ISSUE OWNERSHIP IN TURKISH POLITICS

by

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ISSUE OWNERSHIP IN TURKISH POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: issue ownership, party politics, voting behavior, issue salience, campaign manifestos

Literature on Turkish politics includes diverse studies of socio-economic cleavages and its effects on voting behavior. However, researchers rarely study the impact of those cleavages on political parties' policies and communication. The issue ownership theory is a trending field of study in the West for the last two decades. This theory argues that deep-rooted attributions to parties not only affect the parties' perception by voters, but it also affects how parties prepare their policies and communicate themselves. This paper serves as an introduction of issue ownership theory to Turkish politics and my findings suggest that issue ownership patterns are prevalent in Turkish politics. Issue stances of party families on different sides of cleavages have become more stable over time. Long-term issue ownerships help parties to position themselves on different issues, and present themselves to the public during election campaigns. Issue salience that is related to performance issues, seems to be effective in determining the voters' party preferences, as well as a part of parties' discourses. Further research on all aspects of issue ownership theory in Turkey would enable us to understand voting behavior and party politics better.

ÖZET

TÜRK SİYASETİNDE KONU SAHİPLENİLMESİ

Ahmet Arkın

Siyaset Bilimi, Yüksek Lisans, 2015

Tez Danışmanı: Ersin Kalaycıoğlu

Anahtar Sözcükler : konu sahiplenilmesi, parti politikaları, oy verme davranışı, konu
belirginliği, seçim bildirgeleri

Türk siyasi literatüründe sosyo-ekonomik bölünmeler ve bunların oy verme davranışı
üzerine etkisini ölçen muhtelif çalışmalar vardır. Fakat, bu bölünmelerin parti
politikalarına ve iletişim stratejilerine etkisini ölçen çalışma sayısı yok denecek kadar
azdır. Konu sahiplenilmesi teorisi Batı'da son yirmi yıldır sıkça çalışılan konuların
başında gelmektedir. Bu teoriye göre siyasal partilere atfedilen köklü bazı karakteristik
özellikler sadece bu partilerin seçmenler tarafından nasıl görüldüğünü değil, aynı
zamanda partilerin bunların farkında olarak kurdukları iletişim stratejilerini de belirler.
Bu tez konu sahiplenilmesi teorisinin Türk politikasındaki uygulanabilirliğine dair giriş
niteliğinde bir çalışmadır. Tezin bulguları bu teorinin Türk siyasetinde de etkili
olduğunu göstermektedir. Partilerin farklı konularda aldıkları pozisyonların zaman
içinde daha belirgin hale geldiği saptanmıştır. Uzun vadeli konu sahiplenilmesi

partilerin kendilerini ideolojik olarak konumlandırmalarına ve seçmene bu konumdan hitap etmelerine olanak sağlarken; belirgin konularda ortaya çıkan kısa vadeli konu sahiplenilmeleri seçmenlerin kararlarında etkili olmakta ve partilere de kısa vadede ekstra söylem manevra alanları kazandırmaktadır. Konu sahiplenilmesine dair ileride yapılacak kapsamlı araştırmalar Türkiye'de parti politikaları ve seçmen davranışına dair bilgi birikimimizi daha da arttıracaktır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Could any Zoroastrian have such a concern?

On October the 11th 2011, Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP) İstanbul deputy Sırrı Süreyya Önder stated to the journalists in the Turkish Grand National Assembly that his party proposed a bill to the National Assembly, concerning the removal of the ban on türban[1] and obligation of wearing ties in the National Assembly (Milliyet 2011a). His mention of ties went unnoticed, but the word 'türban' became very salient to the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) members. Four days after this incident, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then Prime Minister and the leader of the AKP evaluated Önder's words in his party's 18th Annual Counsel and Assessment Meeting's (İstişare ve Değerlendirme Toplantısı) opening. Referring to Önder and his party, he said: "[…]They do not have such a concern. […]Why are you taking advantage of my sisters who wear türban? […]Could anyone whose religion is Zoroastrianism have such a concern?" (Milliyet 2011b). Debates continued on both sides with declarations, and accusations of the other party. About a month later, Erdoğan this time claimed thatthe religion of the Kurds is not Zoroastrianism but Islam; unlike what Abullah Öcalan (imprisoned on İmralı Island since 1999, the founder and the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party [Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan, PKK]) claims in his recent book (Radikal 2011). The debates on Zoroastrianism, Islam, and Kurds lasted a couple of weeks after the incident.

This stylized observation is important in many aspects, and makes us ask several questions regarding the nature of Turkish politics. "Why does a member of a party that rarely mentions religion gives such a declaration on one of Islam's hot topics" is a question, on one hand; and "how can a political leader be so sure of intentions and concerns of other political figures" is a question, on the other. Answers to these questions might seem simple, for example by saying that "AKP is a predominantly religious conservative party, and wandering on its terrains would naturally irritate its

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[1] *"Türban" indicates a type of veil, which covers all hair, the neck and the shoulders; is pinned under the chin and only revealing the face. Although there are various types of covering hair in Turkey, türban is the controversial one which is mentioned in the political debates (see Heper [2009, 417–418] for more information on different types of covering for women in Turkey).*

members", or "BDP has religious members and voters within its party and constituency, and therefore it is normal for them to speak up on such an issue". Both of these answers are fair; yet my thesis is that political science literature and Turkish politics field offer us insights to elaborate on this topic in more detail.

1.2. The main goal of this study

The main goal of this study is to bring new insights for understanding how party politics, campaigning, and voting behavior shape each other in Turkish politics. Issue politics is a neglected topic in the field of Turkish politics, and often is limited to specific monochromic policy analyses. This study in this respect will not only serve as a longitudinal analysis of issue politics in Turkey, but will also try to analyze various components of the phenomena which are shaped by an interactive relationship between the constituency and the parties.

Another contribution of this study will be to evaluate behaviors and discourses of parties in the face of voting public, which is also shaped by various components revolving around the issue perception of the constituency. Overall, this study aims to fill the gap in Turkish politics literature with an interactive two-dimensional analysis of political actors and the constituency's behaviors and perceptions. Çarkoğlu (2012) in the concluding remarks of his article on voting behavior in Turkey calls for further research by stating:

> "In what specific ways are the short-run forces affected by longer-run predictions? How are campaigns effective in shaping voter preferences? To what extent does exposure to media shape issue positions and economic evaluations, which in turn determine party choice? How do longer-run ideological predispositions help mediate the influence of media exposure upon issue and policy preferences?" (168).

This study will try to illuminate most of what Çarkoğlu calls for further research, in terms of its emphasis on issue ownership patterns in the long and the short terms.

In the next chapter, I will attempt to delve further into scrutiny of issue ownership literature in the world. This second chapter will start with a chronological analysis of the study of issue politics in the world, which started in the interwar period and is still on the go. And following that, an examination of the development and different elements of the more contemporaneous issue ownership theory will be introduced. This chapter will also include a sub-section on tracing issue politics in Turkey in a great

detail. The third chapter will be about the methodology and data. After briefly stating the methodological limitations of this study, I will attempt to draw the methodology I will use in my study. Then a thorough description of my data sources will follow. Last part of this chapter will discuss my sample, i.e. the topics that are relevant for the analysis of the Turkish issue politics. The following fourth chapter will introduce findings that will address the relevance of issue ownership theory in the Turkish case, and whether my thesis holds. The following chapter will be a discussion on the findings, enriched by the recent developments in Turkish politics. In concluding remarks, the last chapter of my paper, I will summarize my thesis, and what contributions I have made to the literature of issue politics in Turkey. This chapter will end with a call for further research on the topic.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Birth and Development of Issue Politics in Political Science Literature

It is fair to link issue ownership to the issue politics, since the former is only a more thorough analysis of the latter. Budge (2015) traces the roots of issue ownership to the interwar period where content analysis methodology flourished and influenced most of contemporary political scientists. The famous *Literary Digest* incident (where a weekly US magazine wrongfully –by far- predicted American presidential election results in 1936) casts doubts as to the scientific reliability of surveys conducted back then. However, content analysis of the newspapers, leaders' speeches, and party declarations were very successfully conducted; and the data constructed back then are still used in studies today.

Stoke (1963) in his seminal work criticizes the spatial analysis of issues (i.e. Downsian issues [Downs, 1957]) and binary content coding, and explains his theory on valance issues, where it is impossible to take two different sides –such as corruption. A pioneering work conducted in light of Stokes' theory is Robertson's (1976) analysis of British party rhetoric. Robertson showed that parties rarely take very opposite stances in face of issues, but more frequently put emphasis on different issues without mentioning some other issues. His analysis paves the way to the studies on issue salience. This way led political scientists to ask more questions on what the role of voting behavior is in parties' agenda-setting, and how both interact.

The most prominent and inclusive study done about this topic is Budge and Farlie's (1983) seminal research on twenty-three democracies. Albeit not using the term "issue ownership", this study claims that parties have *favorable issues* that they emphasize and try to make public during their campaigns before elections. Budge and Farlie (1983) mainly worked with manifestos[2] and newspaper archives to substantiate their theories.

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[2]*This study also led to the establishment of Manifesto Research Group (MRG) in 1979, which collected and analyzed manifestos from OECD countries initially, and later on expanded. MRG eventually evolved into Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), and now continues under the name of Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP).*

Rabinowitz and Macdonald (1989) explain how voters perceive these issues by using the directional voting theory. They argue that intense emphasis of an issue by a party, depending on where that party stands on the issue dimension, increase the chance that voters standing on the same side vote for that party. As Petrocik (1996) states, manifestos are great resources to observe rooted issue ownership of parties, in the eyes of the constituency. Budge and Farlie (1983) take a similar stance with Petrocik, and add that apart from the deep-seated issue reputation of parties, election issues are often cannot be controlled by parties, but are rather exogenous. Petrocik et al. (2003), analyzing parties' and candidates' speeches as compared to newspaper articles and public opinion surveys, fails to find causation between parties' agenda-setting efforts and salience of issues in the eyes of the public. However, party reputations remain, and parties selectively emphasize or depreciate certain issues according to their advantages or disadvantages (Petrocik, 1996). Analyses regarding the relationship between campaigns and voters' preferences further catalyzed debates on the causative nature of issue ownership and issue salience.

Riker (1993) argued according to his research that issue association changes from election to election, and losers of a competition seek for other issues they could be advantaged in upcoming elections. Petrocik (1996) in his article where he coined the term "issue ownership" comes up with a theory that has bits and pieces from both arguments. He argues that parties indeed own some issues, and have advantages and disadvantages in election campaigns. However, equally important other determinant is incumbent performance. He argues that wrongdoings of the party that holds the office as well as exogenous factors –such as natural disasters or global crises also affect the ownership of an issue by a party. Yet, how a party performs in the face of those crises cannot be thought on its own without counting in that party's reputation regarding that very issue.

