provinces, micro-individual level data indicates that Kurdish background has no significant positive impact upon vote for the AKP after controlling for other influences.

Figure 8. Likelihood of Vote for the AKP compared only to MHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations

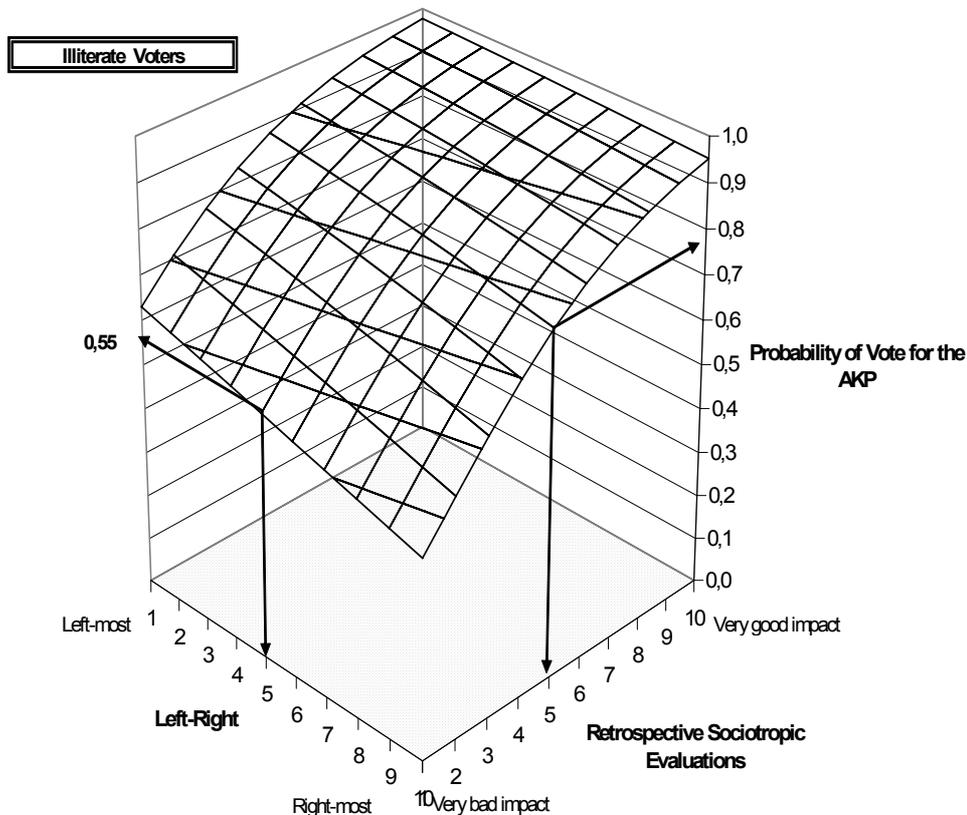
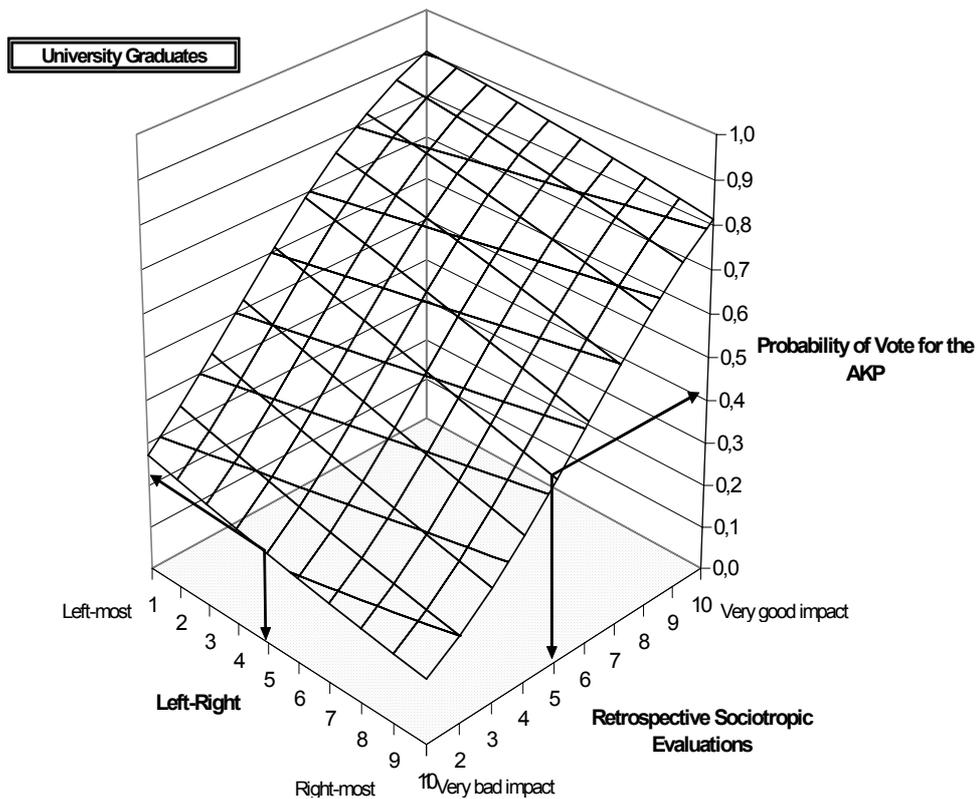


