

# Party Identification, Islam and Secularism in Turkey\*

by

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## Introduction

Turkish studies of voting behavior have gained momentum in recent years parallel to the stellar rise to power of the Justice of Development Party (AKP) in just over a year after its establishment on November 3, 2002 elections. Formed by a group of “Young Turks” who split from the former Virtue Party (FP) when the latter was banned by a decision of the Constitutional Court on the basis of its anti-secular activities, the AKP was initially perceived as a challenge to the Turkish secular state establishment. At its inception on August 14, 2001 its leader was banned from political activity for a speech he had made in the Southeastern city of Siirt in the capacity of mayor of the metropolitan city of Istanbul on the occasion of the ban of the FP.<sup>1</sup> In spite of the fact that the real leader of the AKP was banned from political activity, and the most of the rest of the leadership had shared a similar political career that had been soundly established in the political Islamist movement of National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) they were able to obtain 34% of the national vote in the 2002 general elections. In a few months time, with a critical help from the opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) and the only other party represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which possesses immaculate secular credentials, Mr. Erdoğan was able to enter the TBMM by winning the elections, which were repeated in the electoral district of Siirt on March 9, 2003. Turkey seemed to sharply veer toward the right of the left – right ideological spectrum and the secular Republic encountered another challenge from political Islam at the polls.

Ostensibly the economic and political climate of the mid-2000s seemed not to create any major challenges for the AKP government. The AKP seemed to hesitate in supporting the U.S. military campaign in Iraq, in spite of the fact that the AKP leadership wanted to describe Turkish – U.S. relations as strategic partnership. The Islamist and Kurdish factions within the parliamentary group of the AKP split over the issue of occupying the territory of a Muslim neighbor and spilling Kurdish and

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<sup>1</sup> In that speech mayor Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seemed to depict the Turkish Republic as a foreign non-Muslim force that invaded Turkey by choosing a poem from the War of Liberation of Turkey at the end of World War I, and called for popular resistance to the decision of the Constitutional Court.

Muslim blood in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> However, the AKP moved swiftly to improve relations with the European Union (EU) and began to show great eagerness to settle the Cyprus issue and undertake various economic and political reforms. The AKP government continued to work functionally with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and continue with the austerity program of the former government, which had been drawn up by the State Minister in Charge of the Economy Dr. Kemal Derviş. The start of accession negotiations with the EU also improved the image about the stability of the Turkish economy, and the plenitude of international credit enabled the stellar increase of foreign direct investment in Turkey by 2006 and 2007. On July 22, 2007 the AKP improved its standing at the general elections by winning about 46% of the national vote and capturing about 62 % of the seats in the TBMM. Two major electoral victories in a row is an exception in Turkish politics (see Table 1).

Under the circumstances a debate has been initiated among the students and pundits of Turkish politics on the motives that drove the Turkish voters to prefer the AKP over the other parties of the center left and right in Turkey.<sup>3</sup> What were the major determinants of the party preferences of the Turkish voters? Had their relative importance changed? If so, why and how has it changed?

This paper using data collected in June and July 2007 focuses on the party preferences of the voters in the July 22, 2007 with an objective of assessing the relative impact of ideological, cultural, economic, and psychological (party identification) factors in determination of the voters' choice. First, the paper focuses on the literature on Turkish voting behavior to draw up relevant hypotheses to be submitted to empirical tests. In the second part of the paper the nature of the data to be implemented in the empirical tests will be presented, and measures of the dependent and independent variables are constructed. In the Third part of the paper the findings of the empirical tests of the hypotheses will be presented. In the fourth part of the paper the conclusions that are drawn from the findings will be laid out.

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<sup>2</sup> It is a matter of fact that the population to the south of the Turkish – Iraqi border consists of tribes and people who are related to those who are Turkish citizens to the north. As part of the Ottoman Empire there was no border that sharply divided southern Turkey from Northern Iraq. Consequently, with the Turkish – Iraqi border several related families were left on both sides of the border. Hence, any military incursion of Turks in north of Iraq risks the welfare of many who are related with Turkish citizens, which in turn undermines the popularity of such a move in the southeastern parts of the country. Their elected representatives also reflect the same mood in the TBMM. On March 1, 2003 it seemed as if they were able to file enough votes to forestall Turkey from moving with the U.S. The legislative vote also occurred in a political milieu where the AKP Cabinet was split over the vote, while some Ministers openly declared their opposition to their government's bill. The Turkish Armed Forces also demonstrated trepidation and even anxiety over the placement of more than 60,000 U.S. troops on Turkish territory before the vote. Therefore, it was a vote in which party discipline mattered little, and the deputies of the TBMM voted without taking heavy political risk.