So far, the studies we have discussed mostly focus on US and British politics that predominantly have two-party systems. Kuechler (1989) argues that most of European voters –who vote in multi-party systems, do not have any exact perception or attribution of issue association for parties. Two or more parties might be perceived to handle an issue better than rest of parties within a country. He further argues that the famous Michigan model fails to explain European voters, since measurement of party identification, issues, and party roles are different in European party systems (1989: 81).

What is more, whereas US election studies are limited on congressional and presidential elections, European elections offer a wide range of elections to study –from European Parliament elections to local elections, from parliamentary elections to federal elections. This variation could also be the case for various combinations of issue-party associations, and could be the reason behind the low voter turnout rates in the EU democracies.

Bélanger and Meguid (2007), according to data they collected from Canadian elections, state that at this point, it is crucial to separate aggregate level data (issue ownership) from individual level data (issue voting). Their claim –not so different than Budge, Farlie, and Petrocik, is that issue ownership is important, but issue salience is the main determinant behind voting behavior of public.

Theories on issue ownership also extensively focused on how issue ownership is shaped. General consensus is on a twofold issue ownership theory. According to this literature, there are long-term and short-term ownership patterns of issues. Lipset & Rokkan's (1967) seminal study suggests that –although they do not use the concept of issue ownership, deep-rooted cleavages in the society determine the relative positions of parties and constituencies. Similarly, Petrocik, argues that issue ownerships are "produced by a history of attention, initiative and innovation towards these problems" (1996: 826). In a similar vein, Klingemann et al suggest, "parties sustain an identity that is anchored in the cleavages and issues that gave rise to their birth" (1994: 24). With regard to identities that are anchored in the cleavages, another study that is supportive of this claim is Stubager & Slothuus' (2012) research where they find the party identification as the most influential factor as to how voters perceive parties. In other words, the relationship between parties and their constituency shape the issue ownership of parties; and voters, in a similar vein, utilize their perception of issue ownership of parties to decide which party to vote for.

All these findings explain how issue ownership is born and sustained in a polity, yet one must also take into consideration the short-term issue ownership patterns as well. Petrocik et al. for instance, claim that reputations of parties with regard to issues are not "eternal or even invariant" (2003: 602). Performance factors such as economic downturns, foreign policy crises, or even irresponsiveness of incumbent to natural disasters might alienate constituency from a party (Petrocik, 1996). Apart from the bad

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experience with an incumbent government, successful incumbents might also claim some issues as their own through their performance. This claim, however, depends on the long-term sustainability of this ownership. In other words, parties might have some issues "on lease" (Walgrave & De Swert, 2007: 39), yet it takes more than a successful recovery to have an issue truly owned by a party. Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) argue that volatile nature of voters in contemporary democracies makes it even harder for a party to own an issue perpetually.

The last decade witnessed immense increase in articles about issue ownership. Lefevere shows that the mention of "issue ownership" in the literature in 2015 is seven times more than it was in 2005 (2015: 756). Walgrave et al (2015) suggest that this boom is due to the decrease in ideological divides within societies, and simultaneous establishment of pragmatic party organizations. The literature mostly focuses on North American and European countries, clustering around USA, Canada, Scandinavia, and Western Europe. Extending the literature to Turkish politics is about time. This study will attempt to do so in the following pages.

2.2. Issue Politics in the Turkish Politics Literature

Turkey is with no doubt a unique case. Most of Western democracies never witnessed the amount of interruptions in its democratic progression. 1960 and 1980 coup d'états, along with 1971 and 1997 military interventions to elected officials halted democratic processes in Turkey; and the new constitutions, laws, by-laws, and even regimes that have been introduced by military officers deteriorated the natural democratic progression the country might have experienced. The ongoing 10% threshold (also inherited from 1980 coup d'état) is also the highest in Europe and among the highest in the world. The road that led to democracy is contemporaneous, but not similar to the first full-fledged democracies in the –especially the Western world in early 20th century. This section is devised to provide a brief introduction to societal and party cleavages in Turkey.

For the last three decades, majority of studies on Turkish society and politics have been under the influence of Mardin's (1973) seminal article titled "Center–Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" Utilizing Lipset & Rokkan's (1967) social cleavages theory and methodology, Mardin's argument is that the societal cleavage in Turkey is a deep-rooted issue, dating back to the modernization efforts of the Ottoman

rulers. A Westernized, secularly educated group of rulers, military officials, and bureaucrats (center) have set forth a distance between themselves and the rest of the population (periphery). This divide eventually resulted in alienation of the periphery from the center that created a cleavage within the society that affects every component of social life with regard to values and opinions of individuals. He argues that the Republic inherited this cleavage, and the conflict the Turkish politics face after the introduction of multiparty politics is a result of this rooted clash in the society. His further arguments are on the prominence of this cleavage in terms of its continuing effects on every aspect of social interactions, from economics to education, and from politics to social values. Following pages will discuss the literature that is built around Mardin's theory, and substantiate its relevance and importance to the theory of issue ownership in Turkey.

2.2.1. Roots of issue politics and long-term issue ownership in Turkey

From the issue politics perspective, it is logical to start the discussion from 1950 onwards. The reason is that the first competitive and fair multi-party election was held in this year (disregarding dubious 1946 elections), and the benefits of issue ownership are reaped −although not sown. Thus, 1950 parliamentary election is of utmost importance to understanding the issue politics in today's Turkish politics.

Since its foundation in 1946, the Democrat party already started to affect the political discourse of Turkish polity. Mardin (1973) claims that the success of the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) lies in its campaign strategy it started off in 1946. The DP appealed directly to the rural peasants, and framed their daily concerns as their main raison d'être. Wuthrich (2013) quotes Lerner (1958) from his seminal work to show the hint the importance of machine politics promises of the DP approaching the 1950 elections:

> "The *Demokrat* men came to Balgat and asked us what was needed here and told us they would do it when they were elected . . . We all voted for them . . . and the new men did what they said. They brought us this road and moved out the gendarmerie . . . We are all *Demokrat* party here in Balgat now." (Lerner quoted in Wuthrich, 2013: 763).

Wuthrich (2013) further claims that establishing relationships with local notables, usually through benefiting existing divided structure within local communities, was another factor that brought the DP victory in 1950. Pragmatic and structural tactics

employed by the DP, however, does not render the issue politics irrelevant for 1950 elections.

Mardin (1973) claims that one of the major factors that carried the DP to victory was its promise and actions to make Islam and peripheral values and concerns legitimate. This is evident in Çınar & Sezgin's (2013) study where they show evidence for the organic ties between the religious establishments in the society and the DP. In the face of these developments, the CHP campaign also slowly employed a peripheral tone. Wuthrich shows that CHP appealed specifically to the rural citizenry in its 1950 election manifesto, mentioning concerns of villages and villagers almost two times more than the DP manifesto: 26,5% versus 13,6% respectively (Wuthrich, 2011: 213-216). He further argues that the language and rhetoric used in the DP's manifesto was more towards the urban dwellers than that of the CHP's (2011: 216). In a similar vein, Mardin (1973) argues that the reason the CHP relaxed laws on Islamic practices and organizations in the late 1940s, was a result of a compensational behavior against the DP's campaign (also see Wuthrich 2011, 2013). At this point, we should also keep in mind that the DP was founded by the four PMs of the CHP, and there were no difference between CHP and DP candidates regarding their backgrounds (Frey, 1975). Sayarı (1978) also notes that the divide of the DP off the CHP was a result of merely an intra-elite conflict, and has no ground with regard to social cleavages. Based on the landslide victory of the DP in 1950, we can assume that despite the discursive and active efforts of the incumbent CHP prior to the 1950 elections, issues like rural values, economic well-being, and moral values (i.e. religion, in this case Islam) were attached to the DP rather than to CHP. Unfortunately we do not have survey data regarding what shaped voters' decision in the ballot box, yet a thorough analysis of the whole multi-party period suggests that this assumption holds.

After a long-term bad economic situation in the 1940s due to the Great War –which Turkey did not participate, the economic boom of the1950s with the help of US aid and a more relaxed global trade structure surely helped the DP establish the image of an economic problem solver in the minds of the constituency. It also became very easy for rural people to advance themselves economically through patron-client relationships (Mardin 1973; Wuthrich 2013) and upward social mobility (Tachau & D. Good, 1973; Toprak, 1981). As a reaction to this newly emerging social structure, the already-mobilized members of the state (i.e. bureaucrats and military officials) developed a

closer mindset to the opposition party, the CHP, which resulted in the *attack of the center* in 1960 with a military coup d'état (Mardin 1973). Although İsmet İnönü (then head of the CHP) and other party members stated on several occasions afterwards that they do not approve any intervention to democratic processes, the values of the center – namely Kemalist worldview with a heavy tone of secularism started to be associated with the CHP.

The coup d'état was not the sole reason behind this association though. As mentioned in the previous section, parties are often evaluated through the setting in which they are established. The CHP was a party founded by the founding fathers of the Republic, who aimed to break free from the Ottoman heritage, and somewhat achieved this goal. Under these circumstances, the CHP's ownership of center values, either voluntary or reluctant, has become a phenomenon in Turkish politics, and an irrevocable component of issue politics in Turkey. In Tachau's words, the CHP "had difficulty shaking off its image as the representative of a haughty and oppressive reform-minded elite that was out of touch with the average Turk, particularly in the rural hinterland" (2002: 39).

Wuthrich (2013) spares a detailed account on the issue politics in the1950s. According to his theory, the issue cleavages and voting preferences could not be generalized to show a nation-wide cleavage, but rather every local unit had its own cleavages and issue perceptions and preferences. The main reason for that is the low level penetration of national issues and campaign discourse to rural masses as a result of low level of access to mass media tools. What is more, showing that the CHP was more popular in rural areas than the DP who gained most of its votes from urban centers (clustered in the western Anatolian regions), there were in fact no difference between the profiles and backgrounds of people who voted for both parties in this period. He also argues that factors other than omnipotent center-periphery cleavage affect voter preferences and politics in Turkey, but they are often missed because of the focus on cleavages (2013: 768-9). However, a closer investigation into studies that are influenced by center-periphery theory show us that this theory has mostly been used for practical purposes to describe voting behavior in Turkey, and has often been subject to change regarding what center and periphery stand for.

