

Attitudinal Orientation to Party Organizations in Turkey in the 2000s

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ABSTRACT *The Turkish party system experienced a serious blow in the early 1980s, when the military government in power closed down all the former legal political parties. Therefore, little evidence of strong psychological ties between voters and the political parties they supported at the polls is expected. This essay draws upon existing literature on voting behavior to develop four hypotheses to explain partisan affiliations of Turkish voters. Each of the hypotheses is then put to empirical tests, using data collected by means of a nationally representative survey. The four independent variables used in the four hypotheses are the role of parents' party identification (socialization), ideological orientations, economic expectations, and the ethnic identities of voters. Socialization emerges as a major determinant of partisan affiliation with the relatively older Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Action Party (MHP), while identifiers with the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) take few cues from their parents and pay more attention to the economic performance of that party in government. Ideology seems to play a major role in determining the psychological orientations of those who feel attached to the CHP versus the AKP or the MHP but little role in differentiating AKP from MHP voters. Ethnicity only plays a role in partisan affiliation with the MHP.*

Introduction

It has been more than half a century since the seminal study of Angus Campbell and his colleagues from the University of Michigan on the American voter unearthed that party identification functions as a most critical variable that determines the party choice of the voter.¹ Since then, much research has focused on the changing role of party identification in voters' decisions in their preference of supporting one party over the other(s) at the polls. Although studies of Turkish party preferences date back to the 1950s,² most studies have focused on the role played by such socio-economic factors as social class, socioeconomic status, urbanization, rural–urban differences, and the like and have refrained from investigating the role played by socio-psychological factors in determining the party preferences of the Turkish voters until quite recently.³ However, even those studies seem to have overlooked the role played by the identification of a voter in the determination of his/her party

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preference. This essay provides an examination of the relative role played by party identification in the determination of party preferences of Turkish voters.

Party Identification and Party Preference

Party identification as the psychological attachment to a political party, an entity separate from the act of voting, or even the propensity to vote for that political party has been incorporated into the political science literature since George Belknap and Angus Campbell's seminal article in 1952⁴ and more decisively since the 1954 publication of Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren Miller's *The Voter Decides*.⁵ As an attitude, party identification—especially when it is strongly felt—provides an important tool in explaining the choice of the voter at the polls without reference to his/her belief system.⁶ Partisan attitudes, which are another way of referring to party identification, enable the voter to economize from being involved in and attentive to the political developments of both the country and the world. Especially if the conceptualization and abstraction capacities of the voter are limited—for most voters whose educational background is not sufficient, or simply less than college or university level—party identification enables a reaction to current issues by reference to the party line. Party identification helps voters simplify complicated political issues, events, and ideas by means of adopting the arguments presented by the party spokesperson of the political party with which they identify. Particularly in the case of those who have a limited capacity for conceptualization, party identification provides a tool of simplification and comprehension of politics and boosts voters' chances of participating in elections.

Political socialization has pointed out that party identification is not necessarily a consciously and rationally developed attitude as one approaches voting age, which in Turkey has been 18 years of age since the 1980s. Children often start picking up cues for party identification from family elders at a relatively young age, which are often reinforced outside the small family circle at school and at the workplace during adolescence and beyond. Therefore, party identification often develops before one gets to vote. In several studies, this trend has been revealed in the United States, Japan, Britain, and continental Europe.⁷ Only one study so far has examined partisanship among elementary school children in Turkey; that study from the 1980s discovered that in the city of Bursa, among the girls in the fifth grade, 4.9 percent registered strong partisan identification and 29.6 percent registered some partisan identification, and among the boys in the fifth grade, 7.4 percent registered strong partisan identification and 36.1 percent registered some identification with a political party. These party identifications often coincided with the choice of their fathers' party identifications.⁸ Under the circumstances, it is plausible to assume that party identification runs in the family in Turkey as well. When both parents ostentatiously demonstrate identification with a political party, it seems almost impossible for the children not to be impressed by that show of partisanship.⁹

In institutionalized party systems, parties have been around for several generations. They are well-recognized political brand names. As such, feelings towards

them have taken root and have been passed down from one generation to the next. In fact, in a seminal study Philip Converse has shown that party identification also tends to become stable in institutionalized party systems.¹⁰ Only when post-industrial society leads to the erosion of parties and promotes direct participation in politics does party identification begin to erode as well, as independent voters who hopscotch across political parties from one general election to the next emerge in large numbers. However, since Turkey is only becoming an industrial society, it should be expected that the political characteristics of industrial society still hold in Turkey. It must be admitted that the Turkish party system experienced severe shocks in 1960 and 1980, when major political parties were banned from politics for long periods of time. Therefore, political socialization of voters into adopting political party identification or even affiliation was disrupted in 1960 and 1980. Under the circumstances, the older generation experienced severe blows to their political habits of supporting political parties and often experienced a difficult period of searching for a new political party that stood for the ideology, interests, and values of the former party with which they had been affiliated. Consequently, they failed to demonstrate with any clarity with which political party they had affiliated to their children. Not only was the party identification of the parents undermined, but the parents failed to help their children develop party identification as they gained their political selves. Hence, the record of Turkish voters indicates that there are many independent voters. Furthermore, some identify with political parties, yet even their identification may not have deep-running psychological roots that can survive several defeats at the polls. Turkish elections have witnessed staggering levels of volatility combined with fragmented voting patterns, which support many small parties, as independents switch sides from one political party to another from one general election to the next (see Table 1).