<sup>3</sup> For two different and contrasting interpretations of the AKP see Yüksel Taşkın, "Muhafazakarlığın Usulanmaz Çocuğu: Reaksiyonerlik", in no editor, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Muhafazakarlık* (vol. 5), (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003): 211 -214, and Sultan Tepe, "Religious Parties and Democracy: A Comparative Assessment of Israel and Turkey," *Democratization*, Vol.12, No.3, (June 2005), pp.294 - 300 and for an analysis of recent resurgence of Conservatism in Turkey and the role of the AKP in it see Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Politics of Conservatism in Turkey" *Turkish Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (June 2007): 233 – 252.

**Table 1: Election Results and the Distribution of Seats in the TGNA (1983-2007) (%)**

Political Parties Elections		CHP	SHP	HP	DSP	ANAP	MDP	DYP <sup>++</sup>	MHP	RP/FP <sup>+</sup>	AKP
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1983	Vote			30.5		45.1	23.3				
	Seat			29.2		52.8	17.7				
1987	Vote		24.4		---	36.3		19.9		---	
	Seat		22.0		---	64.9		13.1		---	
1991	Vote		20.6		---	24.0		27.2		16.7 <sup>(*)</sup>	
	Seat		19.7		---	25.7		39.7		13.1 <sup>(*)</sup>	
1995	Vote	10.7			14.6	19.6		19.2		21.4	
	Seat	8.9			13.8	24.0		24.5		28.7	
1999	Vote	---			22.2	13.2		12.0	18.0	15.4	
	Seat	---			24.7	15.6		15.5	23.5	20.2	
2002	Vote	19.4		---	---	---		---	---		34.3
	Seat	32.4		---	---	---		---	---		66.0
2007	Vote	20.9	---	---	n.a.	n.a.		---	14.3		46.5
	Seat	20.4 <sup>(**)</sup>	---	---	n.a.	n.a.		---	12.9		62.0

**Note:** Only those parties that could win enough votes to go over the ten percent national threshold and gain representation in the National Assembly are included in the Table. Seats refer to the percentage of seats obtained by the corresponding party in the National Assembly in the immediate aftermath of general elections. Empty cells refer to the non-existence of the corresponding party in question. Independent candidates who won seats in the National Assembly are not shown in the Table. (\*) These cells refer to the Welfare Party Alliance, which includes RP, Nationalist Work Party (MÇP), which later was converted into the MHP, and Reformist Democracy Party (IDP), which is now the Nation Party (MP).

CHP = Republican People's Party (left-of-center, secular); MHP = Nationalist Action Party (ultra-nationalist, anti-Communist); ANAP = Motherland Party (right-of-center, liberal/conservative); HP = Populist Party (praetorian, left-of-center); MDP = Nationalist Democracy Party (praetorian, right-of-center); RP = Welfare Party (Islamist, "National Outlook"); SHP = Social Democratic Populist Party (left-of-center, secular); DYP = True Path Party (right-of-center, nationalist, conservative); DSP = Democratic Left Party (left-of-center, nationalist), AKP = Justice and Development Party (conservative, leadership from political Islamist background).

(+) FP = Virtue Party in the 1999 elections, which was more or less the continuation of the RP under a different name, after the former was banned by the Constitutional Court. The FP was also banned, and the AKP and Felicity Party (SP, Sunni Islamist,) were established in 2001 to replace the FP.

Blank cells indicate that the party represented in the column had not been in existence at the time of the corresponding national election.

(\*\*) This figure includes the seats won by the DSP candidates, who ran on the CHP ticket, and upon election split ranks with the CHP.

n.a. Not applicable, for the corresponding parties opted not to participate in the 22 July, 2007 general election.

++ DYP tried to merge with ANAP right before the 22 July, 2007 general elections under the title of the Democrat Party (DP). The merger failed, but in the meantime the DYP was closed up and in its place Democrat Party (DP) was founded.