Closure of the DP was followed by execution of three of its leaders, a new constitution, and foundation of the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP), often seen as the successor of

the DP. In this period, enabled by the liberal nature of the constitution, left-wing (Türkiye İşçi Partisi [Turkish Workers Party, TİP]) and right-wing parties (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi [Nationalist Action Party, MHP]) were also formed. Following the military intervention in 1971, Turkish politics also witnessed the establishment of the first Islamist party, Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party, NSP). The only party that had not affected from any of these interventions and turmoil in the polity was the CHP. Kalaycıoğlu argues that up until 1980, all parties that represented the values and interests of the periphery were formed and competed against the CHP, and party preferences thus represented party identification of voters in the face of this cleavage (1994: 406). Indeed, the AP leadership often talked positioned their party against the CHP. They were religious in the face of "hostile secularism" (Landau, 1974) and pro-wealth and pro-property in the face of *communist* CHP (Tachau & D. Good, 1973). Even though Bülent Ecevit, then leader of the CHP claimed that his party's hostile behavior towards Islam in the past was a "historical mistake" (Mango, 2002: 34), the accusations went back and forth from each party to another. The CHP leadership, for example, accused the AP leadership for being masons (Ahmad, 1977: 376-7). This statement, again, can be seen as a compensational behavior of the CHP leadership for the fouls they committed in the past against religious establishments. It can be argued that issue positions were taken as opposed to the other party of the cleavage, and interest and values of the constituency were often kept in consideration in doing so.

The period after 1980 coup d'état is a peculiar case. All existing political parties were closed down and their leaderships were banned from doing active politics by the military junta rule that lasted until 1983. Newly formed Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party, ANAP) got the plurality of votes in 1983 and formed the government as a single party. Before the elections, however, the ideological stances of parties were blurred and there was confusion as to who represented what (Kalaycıoğlu & Çarkoğlu, 2007: 19-20). However, Turgut Özal, then leader of ANAP, used some familiar terms in his party's campaign such as "conservatism", "economic liberalism", and "social justice" (Kalaycıoğlu, 2007: 234). Second runner in the same election, Halkçı Parti (Populist Party, HP) was thought to be the successor of the CHP, yet an analysis of the HP's campaign discourse is missing for making a statement about its stance. Its name along with its candidates and its merger in 1985 with the Sosyal Demokrat Parti (Social Democrat Party, SODEP) hints at its ideological stance. When the ban on politicians

was removed and parties were formed again –some with previous names and some under a different name, it became even clearer as to which party represents what ideological stance.

Kalaycıoğlu's (1994) analysis of 1990 World Values Survey regarding Turkish society shows that although the structural (i.e. demographical) nature of the cleavage has transformed, the values that shape the cleavage remained intact, affected to a great extent by religiosity. Çarkoğlu (1998), in a similar vein, argues that a left-right divide à la Turca (Çarkoğlu 2007), along with the center-periphery divide seem to affect voting behavior and party campaigning in Turkey. He also argues that the center-periphery cleavage has transformed, and analyses of the political agenda suggest that a "local/traditional" versus "universalist" cleavage now shapes Turkish polity (1998: 565-6). He further argues that political disruptions as a result of constant military interventions forced voters to vote without any partisan ties, and in accordance with ideological proximities (1998: 546). Another important finding unearthed by Çarkoğlu is that political parties' emphases of issues represent an effort to reflect the cleavage in the society on their agendas (1998: 566). This part is especially important with regard to my research question and hypothesis, because I shall argue in the next section that lack of party identification has rendered issues and issue ownership more important in the Turkish case, as it is the sole factor in determining a newly established or an existing party's ideological stance.

The structural change in the center-periphery cleavage and establishment –and success of Islamist (Refah Partisi [Welfare Party, RP]) and ethnic nationalist (the MHP) parties alerted students of Turkish politics to look deeper into what shapes voting behavior and party politics in Turkey. Çarkoğlu (2007) analyzes the nature of left-right ideological divide in Turkey, and finds that a universal understanding of the left-right divide is not wholly applicable to the Turkish case. He substantiates his claim on the place of ideology in Turkish voters' minds by arguing that left-right divide is simply an apparatus that makes taking stance easier for voters, in the face of many issue dimensions (2007: 255). In addition to Kalaycıoğlu's (1994) analysis that center-periphery cleavage persists with an increasing tone of religiosity, Çarkoğlu (2007) claims that ethnic factors as well as place of residence also started to affect voter preferences, and that center-periphery cleavage that is overlapping with a left-right divide, along with an ethnic twist could be the best-suiting explanatory factor to explain

Turkish voting behavior (also see Çarkoğlu & Toprak, 2000, 2006; Kalaycıoğlu, 2009).Then again, it is logical to argue that issues that are assigned to each part of the initial center-periphery cleavage seem to be still effective in Turkish politics.

Studies on issue politics mostly continued to be reflected on the social cleavages in 2000s. Ayata & Ayata (2002) argue that the void in religious discourse and action that is created by center-right parties started to be filled by Islamist (Refah Partisi [Welfare Party, RP], and its successor Fazilet Partisi [Virtue Party, FP]) and nationalist parties (the MHP). Yet, both parties are representatives of the periphery concerning the main center-periphery divide. This is in line with Çarkoğlu's (1998) findings, yet Ayata & Ayata also talk about the reaction of the Kurdish constituency in the face of these developments. They argue that Alevi-Sunni sectarian cleavage caused distribution of votes along secular-Islamist cleavage line respectively (also see Çarkoğlu, 2005 on Alevi-Sunni cleavage and its effects on voting behavior). What is more, a more ethnicity-concerned Kurdish constituency reacted to the MHP's rise in 1990s and started to vote for ethnic Kurdish parties such as Halkların Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party, HADEP). As par their analyses, although the cleavages seem to increase in number hence complicating analyses, we see a trend towards overlapping of cleavages concerning the issue spectra, mostly converging on center-periphery cleavage.

Esmer (2002) also finds that among many independent variables including party identification -adapted from the Michigan model (see Çarkoğlu 2012 for more on applications of Michigan model and voting behavior in Turkey), the variable that has the most explanatory factor is the left-right divide. He further argues that secularism is the best explanatory factor for left-wing votes (for the CHP and Demokratik Sol Parti [Democratic Left Party, DSP]). Although the DSP's leader Bülent Ecevit explained his party's position towards religion as "secularism respectful of religious sentiments" (Esmer, 2002: 111), and although he admitted in 1973 that his party (then CHP) made a crucial mistake by being hostile towards religion (Mango, 2002: 34), his party is still identified with secularism. This might be evidence to the effects of long-term issue ownership in Turkish politics.

The divide between secular and Islamists camps has deepened in the last decade, and by then, "The politicians have mastered symbolisms, verbal and body language, and policy

suggestions that maximize their appeal to different cultural blocs (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012: 7). Kalaycıoğlu argues that although the issues cleavages have deepened, research on elections in 2000s suggest that the voting behavior is affected the most by economic factors (2012). Başlevent, Kirmanoğlu, and Şenatalar (2005, 2009), based on two survey analyses before and after 2002 elections, show that voters who are affected by the economic downturn indeed punish incumbents, and reward successful governments. Incumbent performance analysis will be made more thoroughly in the short-term issue ownership section (41-51). In a similar vein, Çarkoğlu (2012) finds that Turkish electorate is retrospectively pessimistic about their own household, yet prospectively optimistic about the economic situation of the country.

Voting preferences of Turkish constituency seem to be affected by social and ideological cleavages to a great extent. A question emerges at this point: how do voters perceive parties with regard to these cleavages? Çarkoğlu & Hinich's (2006) article tackles this question. They find that secular-Islamist divide akin to center-periphery cleavage is a dominant issue spectrum in the eyes of the Turkish voters. Another dominant issue spectrum is nationalism with regard to Turkish and Kurdish identities. Their findings are in accordance with earlier studies. As they also admit, however, they did not ask about competence and credibility of parties according to voters (2006: 381). This might have been another explanatory factor as to why people vote for one party but not for other that are both on the same side of the issue spectra. The competence and credibility issue is also central to issue ownership theory, as discussed in the previous section.

TÜSES (Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, Social Economic and Political Research Foundation of Turkey) conducted surveys between 1994 and 2004 with regard to parties' capabilities and credibility. Their main findings, among others, are that political efficacy of voters is very low, and most of the people do not believe that political parties are capable of solving any problem of the country (Erder, 2002: 51-8). Kalaycıoğlu & Çarkoğlu criticize the methodology used in these survey series (such as sample selection, question framing, conceptualization, time chosen to conduct surveys, and so on), yet they also admit that these surveys are first and only of their kind in the time period they are conducted (2007: 169-70). Kalaycıoğlu & Çarkoğlu pose similar questions prior to 2002 elections, fixing the methodological pitfalls they observed earlier, and show that lack of political efficacy continues to be an important

determinant in Turkish politics (2007: 154-8). However, both Kalaycıoğlu & Çarkoğlu's and TÜSES' (2002, 2005) research are still important sources to analyze the voters-perception aspect of issue ownership theory in Turkey.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Considering the previous chapter, namely the literature review of issue ownership theory, and a longitudinal analysis of issue politics in the Turkish case, I pose three questions to better understand the effects of issue ownership theory in Turkey.

My first question is *"in Turkey, do election campaigns of parties focus on the issues that a party normally owns, as one expects from the issue ownership theory?"* The independent variable is the issue ownership of certain parties with regard to certain issues. The dependent variable is the election campaign discourse of parties.

My second research question is *"do Turkish voters cast their votes according to their issue ownership perception of certain political parties with regard to issues the voters hold important?"* The independent variable in this research question is the party reputations (issue ownership of parties) in the eyes of the constituency, and the dependent variable is the vote preferences of the Turkish people.

My last question is *"do political parties respond to issue salience and issue perceptions of voters?"* The independent variable in this question is the issue salience and issue perceptions of voters, and the dependent variable is again the party manifestos of political parties Turkey.

My hypotheses, before testing these questions, are as below with respect to the research questions above.

- *During the election campaigns in Turkey, parties focus on issues that are advantageous to them.*

- *In return, voters make evaluations as to which party to vote for based on the issue ownership they perceive of certain parties.*

- *Parties emphasize salient issues more in their manifestos according to voters' perceptions of salient issues and party capabilities.*

4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

4.1. Data Resources

The data that are available and relevant for this study include party manifestos (from 1950 to 2011 elections), general election results for multiparty period, voting preferences of the public, media studies of elections (1995, 2007, 2011), and some of nation-wide surveys on party perceptions. However, as stated in the introduction, individual-level data sets regarding the media effect on voting behavior (i.e. issue salience and voting behavior relationship) is missing for the case of Turkey. Methodology section will dwell on this problem in more detail, and attempt to bring solutions.