Some Turkish political parties are brand new organizations that have emerged since the 1980s, often on the premise that they represent a new political vision and mission. The Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) that ruled Turkey alone in government between 1983 and 1991 was established in May 1983, and the Justice and Development (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), which has been in power since 2002, was only established in August 2001. Both came into being by arguing that they represented new political parties of the conservative social forces and liberal economic interests in Turkey. ANAP boasted of encompassing all four major political currents—Turkish nationalism, Islamism, liberalism, and social democracy—within its ranks. The AKP also boasts of covering the ideological spread of the center and right and often declares itself to be the new center of the Turkish party system. With such grand ideological messages as catchall parties, they have often confused voters as to what their actual stances are. Orientation towards these new political parties has also been influenced by expectations of pecuniary gains, expected economic benefits, and other pragmatic motives, rather than anything ideological. The performance of the macroeconomic indicators of the country under the reign of a certain party or a coalition of parties in government and the expectations of the performance of the economy in the foreseeable future seemed to have

Table 1. Volatility and Fragmentation in the Turkish Party System

Elections	Volatility	Fragmentation of Votes	Fragmentation of Seats	Effective Number of Parties
1961	–	0.71	0.70	3.3
1965	24.5	0.63	0.63	2.6
1969	11.4	0.70	0.59	2.3
1973	28.4	0.77	0.70	3.3
1977	18.3	0.68	0.60	2.5
1983	–	0.66	0.61	2.5
1987	–	0.75	0.51	2.0
1991	16.6	0.79	0.71	3.5
1995	23.0	0.83	0.77	4.3
1999	22.6	0.84	0.79	4.8
2002	43.9	0.81	0.46	1.9
2007	17.3	0.72	0.56	3.6

Source: Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000), p.77. The table entries for the 1999, 2002, and 2007 elections are calculations by the author, using the same methods described by Özbudun.

played some role in determining popular orientations towards them. What is being suggested here is not different from the specific support suggested by David Easton.¹¹ Some voters tend to affiliate and eventually develop ties of identification with political parties that they believe promote their own economic interests, the economic interests of their families, and even of the country. Over time, as voters perceive that the economic interests that they hold dear are promoted by a certain political party, they identify with it.

Third, attitudes towards the role that religion plays in one's life have been deeply influential on political attitudes, beliefs, values, and party preferences in Turkey.¹² Attitudes towards the role that religion plays in Turkey have constituted a deep cleavage in Ottoman and later in Republican Turkish society between those who hold the "image of Good Society built around human reasoning and science" dear, on the one side, and those who hang on to the "image of Good Society built around tradition and religion as its core value," on the other. Those who belong to the former *kulturkampf* tend to develop affiliations and eventually identify with political parties that champion secularism and laïcité, while members of the opposite camp develop similar orientations and affiliations and eventually identify with the political parties that champion tradition and religiosity, which they often succinctly refer to as conservative values.

Fourthly, Turkish society has come under the influence of another cultural cleavage, which is driven not by religion but by ethnicity. There are those whose mother tongue is Kurdish, and there are the rest, who are overwhelmingly native Turkish

speakers. In fact, in the areas of the country where Kurds live in large numbers, those political parties that promote Kurdish identity and even propagate Kurdish nationalism often receive a great deal of electoral support in spite of the fact that those parties enjoy almost no chance of winning any representation in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). Under the circumstances, it is plausible to argue that those whose mother tongue is Kurdish often identify with political parties that promote Kurdish identity while others do not. Turkish speakers tend to vote for many different political parties, some of which may not even be considered nationalist, such as the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP), the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP), and the Justice and Development Party. Therefore, it is also plausible to assume that among those whose mother tongue is Turkish no such identity relation existed between them and the Turkish nationalist parties.

In the subsequent sections of this study, each of the four independent variables, and party identification as the dependent variable, will be operationalized, and the bivariate relations between each independent variable and party identification will be examined. In the latter part of the study, multivariate relations between the four independent variables and party identification will also be analyzed through a causal model. Consequently, it is possible to reach a conclusion about the role each and every independent variable plays in the determination of party identification. Which of the four sources of party identification plays the most, and which the least, important role in the determination of party identification in contemporary Turkish politics will be determined.

Data and Setting

The data for this study were collected through a national field survey of voter attitudes, values, beliefs, orientations, and reported behavior concerning party preferences during the July 22, 2007 general elections in Turkey.¹³ The sampling procedure took a target sample size as 2,000. First, the Turkish Statistical Institute's (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, TÜİK) NUT-1 regions were adopted, and the target sample was distributed according to each region's share of urban and rural population according to registered voter records for 2002 election. TÜİK's block data were used, and it was decided to take the 200 blocks of equal size. The target was to reach 10 voters from each block. The probability was applied proportionate to the population size principle (PPPS) in selecting neighborhoods and villages from each TÜİK-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. For every one of these blocks, a randomly selected a replacement was also picked in accordance with PPPS for cases where the 10 planned interviews could not be completed in the primary selected neighborhood or village. From each of these neighborhoods, block addresses were obtained from TÜİK. Ten addresses from each neighborhood were given to the fieldworkers, who were asked to reach all the addresses. When 10 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 village headman (*muhtar*). If 10 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 an interview. If this individual was not available for an interview, a second individual in the household in the same alphabetical order was selected for an 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. The surveys were conducted in the month before the general elections, in the heat of the election campaign period, when voter attention to the political parties, candidates, and political issues of the day was at a peak. A total of 2,018 prospective voters were interviewed at their households, and the resulting sampling error was +/-2.3 percent.