*Source:* Kalaycioglu, 1999: 48. Official Gazette (Resmi Gazete) 10 November, 2002, no.: 24932; Official Gazette (Resmi Gazete) 30 July, 2007, no.: 26598 (First Repetitive Issue).

## Socio-Cultural Cleavages and Party Identification in Turkish Politics

In a classical article Şerif Mardin had suggested as well as wondered whether the key to understanding Turkish politics revolved around the concept of Center versus Periphery divide and relations, which the Republican Turkish political system inherited from its predecessor, the Ottoman state.<sup>4</sup> Mardin suggested that the contemporary Turkish political elites and the masses alike were deeply influenced by their cultural orientations, values and beliefs which sharply differ in defining their irreconcilable images of good society. In another article Harvard anthropologist Nur Yalman argued that Turkish affiliations with religion and secularism coincide with two different *kulturkampfs*.<sup>5</sup> Two separate images of good society that are deeply influenced by the existence of the two *kulturkampfs*, one that sprouted from the power elite of the Ottoman state, which stresses science, positivism, and human rationality as its core values versus the other that stresses the core values of tradition, religion, and divine revelation have co-existed and often clashed since the eighteenth century. It is this division that has come to influence the socialization and the upbringing of the political self in the Turkish society. From progress and modernity to family and local solidarity (*hemşehri* bonds) a very large set of issues and values were deeply influenced by how one placed oneself vis-à-vis these *kulturkampfs*.

However, over the years, other phenomena developed to influence the socialization and identity of the voting age population in Turkey. For example, varieties of nationalism developed into mass movements that motivated Turkish and later on Kurdish ethnic groups in the country since the early 1900s. Ethnic Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms have also been clashing and even battling for the hearts and minds of those ethnic groups. Another major phenomenon that has been influencing the inhabitants of Turkey is rapid social mobilization, which has in part been precipitated by the economic transformation of the society from an agricultural to industrial society. That socio-economic transformation has also deeply influenced the overall political orientation and identification of the individual members of the Turkish society. Large masses migrated from the countryside to the major cities of the country. In consequence, 16 cities have started to host more than a million people each, with Istanbul among them possessing more than 12 million inhabitants emerged. An industrial, urban, and modern capitalist market economy began to emerge and obscure the agricultural, rural, and slow to modernize parochial social

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<sup>4</sup> Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" in Engin D. Akarlı and Gabriel Ben-Dor (eds.) *Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 1975): 7-32.

<sup>5</sup> Nur Yalman, "Some Observations on Secularism in Islam: The Cultural Revolution in Turkey," *Daedalus*, 102, (1973): 139-167.

milieu of the countryside. Finally, a new middle class started to emerge in such boom towns of Anatolia as Denizli, Çorum, Kayseri, Gaziantep, Eskişehir, Konya, Mersin, Bursa, etc. They are comprised of owners and managers of small and medium enterprises that seek opportunities in and out of the domestic Turkish market, who are dead set against state involvement and regulation of any sort in the markets and social institutions and practices, for they staunchly support *laissez faire* capitalism, and freedom (*serbesti*) from any form of state regulation, which coincides with their deep Muslim convictions, social conservatism and traditionalism. It seems to be a small wonder that the new powerhouse of Turkish politics, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) adopted, symbolized and propagated the same bundle of values, and its leader Prime Minister (PM) Erdoğan and close associates have also emerged from within the ranks of that new middle class. However, it is still uncertain what sorts of long term influences the new middle class will create in Turkish politics.

Under the influence of the perennial divide of the *kulturkampfs* and the more recent socio-economic and political cleavages caused by Kurdish and Turkish ethnic nationalisms, urban – rural, and the social class divisions in Turkey political orientations, attitudes, beliefs, affiliations and sympathies of the population are being shaped.