As we discussed earlier, issue ownership has two components: issue ownership of parties (perception of parties and voters: party politics dimension) and issue voting (salience and voting behavior dimension). The former is about how parties and leaders themselves frame the issues that they think would benefit them and/or harm other parties. Perception of voters regarding political parties is also within this domain. This component can be found through a research on party manifestos and election/parliament speeches. The latter component is about what happens after parties communicate themselves to the public, namely; how salient are their issues, and what effects they have on voting behavior of the constituency.

4.1.1. The Manifesto Project

For testing the first part of my hypothesis, I will utilize Manifesto Project Database's party manifesto data. The Manifesto Project started its journey as the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) in 1979 by Ian Budge as a Standing Group of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). From 1989 to 2009, it continued as Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) hosted by WZB (Social Science Research Center Berlin) and directed by Hans-Dieter Klingemann. Since 2009, it is titled Manifesto Research on Political Representation (MARPOR); hosted by DFG (German Research Foundation), and headed by Andrea Volkens.

The Manifesto Project database for Turkey ranges from 1950 to 2011. The data is classified under seven policy domains:

- Domain 1: External Relations
- Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy
- Domain 3: Political System
- Domain 4: Economy
- Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life
- Domain 6: Fabric of Society
- Domain 7: Social Groups

As stated above, issue politics literature of Turkey offers us the issues we need focus on for testing our hypothesis. However, this database has its pitfalls regarding Turkey. Mostly, manifestos of parties that are represented in the parliament are covered in the dataset. Thus, there are discontinuities for covering parties' manifestos from one election to another. For example, DSP (Demokratik Sol Parti), MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi), and ANAP (Anavatan Partisi) have their manifestos covered for the 1999 elections, but their manifestos are not covered in the 2002 elections. It is fair to say that this is a methodological limitation. However, issues covered are consistent, and hence provide us room for comparison in terms of patterns regarding the constituency that parties appeal to.

This dataset will also use to test short-term issue ownership theory, evaluated in the period between 1999 and 2011 elections.

4.1.2. Other Resources

The effects of issue ownership on voting public (voters' perception of parties) could be analyzed through surveys pre and after elections. Questions that scholars of issue ownership theory (in this paper, limited to evaluating short-term issue ownership theory) ask at this point include "what's the biggest problem of your country right now?", and "which party do you think could handle this problem the best?"TÜSES (Social, Economic, and Political Research Foundation of Turkey) provides data regarding these questions, for a time period ranging from 1994 to 2004. Ali Çarkoğlu & Aytaç's (2015) recent general elections report also provides data on these questions between years 2002 and 2015.

4.2. Methodology

This section will cover how the methodology for our tests and analyses is formed. As stated above, the Manifesto Project covered seven issue domains with regard to its

coding. Table below is a detailed cascade of those domains, along with their numeric codes.

Table 1. The Manifesto Project issue domains

Domain 1: External Relations	
Domain 1: External Relations	
101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive	
102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative	**Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life**
103 Anti-Imperialism: Positive	501 Environmental Protection: Positive
103.1 State Centred Anti-Imperialism	502 Culture: Positive
103.2 Foreign Financial Influence	503 Equality: Positive
104 Military: Positive	504 Welfare State Expansion
105 Military: Negative	505 Welfare State Limitation
106 Peace: Positive	506 Education Expansion
107 Internationalism: Positive	507 Education Limitation
108 European Integration: Positive	
109 Internationalism: Negative	
110 European Integration: Negative	

	Domain 6: Fabric of Society
	Domain 6: Fabric of Society
	601 National Way of Life: Positive
	601.1 General
	601.2 Immigration: Negative
	602 National Way of Life: Negative
	602.1 General
	602.2 Immigration: Positive
	603 Traditional Morality: Positive
	604 Traditional Morality: Negative
Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy	605 Law and Order
201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive	605.1 Law and Order: Positive
201.1 Freedom	605.2 Law and Order: Negative
201.2 Human Rights	606 Civic Mindedness: Positive
202 Democracy	606.1 General
202.1 General: Positive	606.2 Bottom-Up Activism
202.2 General: Negative	607 Multiculturalism: Positive
202.3 Representative Democracy: Positive	607.1 General
202.4 Direct Democracy: Positive	607.2 Immigrants: Diversity 607.3 Indigenous
203 Constitutionalism: Positive	rights: Positive
204 Constitutionalism: Negative	

	608 Multiculturalism: Negative
	608.1 General
	608.2 Immigrants: Assimilation
	608.3 Indigenous rights: Negative
Domain 3: Political System	
301 Decentralisation: Positive	**Domain 7: Social Groups**
302 Centralisation: Positive	701 Labour Groups: Positive
303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency: Positive	702 Labour Groups: Negative
	703 Agriculture and Farmers
304 Political Corruption: Negative	703.1 Agriculture and Farmers: Positive
305 Political Authority: Positive	703.2 Agriculture and Farmers: Negative
305.1 Political Authority: Party Competence	704 Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive
305.2 Political Authority: Personal Competence	705 Minority Groups: Positive
305.3 Political Authority: Strong government	706 Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive
305.4 Former Elites: Positive	
305.5 Former Elites: Negative	
305.6 Rehabilitation and Compensation	
Domain 4: Economy	
401 Free Enterprise: Positive	
402 Incentives: Positive	
403 Market Regulation: Positive	
404 Economic Planning: Positive	
405 Corporatism: Positive	
406 Protectionism: Positive	
407 Protectionism: Negative	
408 Economic Goals	
409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	000 No meaningful category applies
410 Economic Growth	
411 Technology and Infrastructure: Positive	
412 Controlled Economy: Positive	
413 Nationalisation: Positive	
414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive	
415 Marxist Analysis: Positive	
416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive	
416.1 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive	

416.2 Sustainability: Positive	

The Manifesto Project database provides a percentage number of an issue within a manifesto with regard to the entire text. So, the emphasis a party puts upon an issue could be seen more clearly. This will enable us to see a party's issue favorability in a single election or over a long period of time.

The parties in the scope for this study are Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party, DP), Adalet Partisi (Justice Party, JP), Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party, MSP), Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party, ANAP), Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party, DYP), Refah Partisi (Welfare Party, RP), Fazilet Partisi (Felicity Party, FP), and Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP) for the periphery block; and Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party, CHP), Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party, DSP), and Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti (Social Democratic Populist Party) for the center block. 1950 and 1954 elections are dropped for periphery parties (i.e. Democrat Party) since there is not any meaningful text for these elections. Similarly, 1983 election is not taken into account for center parties since there was not any representative of center block in this election. For practical purposes, I will not include parties who participated in elections less than two times.

The first reason I selected these parties are because the literature shows that they manifest a continuum of each other, and they belong to the one side of the cleavage. Also, parties under inspection are those who gained a parliamentary representation in their history. Second, at any given election, at most three of them coexist (i.e. center parties in 1987-1999 elections), and most of them are short-lived due to party closures, coup d'états, and self-abolition. In cases where there are more than one party at a given block, I take the average frequency of the parties in that election concerning the domain or parameter(s) under inspection. Third, I prefer to divide blocks as center and periphery for the practical reason that I investigate whole multiparty period, and the best way to divide parties in two is abiding by Mardin's (1973) seminal work where he classified the period before 1973 as such, and from which many other Turkish politics students derived their theories on societal cleavages.

The topics under investigation are selected in three ways. First, the overall analysis of the issue consistency will be made. This evaluation will show the general trend of consistency in parties' discourses, measured by correlation coefficients of all domains with respect to each other. Second, topics of "economy" and fabric of society" are selected by the author's intuition based on the literature that these two topics are expected to be playing a big part in parties' fixed discourse over time. For instance, issues of traditional values, national way of life, or law and order are expected to be emphasized more by periphery parties; whereas issues of and around liberal economy are also expected to belong to the same block. Considering parties in the periphery block have been formed and competed against the CHP (Kalaycıoğlu, 1994: 406), parties on the centrist block are expected to show contrarian trends.

Third, I look at the average frequency of the seven domains separately throughout 1950 and 2011, and look at the highest three for closer inspection, and also to see its difference in time compared to the other block. Table 1 shows average frequency for party families throughout multiparty period. This table guides me to investigate political system for peripheral block and welfare for centrist block separately under different subheadings. Domains of political system, welfare, and social groups will also be investigated since they are among the top three topics for both blocks.

Table 2: Average frequency for party blocks, 1950-2011

	External Relations	Freedom and Democracy	Political System	Economy	Welfare	Fabric of Society	Social Groups
Center	5,25	8,35	15,03	**28,90**	**16,78**	4,80	**19,95**
Periphery	5,34	6,79	**22,52**	**29,79**	12,95	8,17	**13,81**

Method of analysis consists of two parts. First part is correlation graphs where it is possible to see trend lines and ups and downs of discursive changes of party blocks over time. Second method is to look at R-values and p-values of the correlations among parameters and domains. R-values represent correlation coefficients of variables over the multiparty period, and p-values indicate to their significance. Using Pearson's Linear Correlation analysis, correlations with p-values smaller than 0.05 are thought to be significant and topics bearing this value are assumed to have a significant positive or negative relationship.

Issues around economic performance, corruption, government efficiency (response to natural disasters, etc.) are expected to be the short-term issues, and expected to benefit the opposition in some cases (2002 elections), whereas benefit the ruling party in others (2007 elections). To observe short-term performance of the incumbent, the issue ownership related to this performance, and its relation to the cleavages in the society, 2002 elections offer a very good natural experiment area for us. AKP's appeal to the public could thus be evaluated both in terms of its response to short-term performance of the coalition government of 1999, and its vote share could indicate its relation to rooted cleavages in Turkey (left-right scale). A comparative analysis of 2002, 2007, and 2011 elections could enable us to grasp effects of short-term issue ownership in Turkish politics. What is more, a comparative analysis of media between 2007 and 2011 elections, apart from answering to my third research question (see page 19), could support the relationship between issue salience and issue ownership components of the issue ownership theory (see page 21).

Findings from TÜSES's (2002, 2005) and Çarkoğlu's (2015) research regarding most important problems in Turkey, and parties that could handle those problems the best will be used to substantiate the findings from Manifesto Project's data, and to answer my second research question regarding voters' perception of political parties' issue ownership (see page 19).