The Dependent Variable

In the survey, the respondents were asked to register whether they identified with a political party,¹⁴ and if so, to name the political party with which they identified. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they identified with a political party (see Table 2), and 67 percent of those who responded affirmatively indicated that they identified with the AKP, the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), or the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) (see Table 2). In the following sections, the reasons for the differences between the categories of Table 2—that is, those who identified with a political party versus independents—and the categories of Table 3—that is, those who identified with one political party as opposed to another—will be examined.

These responses tend to give the impression that a relatively large number of Turkish voters identify with one party or another. Such a picture seems to be highly exaggerated, for most Turkish parties, including the government party, the AKP, are brand new organizations. While they can attract sympathies, the idea of widespread identification seems to be somewhat outlandish.¹⁵ However, since party identification is a psychological construct that indicates the attachment of an individual voter to a political party, symbol, and/or organization, the declared propensities of the

Table 2. As of Today, Do You Identify with a Political Party?

Codes Responses	Frequency	Percent
2 Yes	1,355	67.1
1 No	663	32.9
Total	2,018	100.0

Table 3. The Party with Which the Respondent Declares Identification

Codes Party		Frequency	Percent
5	AKP	729	36.1
8	BBP	3	0.1
2	CHP	250	12.4
4	DP/DYP	57	2.8
3	GP	49	2.4
7	MHP	154	7.6
6	SP	19	0.9
1	DTP	27	1.3
0	Independent	685	33.9
Missing	No Response	45	2.2
Total		2,018	100.0

voters to have a partisan affiliation to a party organization, more or less to be a fan of the party (*parti tutmak* in Turkish), will be used as the definition of party identification in this paper.

Under the circumstances, it is possible to employ an ordinal measure of party identification as presented in Table 3, or a dichotomous measure of party identification based upon the data presented in Table 3, such that it is possible to code each party separately and to assign “1” to those who registered identification with that party and “0” to those who failed to do so. For example, for the AKP, it is possible to assign “1” to all those who registered that they identified with that party and “0” to all other responses. In this study, a logistic binary regression is used to test the four hypotheses proposed in the preceding pages and to employ the dichotomous measure of party identification for each of the political parties for which there are a sufficient number of observations.

Independent Variables

Parental Party Identification

The party identification of the parents of voters in the 2007 elections constitutes the independent variable of the socialization hypothesis presented in the preceding sections. If Turkey had parties that had been in existence without interruption for a few generations, then it would be possible to observe the association between the party identification of parents with a certain party and their offspring as the voters under analysis with the same political party. However, since such political continuities do not exist for all the political parties in the Turkish party system, for some parties all that can be observed is the connection between the left-, center-, and right-wing parties with which the parents had been identified in the past and the party with which their offspring and the respondent identifies today.

Table 4. Party Identification (Attitude and Reported Voting Record)

Party Identification	Frequency	Percent
Justice and Development (AKP)	476	23.6
Republican People's Party (CHP)	141	7.0
Nationalist Action Party (MHP)	68	3.4
Democratic Society Party (DTP)	13	0.6
Democrat Party (DP)	20	1.0

A close examination of Tables 5 and 6 indicates that a majority of the respondents can name what they recall as their mother's or father's party identification. Interestingly enough, the plurality of responses indicates that the CHP, which has been around for more than 80 years in Turkish politics, was the party with which the parents identified most. However, a close examination of Table 3 indicates that one of the most recently established parties, the AKP, is not only the most successful party at the polls but also the one that boasts the greatest level of voter identification, though no voter had either parent identifying with it yet, for that party is only six years old.

The party identification data of the mothers and fathers of the voters is categorized in line with the knowledge of the left–right position of the former and current political parties in Turkey, as shown in Table 6. Few of the respondents mentioned other parties, and these were omitted as missing from the analysis (see Table 6).

Table 5. Do You Remember If Your Mother Identified with a Party? If So, Which One?

Codes Party	Frequency	Percent
4 DP	164	8.1
2 CHP	290	14.4
4 AP	88	4.4
6 CKMP	2	0.1
5 MSP	24	1.2
6 MHP	77	3.8
3 DSP	112	5.6
4 DYP	150	7.4
5 FP	24	1.2
4 ANAP	119	5.9
1 HADEP	20	1.0
5 RP	68	3.4
0 Independent	42	2.1
Missing Other Parties	4	0.2
Missing Don't Know	834	41.3
Total	2,018	100.0

Table 6. Do You Remember If Your Father Identified with a Party? If So, Which One?