Caution is needed in analyzing the main characteristic of the political parties in Turkey. The Turkish party system went through a major metamorphosis between 1982 and 1995. The military government of 1980 – 1983 banned all of the former political parties from operation. The current government party the AKP was established on August 14, 2001 and came to power on November 3, 2002 and again after winning the July 22, 2007 elections, and it is only six years old! The main opposition party the Republican People's Party (CHP) was re-established in 1995, for it was one of those political parties that had been banned by the military government in 1982. Originally the CHP was the party of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and ruled the country as a single party in government between 1923 and 1950. However, the current CHP was established by one the factions of the pre-1982 CHP and many of its former members failed to take part in it. Therefore, the current CHP may also be considered as no more than twelve years old, or as old as eighty-five years. The MHP also has a similar saga. It was also banned in 1982 and came back after the ban was lifted in 1995. The leader and main cadres of the MHP of the pre-1982 era and post 1995 CHP had been the same. Therefore, it can boast with roots that travel back to late 1960s, and about forty years of history. Anyhow, by international standards the Turkish parties are relatively recent organizations. Consequently, feelings and orientations toward the political parties in Turkey do run in the families, just like in

other countries,<sup>6</sup> yet such socialization effects on party identification become rather difficult to track with relatively new parties as the AKP.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, family socialization cannot be ignored as a source of party identification in Turkey.

In the light of the discussion above I would propose that there are five major sources (independent variables), which determine family influence and socialization, religious (Islam) versus secular orientations, urban versus rural inhabitation, Kurdish versus Turkish ethnic identity, and socio-economic status. In this paper the relative importance of each of these sources in determining party identification will be tested. On the basis of the empirical tests it would be possible to determine what role family, cultural cleavages, socio-economic differences and ethnic identity play in the development of affiliation to newly emerging political parties in Turkish politics.

### **The Data and the Setting**

The data for this study are collected in 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. Our sampling procedure took target sample size as 2000. First, Turkish Statistical Institute's (Türkiye İstatistik 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 2002 election. We used TUIK's block data and decided to take the 200 blocks of equal size. We targeted to reach 10 voters from each block. We applied probability proportionate to population size (PPS) principle in selecting neighborhood and villages from each TUIK-1 region of urban and rural localities. All neighborhoods and villages are separated into NUT-1 regions and PPS selection was applied to select neighborhoods and villages. For every one of these blocks we also picked a randomly selected a replacement in accordance with PPS

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<sup>6</sup> George Belknap and Angus Campbell (Winter 1952), "Political Party Identification and Attitudes toward Foreign Policy", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 15: 601 – 623; Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, Warren Miller (1954), *The Voter Decides*, (Evanston, Illinois: Roy Peterson); Angus Campbell et. al, *The American Voter*, (New York: John Wiley, 1960); Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba, John R. Pettrcok (1976), *The Changing American Voter*, (Cambridge, Mass., and London, England: Harvard University Press); A. Kubota and R. E. Ward (1970), "Family Influence and Political Socialization in Japan," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2: 148 - 151. R. E. Dowse and J. Hughes, "The Family, the School and the Political Socialization Process," *Sociology*, vol. 5, no. 1, (1971): 24 -28. E. T. Zureik, "Party Images and Partisanship among Young Englishmen", *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1974): 189 – 192, M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi (1974) *Political Character of Adolescence: The Influence of Families and Schools*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press): 37 – 62, 168 -177. P. A. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock (1993) *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press): 179 - 205. For an earlier study of the same socialization effect in Turkey see Ersin Kalaycioglu and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay (March 1991). "İlkokul Çocuklarının Parti Tutmasını Belirleyen Etkenler", *Toplum ve Ekonomi*, vol. 1, no. 1: 146 – 149.

<sup>7</sup> Ersin Kalaycioglu, "Partisan Affiliations of the Turkish Voters in the 2000's" (Unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on "Turkish Elections – 2007" in Istanbul, Turkey at Istanbul Policy Center and Sabanci University, November 30 – December 1, 2007).

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 are obtained from TUIK. 10 addresses from each neighborhood were given to the fieldworkers and all addresses were asked to be reached. 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 cannot 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 the 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. The surveys were conducted in the month before the general elections, in the heat of the election campaign period, when the voter attention in political parties, candidates and political issues of the day was at a peak. A total of 2018 prospective voters were interviewed at their households, and the resulting sampling error was +/- 2,3%.

### **The Dependent Variable: Party Identification**

In the survey the respondents were asked to register whether they identify with a political party,<sup>8</sup> and if so, name the political party they identify with. In Table 2 those respondents who declared identification with political parties in Turkey are presented.