Regarding the problem about the lack of data on the media coverage of campaigns in the long term (i.e. discourse analyses of sources other than party programs), I will claim that party programs are great indicators of media speeches of its leaders and members. Alonso et. al. (2012: 1) state that:

> 1. Election programs are either issued by councils of elected party elites or legally ratified by party conventions. Thus, they are authoritative statements of party preferences and represent the whole party, not just one faction or politician.
> 2. In all electoral democracies election programs are issued at regular intervals. Therefore, programmatic changes can be observed over parties' lifetimes.
> 3. Election programs cover a wide range of issues. Accordingly, the parties' preferences towards these issues can be measured and compared to the positions

of their competitors within party systems as well as of their sister parties across political systems.

They also claim that even though majority of the voters do not read manifestos, mass media communicates inconsistencies of speeches / actions of parties versus their manifestos. A recent example from the Turkish politics regarding this issue is when AKP published its 2015 general elections manifesto, the press (along with constituency) that there is not a single word on the resolution process (*tr.* çözüm süreci, referring to the policies for diminishing the unrest among Kurdish people and the rest of the society). Ahmet Davutoğlu (Prime Minister of Turkey, AKP deputy) had to explain to the journalists that the chapters on resolution process dropped as party members were taking it to the print shop (Radikal, 2015). What is more, Alonso et al. also point out the fact that research shows parties do 70% of what they preach in their manifestos, which is a significant number (2012: 2; Rallings 1987; Thomson 2001).

5. FINDINGS

In this section, I analyze the date from the Manifesto Project Database on Turkish parties' manifestos from the1950 to the 2011 general legislative elections. The first section will analyze the discourse of party manifestos regarding issue consistency across 1950-2011. The hikes and falls will be evaluated in a historical context, and the general trend of party discourses will be evaluated.

The second section will analyze the role of incumbent performance and try to find evidence on short-term issue ownership in Turkey. The elections that are analyzed are 2002, 2007, and 2011 elections. I expect to find that performance issues such as economic performance, corruption, and government efficiency (response to natural disasters, etc.) cause change in the discourse of political parties with regard to their manifestos. Analyses of survey results are also expected to reveal voters' perception of political parties with regard to these issues.

Lastly, the third section will analyze the relationship between issue salience in Turkish politics and voter preferences in 2007 and 2011 elections. Survey results will again be used to substantiate the importance of issue salience in issue ownership theory. This expectation is based on the assumption that issue salience causes parties that have the best handling capability with regard to salient issues be more successful in the upcoming elections.

5.1.1. Issue consistency: a comparison of all domains

Comparing the consistency of issues between elections (Figure 1), although we see fluctuations, the trend has been rising for both centrist and peripheral parties, more within peripheral parties than the other. This means that parties gradually started to stand their ground more than before, with regard to the cleavages they represented in the society. Concerning the multiparty period is a recent phenomenon in Turkish politics; it

could be argued that parties have been aligning their positions regarding their constituencies, which cluster around certain cleavages that affect their voting behavior.

Figure 1: Correlation of all domains with each other, 1950-2011
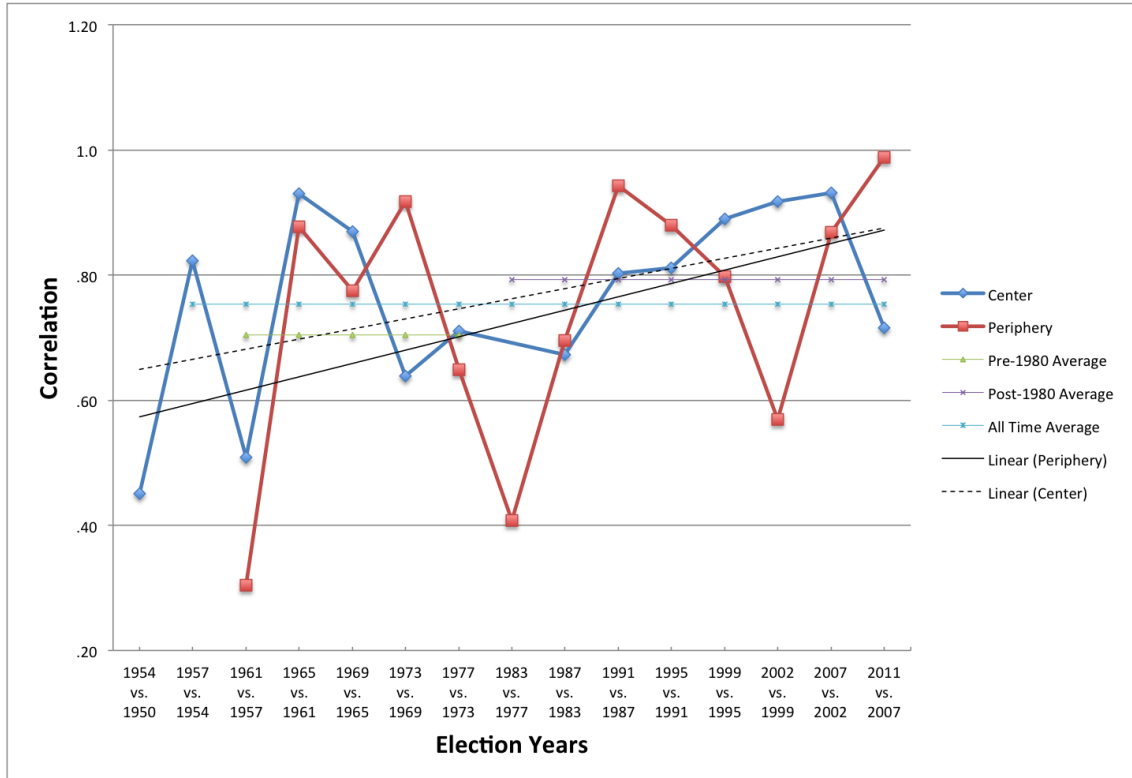
Domains included: External Relations, Freedom and Democracy, Political System, Economy, Welfare and Quality of Life, Fabric of Society, Social Groups

There are, of course, points where there are dramatic dives and jumps comparing elections and regime changes. Overall, for example, post-1980 coup d'état period has a bigger average of issue consistency than the period between 1950 and 1980. One reason here could be introduction of the ten percent threshold for parliamentary elections, which required parties to have a more popular support to be represented in the parliament then they should had had before 1980. Experimenting around issues and risking their support they once guarantee might have become strategies they want to avoid.

Periphery parties' nose-diving consistency rates in the 1977 and in 2002 elections also call for closer inspection. The former period witnessed the most brutal social conflicts in the republican history. Left-right dichotomy's "us and them" approach surfaced to politics as well, and deemed forming coalitions impossible. Peripheral parties were for national way of life (10,9% versus 5,25% in 1973) and positive traditional morality (6,2% versus 4,6% in 1973) and unification of the society under elements creating the fabric of society; whereas the CHP, representing the left-of-center adopted a more left-of-center social democratic approach to the conflict and based it on inequalities in the society. In the 2002 elections, again, the country had been going through two major economic crises and the AKP, a newly formed party coming from a center-right/right-wing tradition, built its campaign discourse on an effective government (12,7%) and a planned (12%), free-market economy (11,5%). Following 2002 elections, the discourse on effective government slowly eroded (6,7% in 2007, and 4,5% in 2011), while economic planning and free market economy nose-dived (1,1% and 6,5% in 2007, and 3,3% and 2,1% in 2011, respectively). We see a trend that the AKP leadership put back on the dominant discourses of the center parties prior to 2002 elections.

Tables B and C show coefficients and p-values for correlations between domains. For the center parties (Table 3), significant relationships exist between political system and economy, political system and welfare, and freedom and democracy and fabric of society domains. All these significance is a result of the negative relationship between these pairs of domains. In other words, there is a historic trend between these domains that an increase in one is reflected as a decrease in the other's frequency, or vice versa.

Topics that construct political system domains are decentralization, centralization, governmental and administrative efficiency, political corruption and positive political authority. First two issues around centralization are very scarce in center parties'

election manifestos. The most prominent issues constructing the majority are around governmental efficiency and positive political authority, with average scores of 5,3% and 6,4% respectively. Although a more thorough analysis of texts would yield better results, if we look at the available texts for this parameter (i.e. manifestos from 2002 onwards), issues within this domain seem to be more related to performance of the incumbent, rather positively or negatively, depending on the incumbent. Issues around "will of nation", "political stability", and "effectiveness" of the incumbent –negatively or positively constructs the majority of these issues. Thus, we could talk about a clash of interest between two performance issues (economy and political system) when one is at stake.

How and why welfare domain has a significant negative correlation with political system is still a question to be answered. One argument could be that center parties have chosen to cling on to their long-term favorite issue of welfare when there was not any political and administrational efficiency issues to be emphasized, or when they though focusing on welfare would bring them more votes in the face of the liberal discourse of the periphery block. A similar significant negative correlation also exists between peripheral parties' discourse shifts on political system and welfare (Table 4). A conclusion based on the findings and the issue ownership literature could be that incumbency has a great effect on these two variables, both for center and for periphery parties. A more thorough analysis would better reveal under what circumstances have the center and periphery parties emphasized one domain in the face of the other.

Table 3: Center block correlation coefficients and significance of all domains, 1950-2011

	external relations	freedom and democracy	political system	economy	welfare	fabric of society	social groups
external relations	**1,**						
freedom and democracy	**-0,40931** 0,12977	**1,**					
political system	**-0,31671** 0,2501	**0,4954** 0,06041	**1,**				
economy	**-0,21598** 0,43945	**-0,383** 0,15881	**-0,60712** *0,01639***	**1,**			
welfare	**0,45143** 0,0912	**-0,48829** 0,06479	**-0,79702** *0,00037***	**0,20121** 0,4721	**1,**		
fabric of society	**0,29074** 0,29314	**-0,59036** *0,02051***	**-0,46601** 0,07998	**0,10166** 0,71847	**0,45415** 0,08903	**1,**	
social groups	**-0,22352** 0,42325	**0,0195** 0,94502	**0,49908** 0,05824	**-0,45485** 0,08847	**-0,43163** 0,10815	**-0,33584** 0,22103	**1,**

Notes:

This table presents correlations between all issue domain frequencies of all center parties (CHP, SHP, and DSP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one center party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for $p<0.05$

Table 4: Periphery block correlation and significance of all domains, 1950-2011

	external relations	freedom and democracy	political system	economy	welfare	fabric of society	social groups
external relations	**1,**						
freedom and democracy	**-0,40855**	**1,**					
	0,11615						
political system	**-0,69175**	**0,38175**	**1,**				
	*0,00299***	0,14454					
economy	**0,06128**	**-0,25618**	**-0,35998**	**1,**			
	0,82162	0,3382	0,17082				
welfare	**0,52769**	**-0,46539**	**-0,86112**	**0,23365**	**1,**		
	*0,03566***	0,06928	*0,00002***	0,3838			
fabric of society	**0,52457**	**-0,26519**	**-0,35548**	**-0,19254**	**0,10252**	**1,**	
	*0,03697***	0,32089	0,17663	0,47497	0,70557		
social groups	**0,02682**	**-0,10455**	**-0,36362**	**-0,27872**	**0,30909**	**-0,07097**	**1,**
	0,92147	0,69999	0,16623	0,29587	0,24406	0,79396	

Notes:

This table presents correlations between all issue domain frequencies of all periphery parties (DP, AP, MSP, ANAP, DYP, RP, FP, and AKP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one periphery party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for $p<0.05$

5.1.2. Welfare and fabric of society

Figures 2 and 3 below show how the frequency of center and periphery parties' discourses on welfare state and fabric of society have changed –respectively. Additionally, the decline in 2002 elections for periphery parties seem to be a result of the fact that the AKP has projected itself as a rupture from the National Outlook movement of the RP and FP. In this election, the AKP focused more on economic issues (39,4% versus a total of 25,6% frequency of center parties in 1999); and among economic issues, shifted its dominant discourse from technology and infrastructure (12,6% in 1999) to free enterprise (11,5%) and economic planning (12%).