Codes Party	Frequency	Percent
4 DP	178	8.8
2 CHP	287	14.2
4 AP	105	5.2
6 CKMP	2	0.1
5 MSP	30	1.5
6 MHP	94	4.7
3 DSP	119	5.9
4 DYP	168	8.3
5 FP	26	1.3
4 ANAP	113	5.6
1 HADEP	18	0.9
5 RP	66	3.3
0 Independent	45	2.2
Missing Other Parties	3	0.2
Missing Don't Know	764	37.9
Total	2018	100.0

Satisfaction with the Government's Management of the Economy

Evaluations, perceptions, and reactions to the economic policies of the government are operationalized by means of a principal factor analysis of six items that tapped the following:

- 1) Over the last year how much of an impact did the economic policies of the government have upon your FAMILY's economic condition?
- 2) On a similar scale could you evaluate the impact of the government policies upon TURKEY's economic condition?
- 3) How satisfactory is your PRESENT personal economic condition?
- 4) How will your FAMILY's economic condition change over the next year?
- 5) How will TURKEY's economic condition change over the next year?
- 6) In the past year how has the economic welfare of your household fared?

The first five items were measured by 11-point scales that ran between "very bad = 0" and "very good = 10." The last item was measured by a five-point scale that ran between "could only survive with debt = 1" and "able to save some income = 5." When these six items were factor-analyzed through a principal components procedure, a single dimension of economic satisfaction was extracted, as shown in Table 7. Factor scores for the single dimension of "Economic Satisfaction" were computed and used in the following tests of the economic satisfaction hypothesis.

Table 7. Economic Perceptions and Expectations from the Government's Economic Policies

Items	Economic Satisfaction
1. Over the last year how much of an impact did the government's economic policies have upon your FAMILY's economic condition?	0.801
2. On a similar scale could you evaluate the impact of the government policies upon TURKEY's economic condition?	0.836
3. How satisfactory is your PRESENT personal economic condition?	0.764
4. How will your FAMILY's economic condition change over the next year?	0.805
5. How will TURKEY's economic condition change over the next year?	0.817
6. In the past year how has your household fared?	0.421

Religiosity

Voters' feelings towards religion and religious observance were measured through a set of questions that the respondents answered in the pre-election survey of 2007. The questions posed are listed as items that were submitted to a principal components factor analysis run, and they are as follows:

- 1) Do you belong to a religion?
- 2) Over the last year, other than for funeral services, how often were you able to go to mosque for worship?
- 3) Irrespective of how often you actually worship, how religious do you consider yourself to be?
- 4) Can people freely practice their worship in accordance with the stipulations of their religion?
- 5) Are religious people under oppression in Turkey?
- 6) Would you like to see a *Şariat-* (Shari'a) based religious state founded in Turkey?

The items do not indicate that they load on a single dimension, for three linearly independent dimensions emerged from the factor analysis run (see Table 8). One dimension consists of freedom of conscience, another consists of faith in religion, and the third one emphasizes Shari'a-based practice and rule in Turkey, which may best be referred to as political Islam. The factor scores that correspond to each dimension were separately computed and used in the following test of the religiosity hypothesis of party identification in Turkey.

Ethnicity

In this study, ethnicity is measured by reference to mother tongue and knowledge of Turkish, Kirmanç, or some other language. In the following, the respondents' answers

Table 8. Religiosity in Turkey

Items	Freedom of Conscience	Faith	Political Islam
1. Belong to a religion	0.046	<i>0.866</i>	-0.184
2. Attend mosque services to worship	0.008	0.143	<i>0.749</i>
3. How religious voter feels	0.005	<i>0.732</i>	0.413
4. Freely practice religion or worship	<i>-0.861</i>	-0.039	0.038
5. Religious people are oppressed	<i>0.830</i>	0.010	0.167
6. Desire Şeriat state in Turkey	0.105	-0.084	<i>0.691</i>

to the question on what language they spoke with their mothers as children at home are presented (see Tables 9 and 10). Those who spoke some Kurdish dialect with their mothers while growing up and who are still fluent in some dialect of Kurdish constitute about 11.9 percent of the sample. In this study, ethnicity is measured by those whose tongue is some dialect of Kurdish versus others, who overwhelmingly are fluent only in Turkish. The former category of respondents was assigned “1” in the data set, while the others were assigned “0.”

Findings

In the theoretical section of this study, four sources that potentially influence and determine party identification in Turkey were proposed. Instead of examining the bivariate relations between each source and the party identification of the voters, the relations between the sources (independent variables) and partisan affiliation of the voters in a multivariate analysis are examined in the following. In a multivariate analysis of the four sources of party identification, it is not only possible to observe the association between each independent variable (source) and the dependent variable (party identification) but also to assess the relative importance of each source

Table 9. Language Spoken with Mother at Home (First Mentioned)

Language	Frequency	Percent
Turkish	1,700	84.2
Kırmanç	140	6.9
Arabic	21	1.0
Zaza	18	0.9
Laz	7	0.3
Other	22	1.1
No Response	110	5.5
Total	2,018	100.0

Table 10. Language Spoken with Mother at Home (Second Mentioned)

Language	Frequency	Percent
Turkish	48	2.4
Kırmanç	33	1.6
Arabic	2	0.1
Zaza	4	0.2
Laz	2	0.1
Other	4	0.2
Missing	1,925	95.4
Total	2,018	100.0

vis-à-vis all of the other sources. The multivariate analysis technique employed in this study is logistic binary regression.