Figure 8. Likelihood of Vote for the AKP compared only to MHP with respect to changes in L-R and Retrospective Sociotropic Evaluations



Islamist or nationalist partisan family background persistently appears insignificant as an influence upon party choice. However, center-left and right partisan family background appears significant for choosing different parties. When mother and father both have a center-right partisan background their offspring is more likely to vote CHP as opposed to other major players and for the CHP as opposed to the MHP. When mothers and fathers have a center-left partisan background and if the AKP is compared with only the MHP, the offspring appears more likely to vote for the AKP. Center-left partisan background of fathers alone also pushes their offspring more towards the CHP and away from the MHP compared to the rest of the major players in the system. In short, when only parental partisan background is the focus, the center-left and right inclination of an earlier generation voters—that is, the present voters' parents—seem to diverge away from the older generation centrist parties and rather effectively push their offspring towards the newer generation represented by the AKP. However, the older generation's polarization between the CHP and the MHP still continues to be effective.

Non-economic issues such as the approval of Shari'a rule or the Kurdish problem have different impacts upon the ruling AKP as opposed to the opposition parties. While terror as the most important issue of the country appears insignificantly related to any party choice, the impact of a perceived Kurdish problem deteriorates the likelihood of voting for the AKP. Although a relatively smaller group compared to the early 2000s, those who would approve of a Shari'a-based religious state in Turkey are more likely to vote for the AKP than any other party.

Economic issues or evaluation of the government's economic policy performance as well as the two ideological variables appear most persistently significant in shaping voter decision. Evaluating the relative importance of these two groups of variables is tricky. Taking each variable into account alone, it is observed that retrospective sociotropic evaluations have the largest and most persistent impact on most party choice decisions. However, when different scenarios of variable interactions are evaluated, it is observed that education level differentiates the magnitude of influence upon party choice by retrospective sociotropic evaluations. As expected, at higher levels of education pragmatic economic evaluations are less effective

than they are for groups at lower levels of education.

Short- to mid-term implications of these findings for the electoral dynamics in the country are complex. The only major group among which the AKP has a significant disadvantage against its major competitor, the CHP, is the Alevi group. The reformist initiative of the AKP aimed at appealing to the Alevi community right after the election should thus not be surprising. The fact that the two major competitors of the AKP—that is, the CHP and the MHP—appear to have no appeal among the citizens of Kurdish background is obviously helping the AKP, especially in the east and southeastern Anatolian provinces. However, when controlling for the ideological and other influences that shape voter decisions, the AKP appears not to have a major sounding among the Kurdish community. This may be one particular reason as to why the AKP does not seem to suffer from this appeal when it campaigns in the western provinces. It seems that the appeal of the AKP in the east and southeast is more shaped by ideological conservative predispositions as well as economic evaluations prevalent among the citizens of Kurdish background rather than pure ethnic identity issues.

The most important implication of these findings concerns the dependence of the AKP upon favorable economic conditions or the favorable economic performance of the AKP government. The fact that economic pragmatism appears more significant than ideological predispositions, especially for the AKP constituency, might be good news for Turkish democracy. If the AKP government delivers on the economic front then they will be continuously rewarded at the polls. However, if they fail, then they will be swiftly punished since their constituency's ideological ties are relatively minor in support of the AKP. If the AKP vote were to depend more heavily on ideology, then any failure on the economic front could have possibly been made up by heavy reliance on ideological mobilization, which potentially is less concrete and ambiguous. However, the AKP does not seem to have that capacity to hold on to a core constituency on the basis of pure ideological mobilization. Knowing these dynamics, it could be expected that the AKP, facing deteriorating economic prospects, would try to highlight the salience of ideological positions in the hope of raising their positive influence upon AKP support among their core

constituencies. However, such ideological repositioning could potentially alienate major groups of voters, which could fail to counterbalance the loss of votes on economic grounds. The rising salience of the issue of the turban in public sphere may just be one such attempt on the part of the AKP government to divert or counterbalance the negative impact of a slowly developing economic downturn in the country due to deteriorating global economic conditions.