Figure 2: Frequency of "Welfare and Quality of Life" domain, 1950-2011
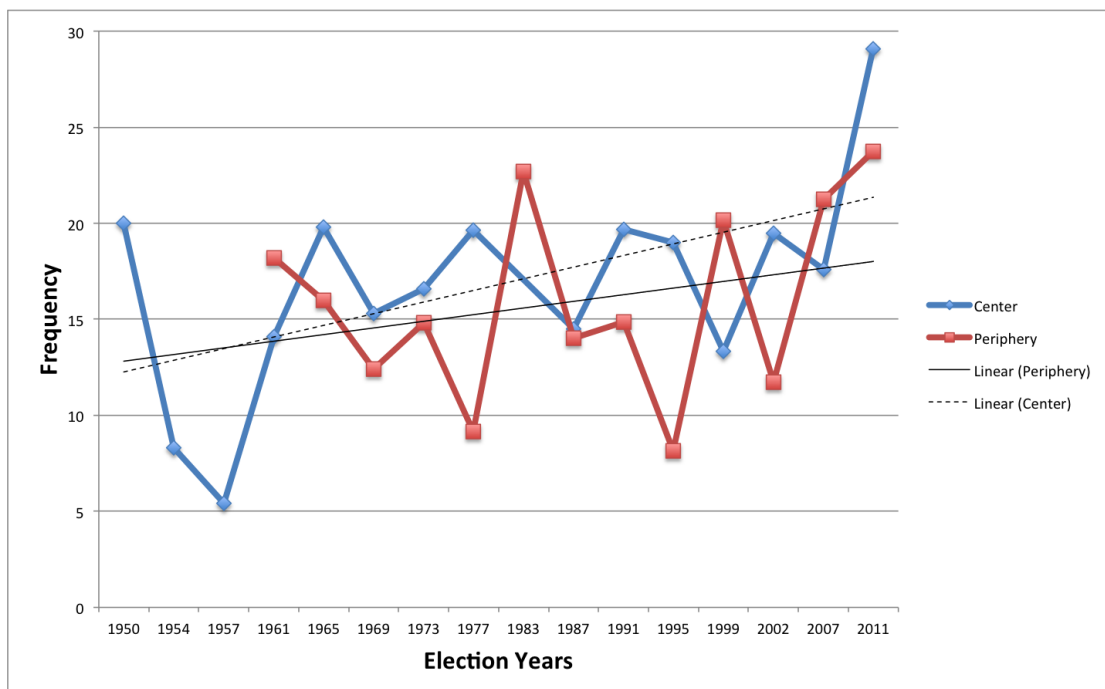
Figure 3: Frequency of "Fabric of Society" domain, 1950-2011
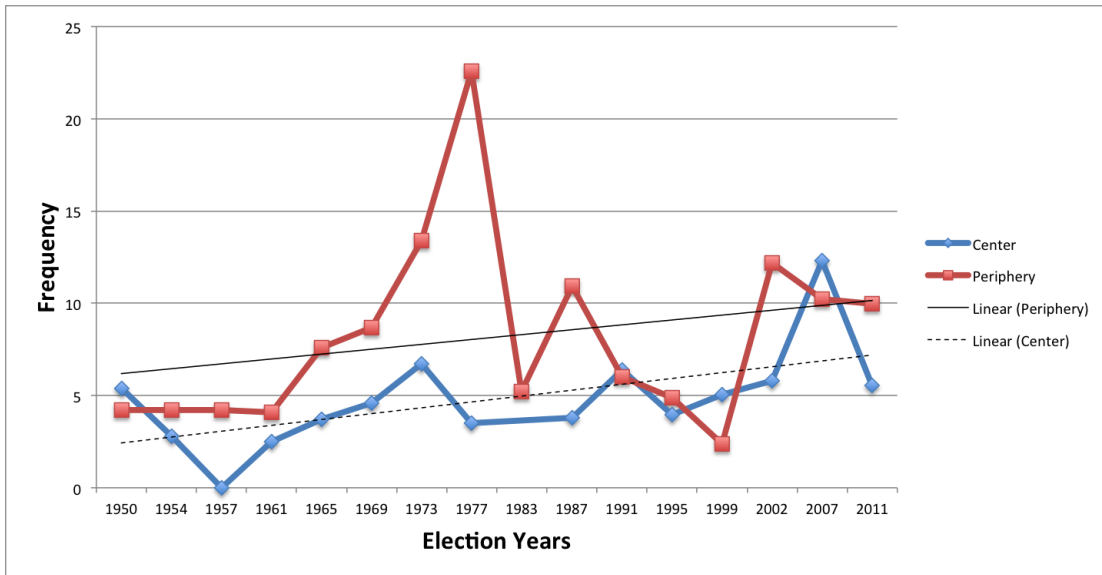
We can also deduce from figures 2 and 3 that the frequency trend for center and periphery parties differ as compared to the other. Centrist parties show a rising trend in their frequency distribution for welfare state issues in their manifestos. These parties also show a more stable trend than peripheral parties, with less dramatic ups and downs throughout elections. Also with regard to the fabric of society issues, the CHP's trend is lower than that of the peripheral parties. Especially 2011 elections is crucial for CHP, where welfare state issues rose by almost 12% whereas fabric of society issues decreased from 12,3% in 2007 to 5,5% in 2011. The main reason lying behind this difference might be attributed to the leadership change the party went through in 2010. If we analyze CHP's 2015 election manifesto, we again see that the trend of focusing on social democracy and welfare and quality of life is still on the go. The reason behind this discourse change might also stem from the fact that the CHP gained its highest vote share in 1973 and 1977 elections where then party leader Bülent Ecevit adopted a left-of-center social democratic approach, and eased the party's discourse on religion by

stating that limitations on religion during CHP's single-party era was a "historical mistake" (Mango, 2002: 34).

An argument regarding the issue ownership theory here is that the CHP's high emphasis on economy and welfare in comparison to fabric of society is not a puzzling phenomenon. As the party that is founded by the introducer of secularism in Turkey, and as a party that has followed commitment to the founding fathers' revolutionist principles, the CHP's constituency in majority already consists of those who adopt a secular way of life. This historical trend deems speaking –negatively or positively about the religion and traditional values unnecessary for the CHP, as par the issue ownership theory indicates. Rather focusing on expanding its vote share among economically deprived constituency by adopting its historical social-democratic and pro-welfare stance seems a more rational act for the CHP leadership. The rationale behind this preference also applies to peripheral parties. Unless focusing on the issues around fabric of society would bring them more votes, peripheral parties would rather not focus on these topics. As such, emphasis on fabric of society peaks in 1970s where social conflicts brought the country on the edge of a civil war.

5.1.3. Economy

Figure 4 is a more detailed examination into the discursive change of the center and periphery parties with regard to economic issues (please see tables F and G in the appendix for a more detailed correlation and significance values table for both blocks). The correlation between issues that define economy domain of the dataset shows a very linear trend for the center parties. The average correlation is around 0.73 throughout

multiparty elections, and the parties in this camp, more or less, have not changed their stance on 16 different issues that constructs economy domain. The peripheral parties' correlation is even higher prior to 2002 elections. The AKP, however, almost completely changed this trend. The issues the AKP emphasized within economy domain has no significant correlation compared to 1999 elections.

Figure 4: Correlation of the economy domain, 1950-2011
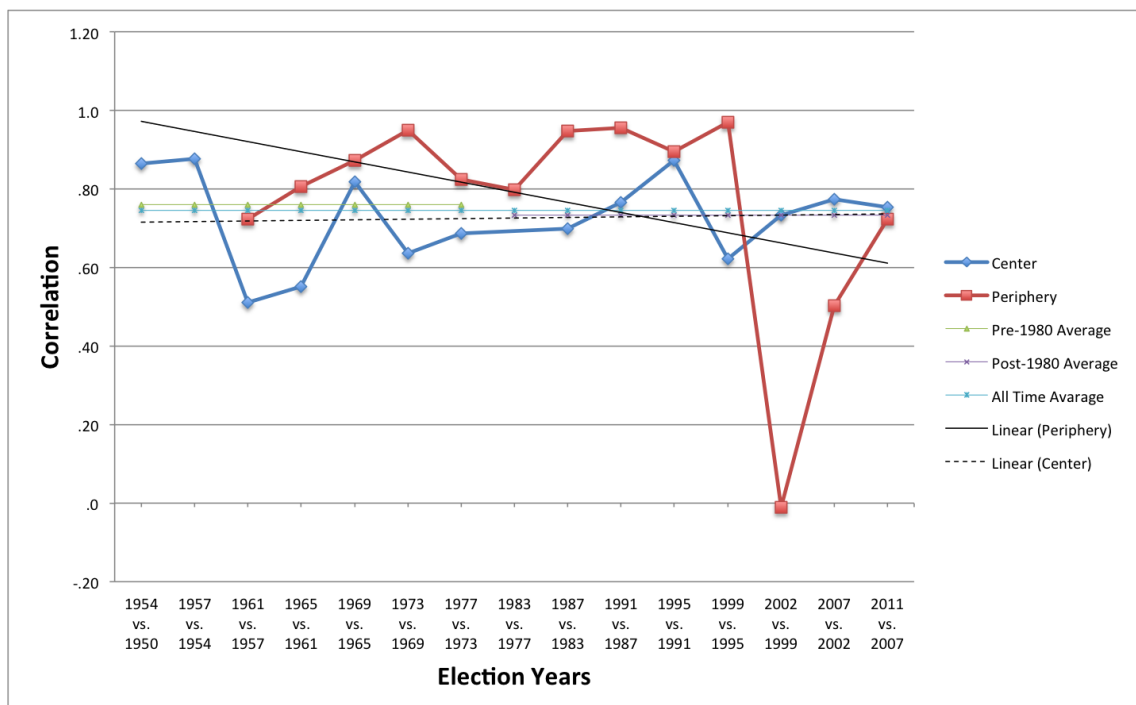
If we look more closely at the issues the AKP picked and dropped in 2002 elections compared to 1999, we see the biggest decline in the issues of technology and infrastructure (from 12,6% to 3,2%), and economic goals (from 7,9% to 1%). The most mentioned topics, on the contrary, are free enterprise (11,4%, from 0,05% in 1999) and economic planning (12%, from 0,1% in 1999). Although the parameter of "economic goals" is specified as "broad and general economic goals that are not mentioned in relation to any other category" (Werner et al., 2014), closer inspection of the available

text (which is for 2002 elections and beyond) shows that they are mostly about topics a party achieved in the past. Concerning that the 2002 election was the first election the AKP participated in, it is understandable for it to mention less about this topic compared to others. Bearing in mind the crises of 2000 and 2001 that shadowed the 2002 elections, it is also understandable for the AKP to talk more about restraining government control on entrepreneurship, and planning a roadmap for the economy to take off.