Justice and Development Party (AKP)

When parental party identification, perceptions of the economic performance of the government, religiosity, and ethnicity are introduced as independent variables in determining party identification of those who purport to identify with the AKP, where AKP identity is assigned “1” and all other responses “0,” it is observed that economic satisfaction and political Islam emerge as important sources (see Table 11). Youth also seem to be more inclined to identify with the AKP, though the relationship between age and party identification is quite small in magnitude (see Table 11).

The findings reported in Table 12 indicate that those who identify closely with and systematically vote for the party do seem to be children of those parents who formerly identified with one of the National Outlook (Milli Görüş) parties.

Table 11. AKP Party Identification

Independent Variables	<i>B</i>	Significance	Exp. <i>b</i>
Both Parents identify with DP or AP	0.282	0.037	0.326
Voter’s Age	-0.011	0.010	0.990
<i>Economic Satisfaction</i>	<i>1.020</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>2.774</i>
Freedom of Conscience	0.290	0.000	1.337
Faith	0.024	0.691	1.025
<i>Political Islam</i>	<i>0.608</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>1.836</i>
Ethnicity	0.292	0.107	1.340
Constant	-0.411	0.025	0.663

Note: 74.6 percent of the cases were correctly predicted.

Table 12. AKP Party Identification

Independent Variables	<i>b</i>	Significance	Exp. <i>b</i>
<i>Both Parents Identify with MSP, RP, or FP</i>	0.895	0.001	2.446
Voter's Age	-0.008	0.043	0.992
<i>Economic Satisfaction</i>	1.020	0.000	2.774
Freedom of Conscience	0.281	0.000	1.325
Faith	0.025	0.680	1.025
<i>Political Islam</i>	0.581	0.000	1.788
Ethnicity	0.278	0.127	1.320
Constant	-0.469	0.011	0.625

Note: 75.4 percent of the cases were correctly predicted.

However, Table 12 fails to improve the predictive capability of the four hypotheses incorporated in this study. Indeed, when Tables 11 and 12 are observed together it seems to be that those who identify with the AKP come from a conservative background and tend to be practicing Sunni Muslims, yet their main motive seems to be more economic than cultural or theological. Nevertheless, the roots of the AKP seem to be better placed in the political Islamist tradition of the Milli Görüş movement than the right-of-center, liberal-conservative traditions of the Democrat and Justice Parties.

What complicates the matter is the relatively new arrival of the AKP in Turkish politics. The party was formed by a group of younger members of the political Islamist Virtue Party (FP) who split from the FP when it was banned by the Constitutional Court. However, the AKP leadership went on to recruit non-Islamists to their ranks. Indeed, in the 2007 elections they co-opted various laicist and former CHP members, including a former general secretary of the CHP among its candidates, who not only became a member of the AKP parliamentary group in the National Assembly but also the minister of culture in the AKP government. The AKP has a very short history, which started on August 14, 2001, and therefore it is not clear as to whether the previous generations of voters can be determined as those who had voted for the political Islamist Milli Görüş parties from the ranks of which the AKP front bench emerged or from the moderate right-wing parties from which the rest of the party members emerged. For that reason, the same multivariate analysis was run twice in order to better assess what role, if any, parents played in determining the party identification of voters in 2007.

The findings presented in Tables 11 and 12 further provide empirical evidence that give credibility to the argument that economic benefits and satisfaction with the performance of the AKP in government constitutes the most important single source that determines feelings of partisan affiliation towards it. Tables 11 and 12 also provide evidence that the AKP is more identified by voters whose parents had been identified with Milli Görüş or the political Islamist MSP, RP, and FP than the

liberal–conservative Democrat Party and Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP). Thus, political Islam and sensitivities concerning freedom of conscience and religion also continue to play some role in determining partisan affiliations towards the AKP, yet they seem to be secondary to economic satisfaction and prospects for economic improvement felt by the voters.

Republican People’s Party (CHP)

It is relatively easier to test the socialization hypothesis for identifiers of the Republican People’s Party (CHP). The CHP emerged out of the ranks of the formerly established People’s Party (1922) about a year after the declaration of the Republic, in November 1924, as the first party of the Republican era.¹⁶ It is possible to find many parents who have identified with the CHP in the past, and testing the socialization hypothesis by observing the correlation between the CHP identifiers and their parents’ record of party identification suffices. In the following, those who reported that they identified with the CHP are coded as “1” and all the rest as “0.”

Parental influence emerges as the most salient determinant of identification with the CHP, which is followed by laicism and economic dissatisfaction. Economic dissatisfaction and laicism carry almost equal weights, whereas parental influence is about four times as important in influencing one’s partisan affiliation with the CHP (see Tables 13). Voter’s age has a positive but negligible impact on the determination of feelings of party identification towards the CHP. Ethnic identity plays no role in determining either measure of party identification.