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<sup>8</sup> The question we posed was “*Siz bugün herhangi bir siyasal 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 we employed in focus groups, and the standard reaction we received was a blank look and “*buyur?*” (excuse me?) It became apparent after a few focus groups that we needed a concept that better communicated the phenomenon of identification and the closest we could find was “*parti tutmak*”, which has been in usage for a very long period of time, and “*tutmak*” connoted deep and intense feelings felt for an object, such as sports club. Since party identification also refers to intense positive orientation and strong attachment to a political party and what it stood for, we believe that “*parti tutmak*” functions as the equivalent of party identification in the Turkish context.

**Table 2: The Party the Respondent Declares Identification With**

Codes	Party	Frequency	Percent
5	AKP	729	36,1
8	BBP	3	,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	,9
1	DTP	27	1,3
0	Independent	685	33,9
Missing	No Response	45	2,2
Total		2018	100,0

Table 2 tends to give an impression that a relatively large number of the Turkish voters are identified with one party or the other. Such a picture seems to be highly exaggerated for most Turkish parties, including the government party the AKP are brand new organizations, which can attract sympathies, but widespread identification seems to be somewhat outlandish. To be able to give a more rigorous operation definition of party identification, only those who have reported voting for the same party in the last two elections of November 3, 2002 and July 22, 2007 and also declare that they are identified with a certain political party are to be included in this paper as “party identifiers”. When this more rigorous procedure is followed a substantial difference occurs in the number of respondents who can be classified as party identifiers. The total number of respondents who identify with a political party drops from 66 percent to 35 percent (see Table 3).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The smallest parliamentary party group in the current National Assembly is the Democratic Society Party (DTP), which consists of those deputies who got 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 twenty 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 TBMM if they win enough votes as independent candidates in their electoral districts. However, we have a statistical problem for in our sample only 27 voters (1,3 percent of the sample) declare that they identify with the DTP (see Table 3), and only 13 respondents (0,6 percent of the sample) claim to have voted for the DTP or its predecessor HADEP and intend 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 analysis would also be equally meaningless, on the one hand, and comparisons of statistical analysis on the DTP party identification with the findings on AKP, CHP, and MHP would also be equally meaningless, on the other. Under the circumstances the following data analysis will incorporate only the popular feelings of partisan affiliation toward the AKP, CHP, and MHP.



**Table 3: 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

Under the circumstances it is possible to employ a dichotomous measure of party identification based upon the data presented in Table 3, so that, each party separately and assign "1" to those who register identification with a party and "0" to the rest, that is all those who do not identify with that same party. For example, all those who identify with AKP is assigned "1" to all those who register that they identify with that party, and "0" to all other responses, and the same procedure is followed for CHP, MHP, so on and so forth. With the dependent variables coded as dichotomous variables it is possible to estimate what sorts of factors best discriminates between those who identify with a political party from those who do not. In this paper, discriminant analysis is used to test the five hypotheses proposed in the preceding, which is a categorization technique that estimates which respondents, who share certain characteristics fall in what category of the dependent variable. The independent variables incorporated in the preceding parts of this paper constitute the characteristics or discriminating factors that estimate the party identifiers for a specific party.

### **The Independent Variables**

In the preceding theoretical introduction of this paper it is proposed that one main source of party identification are the childhood political experiences in the family. Most specifically, following the socialization hypothesis proposed by Philip Converse<sup>10</sup> the first two independent variables we incorporate in this study are the father's and mother's party identification as recalled by a prospective current voter, who participated in our study as a respondent. In this study a slightly altered version of Converse's original hypothesis is to be tested, for Converse suggested that only father's party identification be taken note of, while we are going to include both father's and mother's party identification as separate variables.

### **Socialization in the Family: Parental Party Identification**

Tables 4 and 5 clearly indicate that most respondents can recall their fathers' and mothers' party identification separately. The CHP, DP, and AP as those political

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<sup>10</sup> Converse proposed 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; see Philip Converse (1969), "Of Time and Partisan Stability," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 2: pp. 139 - 171.

parties that had dominated the Turkish party politics between 1923 and 1980 emerged as the political parties with which the parents of the respondents had mostly identified in the past. ANAP, the government party of the 1980s, and the political Islamist MSP, RP, FP, and the ultra ethnic nationalist, Turkist parties of the CKMP and MHP follow ANAP closely. The ethnic Kurdish nationalist HADEP also received some but very few mentions. Obviously, AKP did not even get a single mention because of its extremely recent entry into the Turkish party system.