However, after the 2002 elections, the AKP seems to have gone back to the issues which the peripheral parties emphasized the most. On the overall average, the periphery parties have given the most space to the issues of economic goals (8,8%) and technology and infrastructure (6,4%) among issues within economy domain. The AKP's discourse on these topics in the 2007 and the 2011 elections are 6% and 5% for economic goals, and 7,4% and 14,3% for technology and infrastructure, respectively. In fact, technology and infrastructure is the most mentioned economy issue in 2002 and 2011; and economic goals is among the highest, following free enterprise and incentives in 2007, and economic growth in 2011 elections manifestos. Thus, there is an indication that the AKP leadership changed the discourse of the party in the face of major economic crises in 2002, and turned back to the old periphery parties' discourses once they hold the incumbency.

5.1.4. Social Groups

Both center and periphery parties performed very similar discursive shifts in the issues around social groups, namely positive labor groups, agriculture and farmers, positive

middle class and professional groups, positive minority groups, and positive non-economic demographic groups. Both center and periphery block started off their discourse for this domain by emphasizing agriculture and farmers more than other issues, and even more than other domains in earlier periods of the multiparty era. However, the demographic shift in the country seems to be reflected in parties' discourses as well. Both parties gradually dropped their emphasis on this issue, yet they started to emphasize different topics in time.

Significance tests show that center parties have chosen to talk more about non-economic demographic groups and minority groups in a positive way (Table 5). Minority groups include positive statements about "the handicapped, homosexuals, immigrants, indigenous", etc. while non-economic demographic groups include "women, university students, old, young, or middle aged people" in a positive way. The egalitarian policies of the CHP, along with its emphasis in welfare –especially hiked during and after the conflict-ridden 1970 era, could be used to explain these phenomena.

Periphery parties, on the other hand, shifted their discourse towards labor groups and non-economic demographic groups, again positively. Especially Islamist parties' discourse in 1990s on removing the ban on headscarf for female university students had been a major factor in this increase, constituting the highest frequency for this issue stance compared to others within this domain in 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2007 elections. The AKP, again, turning back to agriculture and farmers in 2002 elections, dropped this issue and turned back to the trend of center parties in and after 2007 elections. An analysis of 2015 elections would yield better results for the continuation –if any, and comparison of this trend.

Table 5: Center block correlation and significance for social groups domain, 1950-2011

	Labour Groups: Positive	Agriculture and Farmers	Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive	Minority Groups: Positive	Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive
Labour Groups: Positive	**1,**				
Agriculture and Farmers	**0,06197**	**1,**			
	0,82634				
Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive	**0,35537**	**0,34875**	**1,**		
	0,19365	0,20267			
Minority Groups: Positive	**-0,44284**	**-0,74946**	**-0,42321**	**1,**	
	0,09831	0,0013**	0,116		
Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive	**-0,3708**	**-0,70459**	**-0,07105**	**0,65436**	**1,**
	0,17363	0,00336**	0,80133	0,00813**	

Notes:

This table presents correlations between issue frequencies under social groups domain of all center parties (CHP, DSP, and SHP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one center party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for p<0.05

Table 6: Periphery block correlation and significance for social groups domain, 1950-2011

	Labour Groups: Positive	Agriculture and Farmers	Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive	Minority Groups: Positive	Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive
Labour Groups: Positive	**1,**				
Agriculture and Farmers	**0,55001**	**1,**			
	0,02729**				
Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive	**0,09925**	**-0,0256**	**1,**		
	0,71457	0,92504			
Minority Groups: Positive	**0,07987**	**-0,39929**	**-0,64252**	**1,**	
	0,76873	0,12548	0,00727**		
Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive	**-0,29243**	**-0,56646**	**-0,36676**	**0,52799**	**1,**
	0,27173	0,02215**	0,16232	0,03554**	

This table presents correlations between issue frequencies under social groups domain of all periphery parties (DP, AP, MSP, ANAP, DYP, RP, FP, and AKP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one periphery party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for p<0.05

5.2. Short-term Issue Ownership

2002 elections offer a sort of natural experiment ground for short-term issue ownership theory. The reason is that the country experienced a natural disaster (August and November 1999 earthquakes in the northwest region) and two economic crises. What is more, long-term issue ownership traits can also be seen, because a party that is founded right before elections could win a landslide victory. Issue ownership of the AKP, and issue perceptions of the constituency seem to have played a significant role in 2002 elections result.

Table 7 below shows an overview of people's perception as to the most important problem of the country, and the following Table 8 includes answers of the same sample of people as to which party can solve the most important problem in the country.

Table 7. The most important problem of Turkey (2002)

Problem	People answered	Percentage
Expensive life, economy	962	53,2
Unemployment	434	24,0
Governance of Turkey	141	7,8
Exogenous factors	42	2,3
Education	35	1,9
Terror, security	30	1,7
Democracy, human rights	27	1,5
Corruption, bribery	19	1,1
Religious problems	9	0,5
Others	33	1,8
Not answered	75	4,2
Total	**1807**	**100,0**

Source: TÜSES (2002: 17)

Table 8. Which party can solve the most important problem of Turkey? (2002)

Party	People answered	Percentage among people who indicated there is a problem	Percentage of whole sample
AKP	**272**	**15,7**	**15,1**
DYP	90	5,2	5,0
CHP	71	4,1	3,9
MHP	60	3,5	3,3
HADEP	59	3,4	3,3
ANAP	51	2,9	2,8
Others	69	4,0	3,8
None of them	**808**	**46,7**	**44,7**
Not answered	252	14,5	13,9
There is no such problem	75	-	4,2
Total	**1807**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Sample number		**1732**	**1807**

Source: TÜSES (2002: 52)

Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu (2007) also asked the same questions prior to the 2002 elections, using a different sample and methodology. What they found is, however, in line with TÜSES' findings. In their research too, economic issues were seen as the most important problems of Turkey (67,3%), followed by corruption and political uncertainty (8,2%) (2007: 154). In their study, the AKP was listed as the most competent party with regard to solving problems of Turkey, especially the economic and religious ones (such as türban issue [30,3], and moral values [28,2]) (2007: 157). In both research, however, people who believe none of the parties can resolve the most important problem they indicated is higher than any party value. This could indicate to a lack of political efficacy of the Turkish public (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu 2007: 138-9, 155). Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu also conclude, since more than one third of voters who indicated they would vote in 2002 elections stated that there is not a party that could solve any problem of Turkey, that votes of Turkish people are "not shaped by such issue oriented concerns" (2007: 153). To my knowledge, there is not a published version of the same type of questions sets these authors have published to make a comparison whether their

claim holds valid in a long run. However, at this stage, it indeed seems that vote preferences of Turkish constituency are shaped by reasons other than issue concerns.

TÜSES (2005) repeats the same research after 2002 elections too. The issue concerns of voters seem to be intact, with economy issues being the most important problems (TÜSES, 2005: 40). However this time the AKP's percentage as to its credibility as the "problem-solver" increases, and surpasses those who say none of the parties could solve problems (47,5% versus 26,9% respectively). Çarkoğlu & Aytaç's (2015) research lack the data regarding respondents who said "none of the parties could solve problems", and thus we could not make a comparison between two datasets, and arrive at a clearer conclusion as to whether political efficacy increased or not.

It is necessary to remind at this point that both research mentioned above asked questions about the current concerns of the voters circa November 2002. Because of this reason, they can be regarded as measuring performance issues of the incumbent rather than long-term issue ownership of parties; nor do they measure issues related to longitudinal issue cleavages in Turkish politics. Systematic collection of data with regard to general (not only during elections) issue perception of voters would enable us to grasp issue ownership in Turkey in a better sense.

The issues that voters stated as important also tell about the salient issues back in late 2002. At this point I expect to find a correlation between the important (salient) issues and issues that parties emphasized with regard to their ownership patterns. In other words, responses to "the most important problem of Turkey" would be salient issues in the eyes of the constituency, and parties are expected to respond to these salient issues. Analyses in the following pages will compare 2002, 2007, and 2011 elections, and try to find evidence as to performance issues and how they shape party discourses.

The line plot below (Figure 5) shows changes in the frequency of planned economy issue (per404) in parties' manifestos from 1999 to 2011 elections. The Manifesto Project codebook defines planned economy as:

> "Favorable mentions of long-standing economic planning by the government. May be:
> - Policy plans, strategies, policy patterns etc.;
> - Of a consultative or indicative nature." (2015: 21).

Frequency of economic planning (positive)in AKP's 2002 manifesto is around 12%. We also see that CHP increased its frequency in terms of planned economy from 3.75% in 1999 to 6.25% in 2002, but still, this frequency is almost the half of AKP's. Other interesting finding is that AKP's score is way higher than that of FP (Fazilet Partisi) in 1999, the party that a significant numbers of people left to form AKP. This clearly indicates the bad economic performance of the incumbent coalition government of DSP, MHP, and ANAP forced parties, especially the AKP to formulate an issue position based on bad economic conditions. Another interesting deduction from this graph is that unless there are bad economic performances in a country, parties do not prefer talk about their economic plans. This is evident in the simultaneous fall of the mention to planned economy in the AKP's and CHP's discourses in 2007 elections.