Nationalist Action Party (MHP)

In the case of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), somewhat unlike the AKP and to a certain extent parallel with the CHP, the origins travel a relatively long distance

Table 13. CHP Party Identification

Independent Variables	<i>b</i>	Significance	Exp. <i>b</i>
<i>Both Parents Identify with CHP</i>	1.983	0.000	7.267
Voter’s age	0.034	0.000	1.035
<i>Economic Satisfaction</i>	-0.549	0.000	0.577
Freedom of Conscience	-0.408	0.001	0.665
Faith	-0.122	0.193	0.885
<i>Political Islam</i>	-0.679	0.000	0.507
Ethnicity	-0.512	0.163	0.600
Constant	-4.382	0.000	0.013

Note: 88.1 percent of the cases were correctly predicted.

by Turkish standards. The MHP had been present in the pre-1980 era, and just like the CHP it was banned by the military government of the 1980–83 era, and re-emerged after 1995. Furthermore, the MHP emerged out of the ranks of the former Republican Peasant Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi, CKMP) in the mid-1960s. The CKMP could trace its roots back to the beginnings of the multi-party era in the 1940s. In consequence, when considered together, the CKMP and MHP have been around for at least 60 years in Turkish politics. Therefore, the CKMP and MHP identification of parents can be included as a single category into the data analysis. Parallel to the former analyses of the AKP and CHP, in the following two different versions of the dependent variable, the self-reported partisan affiliation and also reported voting record and voting intention are combined, so that all those respondents who met all of those conditions were assigned a value of “1” for MHP identification, and the rest of the respondents were assigned a MHP identification of “0.”

Political socialization and ethnic identity (feeling Turkish) seem to play equally important and extremely strong roles in determining identification with the MHP (see Table 14). Economic dissatisfaction seems to play a slight role, and so does lack of concern for freedom of conscience (see Table 14). Those who tend to identify with the MHP are influenced by their Turkish identity and also by the partisan affiliations of their parents, who had also identified with the MHP and its predecessor, the CKMP.

Conclusions

In the preceding data analysis it was revealed that although its roots scatter widely across the right of the left–right spectrum of ideologies in Turkey, the AKP still seems to be more attractive to those whose political origins sprouted from the political Islamist Milli Görüş movement and its parties. The findings also demonstrate moderate influence of parental party identification on the voters’ party identification with the AKP. It seems as if in the case of a new party such as the AKP where there

Table 14. MHP Party Identification

Independent Variables	<i>B</i>	Significance	Exp. <i>b</i>
<i>Both Parents Identify with CKMP/MHP</i>	2.312	0.000	10.098
Voter’s age	−0.002	0.733	0.998
<i>Economic Satisfaction</i>	−0.396	0.000	0.673
Freedom of Conscience	−0.282	0.018	0.754
Faith	0.156	0.082	1.168
Political Islam	0.090	0.398	1.094
<i>Ethnicity</i>	−2.701	0.008	0.067
Constant	−2.565	0.000	0.077

Note: 92.5 percent of the cases were correctly predicted.

is some confusion about its antecedents and origins economic considerations and ideological evaluations matter much more than parental records of party identification. Voters cannot get much information or any meaningful cues from their parents in developing their feelings of partisan affiliation with a brand new party, which may represent a break with the party system. However, the argument here is not that voters fail to receive any cues from their parents regarding party identification. What the voters receive as cues and hints from their parents on party identification have not been quite relevant in the case of the AKP.

Second, under the circumstances it is plausible to conclude that the AKP is not a simple continuation of the Milli Görüş movement in a new garb but a break from such an origin. The AKP also does not seem to be a continuation of the former right-of-center parties, such as the DP of the 1950s or the AP of the 1960s and 1970s either. The AKP seems to be a brand new phenomenon of the Turkish party system. It is a right-wing party that represents conservative-traditional Sunni Islamic voters on the one hand and the liberalization of the economy in market capitalism on the other. The AKP seems to be veering towards being a liberal-conservative party with a political reform agenda in Turkish politics, and as such behaves more like a mass, or even a catchall party that resonates well in a society that has become increasingly conservative and traditional in sociocultural matters and liberal in its economic orientations. The AKP may thus be considered to be a new party of the emerging industrial society of Turkey. However, it is a right-wing party by all means. Turkey seems to lack any other party that stands as similarly popular on the left in the emerging industrial society of Turkey.¹⁷ It is not yet clear how such a position can be formulated in a society in which less than 20 percent define themselves as left-wing.¹⁸

For the AKP, being a brand new political party, the parental party identification of the voters no longer mattered. Instead, economic factors and favorable perceptions of management of the economy by the AKP government seem to have been generating sympathy for the AKP, which seems to be contributing to identification with that party. The perceived beneficial management of the economy by the AKP government seems to create specific support for the party. Over time, and in the absence of socialization influences of the family and a successful political challenge of a left-wing party, the economic performance of the AKP seems to be set to function as the most critical determinant of its fate.

Third, religious conservatism, which banks on traditional Sunni Islamic values, also seems to play a role in developing partisan affiliations towards the AKP. It is more plausible to interpret the role of religion as a background factor, which helps to provide credit or credibility to the AKP in the eyes of the conservative majority of Turkish voters. It is very unlikely for any major group of non-Sunni or secular voters to develop any strong feelings of partisanship towards the AKP. This does not mean that it is a religious party, but it is a party with a very strong conservative Sunni faction within its ranks and a strong voter support among the tradition-bound Sunni plurality in Turkish politics outside its ranks. However, this support is not necessarily ideological but is probably practical, based on economic evaluations and expectations.