In the following data analysis these responses are also coded as dichotomous variables. For example, in predicting those who identify with the CHP we incorporate fathers' party identification as CHP assigned the value of "1", and all other parties as "0", and likewise for the mothers' CHP identification. The same procedure is repeated for the estimation of the AKP and MHP party identifiers as well.

**Table 4: 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	,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	,2
Missing	Don't Know	834	41,3
	Total	2018	100,0

**Table 5: Remember if your Father Identified with a party? If so, which one?**

1	HADEP	18	,9
5	RP	66	3,3
0	Independent	45	2,2
Missing	Other Parties	3	,2
Missing	Don't Know	764	37,9
	Total	2018	100,0
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

## Religiosity

Religiosity in the Turkish contexts refers to attitudes, feelings, and beliefs toward Islam, which may best be summarized as faith (*itikad*), and practices in religious practice and rites, which may best be referred to as religious observance (*muamalat*). The feelings toward religion and religious observance of the voters are 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 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 the religious people under oppression in Turkey?
6. Would you like to see a *Şeriat* (Sharia) 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 6). One dimension consists of freedom of conscience, another consists of faith in religion, and the third one emphasizes *Şeriat* (Sharia) based practice and rule in Turkey, which may best be referred to as political Islam. The factor scores that correspond to each dimension are separately computed summed up to yield an Overall Religiosity Index, which is used in the following test of the religiosity hypothesis of party identification in Turkey.

**Table 6: Religiosity in Turkey**

Items	Freedom of Conscience	Faith	Political Islam
1. Belong to a religion	,046	,866	-,184
2. Attend mosque services to worship	,008	,143	,749
3. How religious does the R feel	,005	,732	,413
4. Freely practice religion or worship	-,861	-,039	,038
5. Religious people are oppressed	,830	,010	,167
6. Desire <i>Şeriat</i> state in Turkey	,105	-,084	,691

## Ethnicity

In this paper ethnicity is measured by reference to language, or more specifically, mother tongue and knowledge of Turkish, Kırmanç or some other language or tribal dialect. The respondents' were asked to respond to the question on what language they spoke with their mother as a child at home when growing up. The responses given to this question are presented in the following (see Tables 7 and 8). The first mentioned responses are reported in Table 7 and the second mentioned are presented in Table 8 to this open-ended question. Those who spoke some Kurdish dialect with their mother while growing up and who are still fluent in some dialect of Kurdish constitute about 11.9 percent of our sample. In this paper ethnicity is measured as those whose tongue is some dialect of Kurdish versus others, who overwhelmingly are fluent only in Turkish. The former category of Kurdish speaking respondents is assigned "1" in the data set, while the others are assigned "0".

**Table 7: Language Spoken with Mother at Home (First Mentioned)**

Language	Percent
Turkish	84,2
Kırmanç	6,9
Arabic	1,0
Zaza	,9
Laz	,3
Other	1,1
No Response	5,5
Total	100,0
n =	2018
Observations	

**Table 8: Language Spoken with Mother at Home (Second Mentioned)**

Language	Percent
Turkish	2,4
Kırmanç	1,6
Arabic	,1
Zaza	,2
Laz	,1
Other	,2
Missing	95,4
Total	100,0
n= Observations	2018

## Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status is measured through the self-placement of the respondents on a seven item social status scale. The respondents were presented with a ladder that consisted of seven steps, where “1” represented the lowest and “7” the highest position on the ladder of social status, and they were asked to place themselves on one of those steps. The responses given to this question are presented at Table 9. The self-placement scores of the respondents are used as an ordinal scale that measures their socio-economic status in this study, where the lowest ranked respondents were assigned the value of “1” and the highest the value of “7”, and the rest in strict correspondence to their self-placement on the ladder from “2” to “6”.