The above analysis also suggests that among the highest education group who carries the secularist resistance to the AKP the economic evaluations are not as important as they are for the lower education groups. These groups seem more likely to be motivated on the basis of ideology than compared to the illiterate group for example. This is not surprising considering the fact that higher education group is also less vulnerable facing economic downturn. However, the fact that more right-wing orientation deteriorates the likelihood of vote for the AKP compared only to the MHP is an interesting finding that needs further research. This implies that after controlling for economic evaluations as well as other factors just rendering people more left-wing may in fact increase their likelihood of support for the AKP compared to the MHP. This may be the basis for the so-called “liberal coalition” in support of the AKP.

## Appendix. INDICATORS IN ANALYSIS

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### *Demographic variables*

Age	Age in years for the respondents.
Women=1	Dummy variable equalling 1 for women and 0 for men.
Education	Education level, 1=illiterate no schooling, 2=literate but no schooling, 3=primary school, 4=secondary school, 5=high school and 6=University (+) graduate.
Alevi=1	1 for Alevi and 0 for others.
Kurdish=1	1 for citizens of Kurdish origin and 0 for others.
Urban=1	1 for living in urban setting and 0 for men.
Unemployed=1	1 for those out of work and 0 for others.

*Economic evaluations*

Retrospective pocketbook	Over the last year how much of an impact did the government's economic policies have upon your FAMILY'S economic condition? Please evaluate this on a 0 to 10 scale. "0" meaning a VERY BAD IMPACT, "10" meaning VERY GOOD IMPACT.
Retrospective sociotropic	On a similar scale could you evaluate the impact of the government policies upon TURKEY'S economic condition?
Prospective pocketbook	How will your FAMILY'S economic condition change over the next year? Evaluate this on a 0 to 10 scale. "0" meaning will be VERY BAD , "10" meaning will be VERY GOOD.
Prospective sociotropic	How will TURKEY'S economic condition change over the next year?
Life satisfaction (0-10)	All things considered to what extent are you satisfied with your life? Please use a 0 to 10 scale where "0" means that you are not at all satisfied, and "10" means that you are fully satisfied.

*Ideological positions*

Left-Right self-placement	In politics people sometimes talk about the left and the right. Where would you place your own views on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means the left-most and "10" means the right-most position?
Religious practice index	Over the last year, other than funeral services how often were you able to worship? 1= More than once a week, 2= Once a week, 3= Once a month, 4= In the month of Ramadan and kandil, 5= During religious vacations, once or twice a year, 6= Less than once a year.

*Partisan background*

Mother's p. (Center-right)	1 if mother voted DP, AP, DYP, ANAP, MDP.
Mother's p. (Nationalist)	1 if mother voted for the MHP, MÇP.
Mother's p. (Center-left)	1 if mother voted for the CHP, DSP.
Mother's p. (Islamist)	1 if mother voted for the MSP, RP, FP, or SP.
Father's p. (Center-right)	1 if father voted for DP, AP, DYP, ANAP, MDP.
Father's p. (Nationalist)	1 if father voted for the MHP, MÇP.
Father's p. (Center-left)	1 if father voted for the CHP, DSP.
Father's p. (Islamist)	1 if father voted for the MSP, RP, FP, or SP.

*Issue positions*

Terror important issue	1 if see this as one of country's two most important issues
Kurdish problem important	1 if see this as one of country's two most important issues
Approve of Shari'a	1 if approve a Shari'a-based religious state in Turkey

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The election system that requires a ten percent minimum nationwide vote share for gaining any seats in the TBMM allows for a large representational bias in favor of the large parties that secure more than this threshold of support. See William Hale, “The Electoral System and the 2007 Elections: Effects and Debates,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2008) for an account of the election system. See Ali Çarko lu and Ersin Kalaycıo lu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society* (I. B. Tauris, 2007) on political parties and elections in Turkey.

<sup>2</sup> See Ali Çarko lu, “A New Electoral Victory for the 'Pro-Islamists' or the 'New Centre-Right'? The Justice and Development Party Phenomenon in the July 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey,” *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2007), pp. 501-19 on a review of the July 2007 election process.

<sup>3</sup> See Aylin Güney, “The People’s Democracy Party,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 3, No.1 (2002), pp. 122-37 on Kurdish electoral politics.

<sup>4</sup> Serif Mardin, “Centre Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?” *Daedalus*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1973), pp. 169-90.

<sup>5</sup> Neither the “center” nor its complement, the “periphery,” has its pure and monolithic representatives. At times, both sides seem to carry traits of one another, and their concrete political stands have constantly changed over the years.

<sup>6</sup> The military has a long history during the Republican era of intervening, either directly as in 1960 and 1980 or indirectly as in 1971 and 1997 via decrees or demands from civilians, as was the case in the incident of the February 28, 1997 National Security Council meetings. See Hale, *Turkish politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994) for a detailed account of the military politics relationship in Turkey.