Fourth, it seems as if party identification starts in the family relatively early in life in Turkey. It is in the family environment where the first cues about partisan sympathies and antipathies are transmitted in Turkey. In political parties whose antecedents and origins are clearer than those of the AKP, such as the CHP and the MHP, parental records matter the most. The sons and daughters of those who had voted for the CHP in the twentieth century now tend to develop partisan affiliation towards the CHP, and same is true for the MHP. When there are strong signs of identification of the parents with a political party, their sons and daughters tend to develop the same sympathies and affiliations over time. Only when a severe disruption provides an opportunity for a brand new political party to emerge does the family nexus seem to play a much more moderate role, as has been the case with the AKP. As and when Turkish political parties institutionalize, the family ties in partisan affiliations should be expected to be observed more clearly. The AKP of today is in the process of creating partisan affiliations among its supporters, which will breed the next generation of partisans, whose feelings of support will not only be specific but diffuse as well. What the CHP and the MHP are both enjoying today seems to be mostly diffuse support, for there seems to be too little in the way of specific support they can demonstrate.

The fifth and the final finding of this study is that secular versus religious and Turkish versus Kurdish ethnic identities of the voters seem to play a role on top of the initial socialization to party identification they acquire at home. It may be the case that parents do not only provide cues for party identification but also drop more than a few hints about their attitudes towards religion and secularism on the one hand and their own ethnic identities and how strongly they feel about them on the other. Research has shown that secular and religious orientations and ethnicity are important determinants of party preferences (voters' choices) at the polls.¹⁹ In the preceding analysis of this essay it was discovered that partisan affiliations and secularism and religiosity are correlated. Ethnicity is also correlated with party identification in the case of the MHP. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that during the construction of their political selves, Turkish voters instill in their minds all of these attitudes and values as a bundle, whereby these attitudes and orientations reinforce each other to create right, center, and left-wing orientations among voters. Simultaneously, voters also develop partisan sympathies relatively early on in life and eventually develop interpretations of secularism, religion, and ethnicity, which coincide with their partisan identification earlier developed in life. However, the mechanics of how these cultural characteristics and conditioning work are still not well researched in Turkey. From the findings of this study, only references to possibilities and probabilities about the role of cultural cleavages that need to be researched properly and empirically observed in future research can be made.

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Notes

1. Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E Stokes Campbell, *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley, 1960).
2. For a review of the early literature on Turkish voting behavior and some of the major contributions see the following: Nermin Abadan, *1965 Seçimlerinin Anayasa Hukuku ve Siyaset Bilimi Açısından Tahlili* [Analysis of the 1965 Elections from the Perspective of Constitutional Law and Political Science] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Yayını, 1966); Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye’de Sosyal Değişme ve Siyasal Katılma* [Social Change and Political Participation in Turkey] (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayını, 1975); Ergun Özbudun, “Turkey,” in Jacob M. Landau, Ergun Özbudun and Frank Tachau (eds.), *Electoral Politics in the Middle East: Issues, Voters and Elites* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp.107–43; Üstün Ergüder, “Changing Patterns of Electoral Behavior in Turkey,” *Boğaziçi University Journal (Social Sciences)*, Vols. 8–9 (1980–1981), pp.45–69; Ergun Özbudun, “The Turkish Party System: Institutionalization, Polarization, and Fragmentation,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.17, No.2 (1981), pp.228–40; Üstün Ergüder and Richard I. Hofferbert, “The 1983 General Elections in Turkey: Continuity or Change in Voting Patterns,” in Metin Hepar and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), pp.81–92.
3. For the study of socio-psychological factors in voting behavior in Turkish politics see the following: Ersin Kalaycıoğlu “Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey: Changes and Continuities in the 1990s,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.27, No.3 (1994), pp.402–24; Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “The Shaping of Party Preferences in Turkey: Coping with the Post-Cold War Era,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.20 (1999), pp.47–76. Yılmaz Esmer, “At the Ballot Box: Determinants of Voting Behavior,” in Sabri Sayari and Yılmaz Esmer (eds.), *Politics, Parties, and Elections in Turkey* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp.91–114; Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Participation and Stability in an Islamic Society* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007).
4. George Belknap and Angus Campbell, “Political Party Identification and Attitudes toward Foreign Policy,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol.15 (1952), pp.601–23.
5. Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin and Warren Miller, *The Voter Decides* (Evanston, IL: Roy Peterson, 1954).
6. Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba and John R. Petrucic, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.38.
7. See J. Dennis and D.J. Mc Crone, “Preadult Development of Political Party Identification in Western Democracies”, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.3, No.2 (1970), pp.244–48; A. Kubota and R.E. Ward, “Family Influence and Political Socialization in Japan,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.3, No.2 (1970), pp.148–51; R.E. Dowse and J. Hughes, “The Family, the School and the Political Socialization Process,” *Sociology*, Vol.5, No.1 (1971), pp.24–28; E.T. Zureik, “Party Images and Partisanship among Young Englishmen,” *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.25, No.2 (1974), pp.189–92; M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, *Political Character of Adolescence: The Influence of Families and Schools* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp.37–62, 168–77; P.A. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.179–205.
8. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Ali Yaşar Şarbay, “İlkokul Çocuklarının Parti Tutmasını Belirleyen Etkenler,” [Factors that Determine the Party Identification of Primary School Children] *Toplum ve Ekonomi* [Society and Economy], Vol.1, No.1 (1991), pp.146–49.
9. Jennings and Niemi, *Political Character of Adolescence*, pp.168–74.
10. Converse argued that the more a current voter’s father identified with a political party, and the more the current voter in question voted, the higher the chances that he or she will be identified with a political party. For a more elaborate treatment of the subject see Philip Converse, “Of Time and Partisan Stability,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.2 (1969), pp.139–71.
11. “Specific” and “diffuse support” in this study is employed in the sense that David Easton formulated them in his book on systems analysis: David Easton, *Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley, 1965).