**Table 9: Self-placement of the Respondents on the Social Status Scale**

		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Lowest	149	7,4
	2	263	13,0
	3	487	24,1
	4	707	35,0
	5	294	14,6
	6	85	4,2
	Highest	25	1,2
Missing	No Response/ Don't Know	8	,4
Total		2018	100,0

## Place of Residence: Urban versus Rural Settlements

The type of settlement where the respondents resided was coded by the interviewers after each interview. The results are presented in Table 10, and the metropolitan areas were recoded as “5”, provincial cities as “4”, sub-provincial cities as “3”, small towns as “2”, and villages as “1”. This variable was also introduced into the analysis as an ordinal variable.

**Table 10: The type of settlement where the Respondent Inhabits**

		Frequency	Percent
Categories	Metropolitan city	712	35,3
	Provincial city (il merkezi)	346	17,1
	Sub-provincial city (ilçe merkezi)	228	11,3
	Small town (belde)	211	10,5
	Village	521	25,8
	Total	2018	100,0

## **The Findings**

The hypotheses tests were carried out for only those political parties which more than 30 respondents declared identification with in Table 3. These political parties are the AKP, CHP, and MHP. Only 27 respondents indicated identification with the DTP, and therefore I have not included the DTP in the following data analysis. In the analysis the missing values were replaced by the arithmetic means, and the whole sample of 2018 respondents have been included in the analysis.

### **Identification with the Justice and Development Party**

The discriminant analysis results for the Justice and the Development Party (AKP) are presented in the following two tables (see Tables 11 and 12). They have the same variables, except for the socialization effect, which represented with the fathers and mothers who identified with the right – of – center parties in the past in Table 11, and with the fathers and mothers who identified with the political Islamist parties in the past in Table 12. The results in Table 11 were able to predict the classification of the cases slightly less accurately than Table 12. However, in neither case does the socialization effect emerge as the most important predictor, while religiosity does. The AKP seems not to be closely tied to the political Islamists *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) parties, any more than it is supported by the voters whose family origins are in the DP / AP right – of – center liberal – conservative political traditions. Although religion still played a major role in determining a voter's identification with the AKP, the AKP does not seem to be a party of Political Islam, but of the right of center in Turkish politics now. Table 11 and 12 indicate clearly that Kurds also develop partisan affiliation toward the AKP, while urban versus rural and social class differences fail to play any significant role in determining feelings toward the AKP among the Turkish electorate. In both empirical tests reported in the following, the independent variables included in the analysis can correctly predict the cases of partisan affiliation toward the AKP only two thirds of the time. This finding suggests that partisan feelings toward the AKP also emerge from factors not included in this analysis.

**Table 11: Factors Explaining AKP Identification: Discriminant Analysis with Parents who had identified with the DP / AP: Discriminant Analysis (Structure Matrix)**

Items	Function
<b>Factors (Independent Variables)</b>	1
Overall Religiosity	,891
Father Identified with the DP / AP and other Right of Center Parties (dichotomous)	,422
Mother Identified with the DP / AP and other Right of Center Parties (dichotomous)	,332
Kurdish ethnicity vs. Turkish ethnicity	,162
SES	-,155
Place of Residence	,089

**Remarks:** Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions. Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function. **65% of the cases correctly predicted.**

**Table 12: Factors Explaining AKP Identification: Discriminant Analysis with Parents who had identified with the MSP / RP /FP Discriminant Analysis (Structure Matrix)**

Items	Function
<b>Factors (Independent Variables)</b>	1
Overall religiosity	,930
Father Identified with the MSP/RP /FPand other Political Islamist Parties (dichotomous)	,408
Mother Identified with the MSP/RP /FPand other Political Islamist Parties (dichotomous)	,397
Kurdish ethnicity vs. Turkish ethnicity	,170
SES	-,162
Place of Residence	,093

**Remarks:** Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions. Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function. **67% of the cases correctly predicted.**

### **Identification with the Republican People's Party**

The results of the empirical tests indicate that the main determinant of partisan affiliations or psychological attachment to the Republican People's Party (CHP) is mainly determined by their socialization in the family (see Table 13). Mother and Father's party identification with the CHP or some other left of center party seemed to be playing the most critical role in determining whether the current voter identifies with the CHP or not. Religiosity, as a negative attitude plays the

second most important role, for the CHP is the most ardent secularist party in the Turkish party system. Kurds also seem not to identify with the party that established the Turkish Republic and closely identified with Turkish nationalism, even though it is civic rather than ethnic Turkish nationalism that the CHP espouses. Urban – rural and social class differences seem not to play any role in determining partisan affiliation toward the CHP. Finally, the independent variables correctly predicted 82% of the cases, which means that the explanatory capability of the independent variables incorporated in the empirical analysis of the partisan affiliation toward the CHP is substantially more than the capability of the same independent variables to explain the feelings of partisan affiliation toward the AKP.