<sup>7</sup> Data collected as part of the Turkish Election Study 2007 suggests, for example, that the rallies were only supported by about half the electorate.

<sup>8</sup> Data collected as part of the Turkish Election Study 2007 suggests, for example, that the AKP was seen as more credible than all its competitors in dealing with terror and the Kurdish problem in the east and southeastern Anatolian provinces.

<sup>9</sup> A review of Turkish voting studies is beyond the scope of this article. However, Baslevent, C., Kirmano lu, H. and Senatalar, B. 2004. “Voter Profiles and Fragmentation in the Turkish Party System”, *Party Politics*, 10 (3): 307-324; Esmer, Yılmaz. 2001. “At the Ballot-Box: Determinants of

Voting Behaviour in Turkey”, in Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer (eds.) *Politics, Parties and Elections in Turkey*. Lynn Rienner, pp.91-114 as well as the chapters 6 and 7 in Çarko lu and Kalaycıo lu (2007) are three of the most recent relevant pieces in the literature.

<sup>10</sup>The sampling procedure adopted took a target sample size as 2,000. First, the Turkish Statistical Institute’s (Türkiye statistik Kurumu, TUIK) NUT-1 regions are adopted, and the target sample was distributed according to each region’s share of urban and rural population according to registered voter records for the 2002 election. TUIK’s block data was used with block size set at 200 residents. Ten voters were targeted to be reached from each block. The probability proportionate to population size (PPPS) principle was used in selecting neighborhood and villages from each TUIK-1 region of urban and rural localities. All neighborhoods and villages were separated into NUT-1 regions, and PPPS selection was applied to select neighborhoods and villages. From every NUT-1 region 200 neighborhoods and villages were selected in accordance with their urban rural shares within each region. For every one of these randomly selected, replacements were also picked in accordance with PPPS for cases where the ten planned interviews could not be completed in the primary selected neighborhood or village. From each of these neighborhoods, block addresses were obtained from TUIK. Ten addresses from each neighborhood were given to the fieldworkers, and all addresses were asked to be reached. When ten interviews could not be completed after two visits to each address, the remaining interviews were completed from the replacement block via the same procedure. In rural areas, the selected villages were visited and addresses were obtained from the local *muhtar* (headman). If ten interviews from a village could not be completed, its replacement village was visited and the same procedure was applied. In selecting the individual to be interviewed from each household an alphabetical list of all residents above the age of 18 was first formed. Then the alphabetically first name was selected for interview. If this individual was not available for interview in the household, a second individual in the same alphabetical order was selected for interview. Individuals who were replacements of the first selection were noted in the dataset for tests of significant difference. In order to take account of cancellations after the fieldwork controls at least two interviews were conducted from the replacement lists from each urban block and village.

<sup>11</sup> 7.6 percent of the total sample did not want to report their party of choice in the second wave. Nearly two-thirds of the same group (five percent of the sample) have, however, reported their intended party of choice in the first wave. The author used these reported intentions from the first wave as their party of choice to gain observations in the final analysis. These constitute about ten percent of the observations reported in the ensuing analyses.

<sup>12</sup> See Scott J. Long, *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables* (Sage Publications, 1997) for an accessible exposition of the logistic regression analysis.

<sup>13</sup> The inverse of the odds ratio for the negative influences give the likelihood of vote for the other parties as opposed to the likelihood to vote for the AKP. In other words, an odds ratio value of 0.53 indicates that the likelihood of an Alevi voter to vote non-AKP is slightly less than twice the likelihood of voting for the AKP ( $(1/0.53)=1.89$ ).

<sup>14</sup> See Ali Çarko lu, “Political Preferences of the Turkish Electorate: Reflections of an Alevi-Sunni Cleavage,” in the special issue of *Turkish Politics* on “Religion and Politics in Turkey,” Vol. 6, No. 2 (2005), pp. 273-92 on Alevism and party choice.

<sup>15</sup> Urban-rural divide and unemployment status consistently remain insignificant in this form and are dropped out of the equation.

<sup>16</sup> However, note here that the Hoshmer-Lemeshow test is significant for the AKP versus Independents comparison, suggesting that the estimated model predictions are significantly different from the real observed data. Thus, the validity of this model is doubtful.

<sup>17</sup> See Sahin Alpay’s article “22 Temmuz'da kim kime, niçin oy verdi?” [Who Voted for Whom on July 22?] in *Zaman* daily newspaper on September 6, 2007, on ideology and economic pragmatism.

<sup>18</sup> For Figure 5, age is set at 35 for non-Alevi and non-Kurdish males. All other economic evaluations are set at the mid-level of 5, religious practice is also set at the middle of the range at 3 for practice once a month, and mother and father’s partisan background is set at center-left parties. No issue impact is assumed.