12. For findings on the role that religiosity plays in determining political attitudes and behavior in Turkey see: Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Türkiye’de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset* [Religion, Society and Politics in Turkey] (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2000); Binnaz Toprak, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol.6, No.2 (2005), pp.167–86; Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye’de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset* [Religion, and Politics in Changing Turkish Society] (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2006); Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp.104–6; and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Religiosity and Protest Behavior: The Case of Turkey in Comparative Perspective,” *The Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol.9, No.3 (2007), pp.275–91.
13. This survey is also explained in the introduction to this volume.
14. The question that was posed was “Siz bugün herhangi bir siyasi partiyi tutuyor musunuz?” which translates into English as “As of today (currently) are you a fan of a political party?” The concept of “party identification” is hard to translate into Turkish, for the concept of identification does not exist in colloquial Turkish. It is possible to translate identification as “özdeşleşme,” which was employed in focus groups, and the standard reaction was a blank look and “buyur?” (excuse me?). It became apparent after a few focus groups that a concept that better communicated the phenomenon of identification was needed and the closest that was found was “parti tutmak,” which has been in usage for a very long of time, and “tutmak,” which connoted deep and intense feelings felt for an object, such as a sports club. Since party identification also refers to intense positive orientation and strong attachment to a political party and what it stood for, the authors believe that “parti tutmak” functions as the equivalent of party identification in the Turkish context.
15. The smallest parliamentary party group in the 2007 National Assembly is the Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP), which consists of those deputies who were elected in eastern and southeastern Anatolia. Each one of the DTP deputies ran on an independent platform of Kurdish ethnic solidarity, and they ran as independent candidates. They established a party group after 20 of them gained representation in the Grand National Assembly. In a sense, the DTP was not one of the parties whose ticket was presented for the examination and preference of the voters at the polls on July 22, 2007. There is no ground to reject that those who voted for the current deputies of the DTP in the National Assembly knew quite well that they would become the DTP party group in the TGNA if they won enough votes as independent candidates in their electoral districts. However, there is a statistical problem, for in the sample only 27 voters (1.3 percent of the sample) declared that they identified with the DTP (see Table 3), and only 13 respondents (0.6 percent of the sample) claimed to have voted for the DTP or its predecessor HADEP and intended to vote for the DTP in the July 22, 2007 general elections (see Table 4). Both of these numbers are too few to render sufficient variance for the regression analysis to explain, and other types of statistical analyses would also be equally meaningless. Comparisons of statistical analysis on DTP party identification with the findings on the AKP, the CHP, and the MHP would also be equally meaningless. Under the circumstances, the following data analysis incorporates only the popular feelings of partisan affiliation toward the AKP, the CHP, and the MHP.
16. However, the CHP was closed down by the military government of 1980–83 and was banned from politics. The current CHP was re-established in 1995 by its current leader, Deniz Baykal, and his associates, who constituted a faction of the former CHP. The pre-1980 leader of the CHP was Bülent Ecevit, who had established his own Democratic Left Party (DSP), and other factions of the pre-1980 CHP had also established a Social Democratic People’s Party (SHP) in the 1980s. For a while, the CHP, the DSP, and the SHP coexisted. Eventually the CHP and the SHP were able to negotiate a merger, and the latter subsumed the banner of the CHP. However, the DSP and the CHP continue to coexist. Therefore, there has been some debate about whether the current CHP is a continuation of the former CHP, established as the first party of the Republican era by the founder of the republic, Atatürk and associates, in 1924.
17. For the current state of the left-wing ideology and parties in Turkey see: Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, “Center–Left Parties in Turkey,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol.8, No.2 (2007), pp.211–32.

18. For self-placement of Turkish voters on a left–right ideological spectrum see Ali Çarkoğlu, “The Nature of Left–Right Ideological Self-placement in the Turkish Context,” *Turkish Studies*, Vol.8, No.2 (2007), pp.253–71.
19. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey: Changes and Continuities in the 1990s,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.27, No.3 (1994), pp.402–24; Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “The Shaping of Party Preferences in Turkey: Coping with the Post-Cold War Era,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.20 (1999), pp.47–76; Çarkoğlu, “The Nature of Left–Right Ideological Self-placement in the Turkish Context.”