**Table 13: Factors Explaining CHP Identification: Discriminant Analysis with Parents who had identified with the CHP / DSP, left of center parties: Discriminant Analysis (Structure Matrix)**  
**Structure Matrix**

Items	Function
<b>Factors (Independent Variables)</b>	1
Mother Identified with the CHP / DSP or similar left of center parties (dichotomous)	,897
Mother Identified with the CHP / DSP or similar left of center parties (dichotomous)	,846
Overall Religiosity	-,526
Kurdish ethnicity vs. Turkish ethnicity	-,116
Place of Residence	,021
SES	-,013

**Remarks:** Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions. Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function. **82% of the cases correctly predicted.**

**Identification with the Nationalist Action Party**

Similar to the previous findings with the CHP, those who identify with the MHP are mostly determined by their socialization in their families. Religiosity or secularism play a relatively unimportant role, yet Turkish ethnic identity seems to be the second most important factor that determines a voter’s identity with the MHP. In this case, mother’s identity with the MHP or some other ethnic nationalist Turkist party seems to play a critical role in determining a voter’s psychological attitudes toward the MHP. Urban – rural or social class differences fail to play any significant role in determining a voter’s feelings of partisan affiliation toward the MHP.



**Table 14: Factors Explaining CHP Identification: Discriminant Analysis with Parents who had identified with the CHP / DSP, left of center parties: Discriminant Analysis (Structure Matrix)**

Items	Function
<b>Factors (Independent Variables)</b>	1
Mother Identified with the CKMP / MHP or similar ethnic Turkish Nationalist Parties (dichotomous)	,945
Father Identified with the CKMP / MHP or similar ethnic Turkish Nationalist Parties (dichotomous)	,824
Kurdish ethnicity vs. Turkish ethnicity	-,222
Overall Religiosity	,181
Place of Residence	,142
SES	,125

**Remarks:** Pooled within-groups correlations between discriminating variables and standardized canonical discriminant functions. Variables ordered by absolute size of correlation within function. **95% of the cases correctly predicted.**

## Conclusions

In this paper we have tested five hypotheses, which explain identification with political parties in the Turkish system. We have found little evidence that urban – rural and socio-economic cleavages play any role in determining attitudes of partisanship in Turkish politics. Three factors seem to play different roles in determining feelings of partisanship.

First of all, for a brand new party such as the AKP family socialization plays a secondary role, while religiosity seems to play a more important role defining the identity of the party and feelings of partisanship developed toward it. However, since the correctly predicted cases are only two out of three other factors seem also to play a role in shaping feelings of partisan affiliation toward brand new parties. In another paper economic benefits and prospects, which may be interpreted as a type of specific support toward the AKP in the sense David Easton employed the term seemed to demonstrate a relatively high predictive capability.<sup>11</sup> In full agreement with Converse’s hypothesis, the results of our empirical tests indicate that only in the long run family socialization can become an important determinant of party identification.

Secondly, for CHP and MHP, both of which are parties that have relatively long histories in Turkish democracy, family socialization seemed to emerge as the

<sup>11</sup> Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Partisan Affiliations of the Turkish Voters in the 2000’s” (Unpublished paper presented at the Workshop on “Turkish Elections – 2007” in Istanbul, at Istanbul Policy Center and Sabanci University, November 30 – December 1, 2007).

most important factors that determine the voter's feelings of partisan affiliation toward those political parties.

Thirdly, cultural cleavages, such as secularism versus religiosity and Kurdish and Turkish ethnic identity seem to play some role in defining partisan characteristics of the CHP and MHP, and thus determine the voter's feelings of partisan affiliation toward those parties.

Fourthly, religiosity seems to play an important role in determining partisan affiliations toward the AKP, though that is in the absence of any pragmatic economic considerations. It is a matter of fact that Sunni Islamic characteristic of the AKP plays a major role defining that party, though family socialization indicates that it is not only attracting those who come from a background of political Islam.