Figure 5: Frequency of planned economy: positive (per404) indicator, 1999-2011
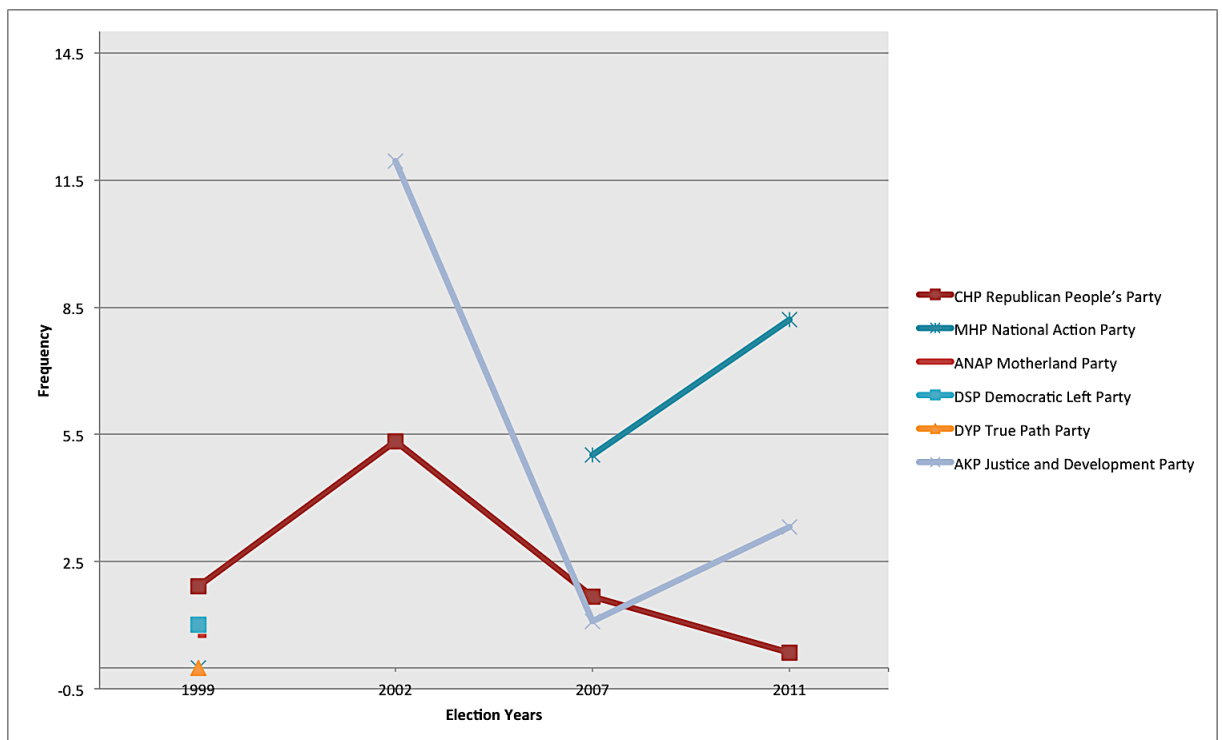
It also seems that once held the office, AKP's discourse on planned economy witnessed a decline from a frequency level from 0.12 in 2002 to around 0.02 in 2007. It is only after the global crisis (that started in 2007 in the US, and affected the world between

2008 and 2011) hit Turkey, did the discourse of AKP on planned economy increased again. MHP also seem to have a rising trend compared to its 2007 manifesto. This might stem from its place as an opposition party. Meanwhile, CHP –which was also an opposition party in 2011, chose to mention planned economy less than it did in 2007. There might be several reasons for this behavior; first explanation could be that with the leadership change, the party might have turned to its core values such as social democratic (left-of-center) issues. Figures6, 7, 8 below show CHP's discourse change concerning welfare state issues in comparison with the AKP and the MHP. These figures are clear indication of the CHP leadership's attempts to reclaim (or re-own) the issues they once emphasized. The June 2015 elections and the CHP's highly welfare-oriented campaigning also show that this pattern continues.

A second explanation would be that from a short-term performance point of view, the economy did well under AKP between 2002 and 2007 (Bacik, 2008). Putting more emphasis on economy (other than left-of-center welfare state issues) would not benefit CHP, since this would raise concerns in constituency's mind regarding their sincerity (Jensen, 2010; Wagner, M & Meyer, T.M., 2015). As Petrocik also argues, attempts at "hijacking" an issue do not fare well if the incumbent is successful in that particular issue (1996).

Figure 6: Frequency of equality: positive (per503) indicator, 1999-2011
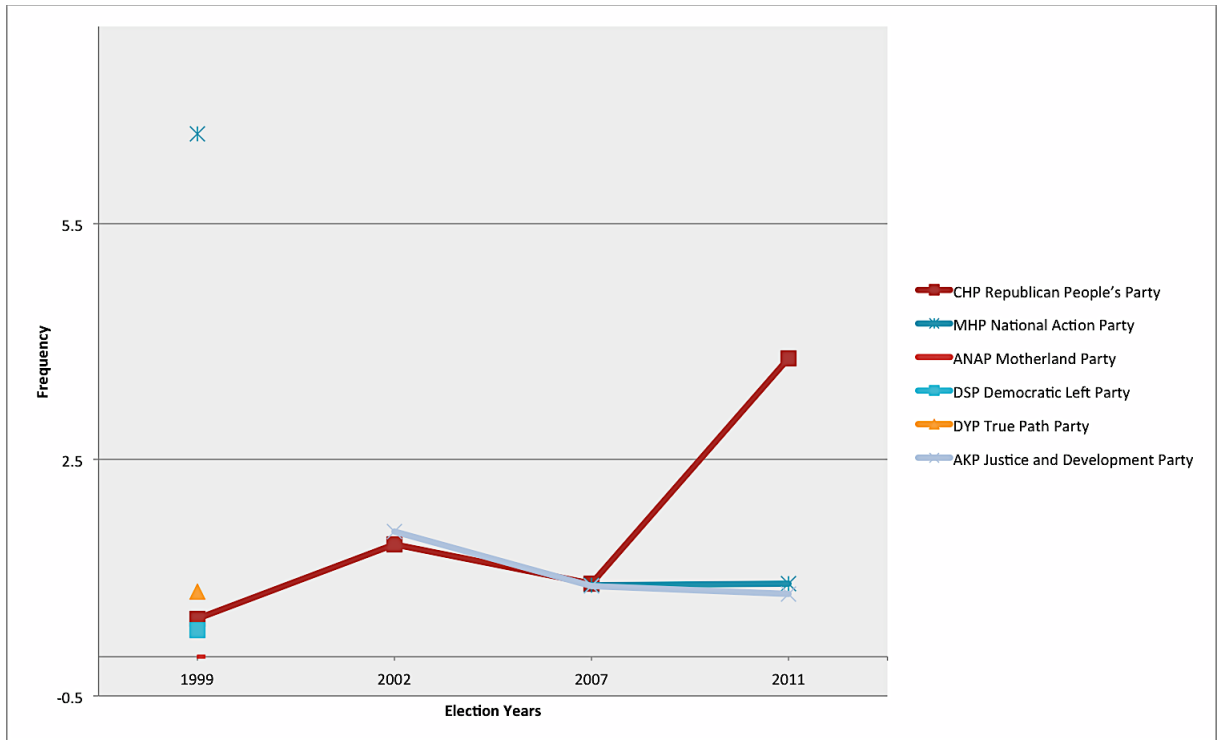
Figure 7: Frequency of welfare state expansion (per504) indicator, 1999-2011
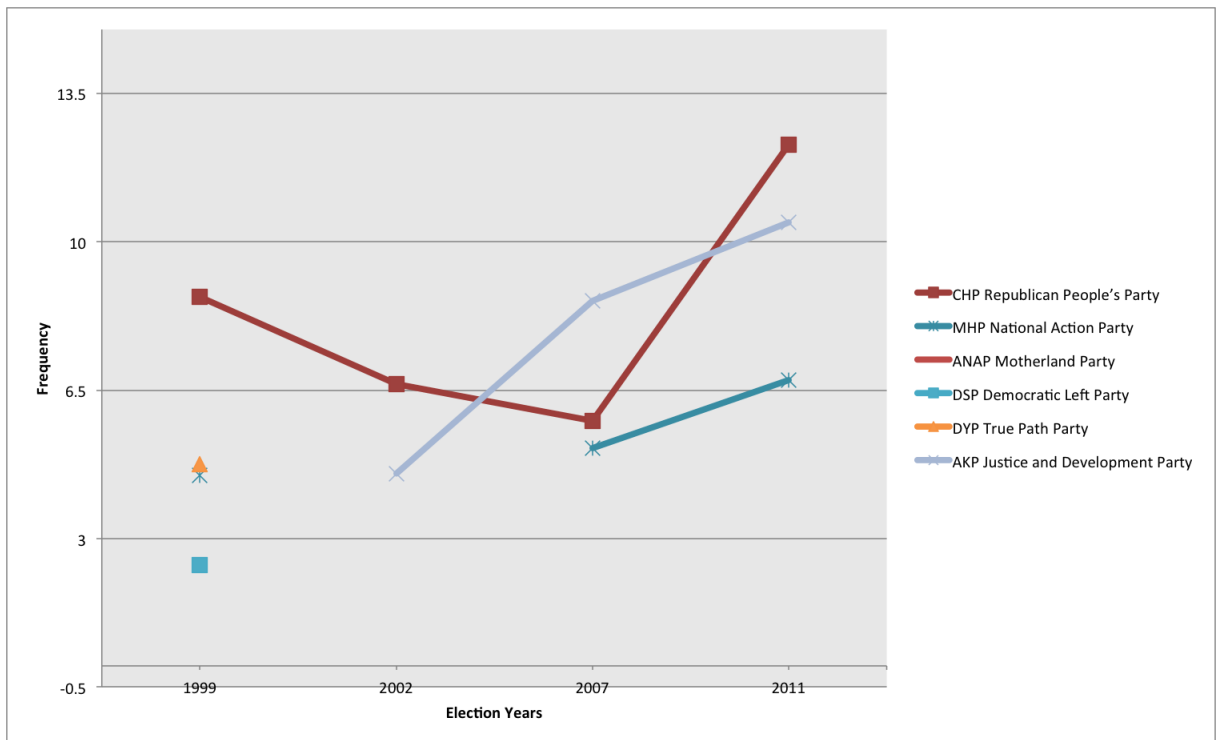
Figure 8: Frequency of education expansion (per506) indicator, 1999-2011
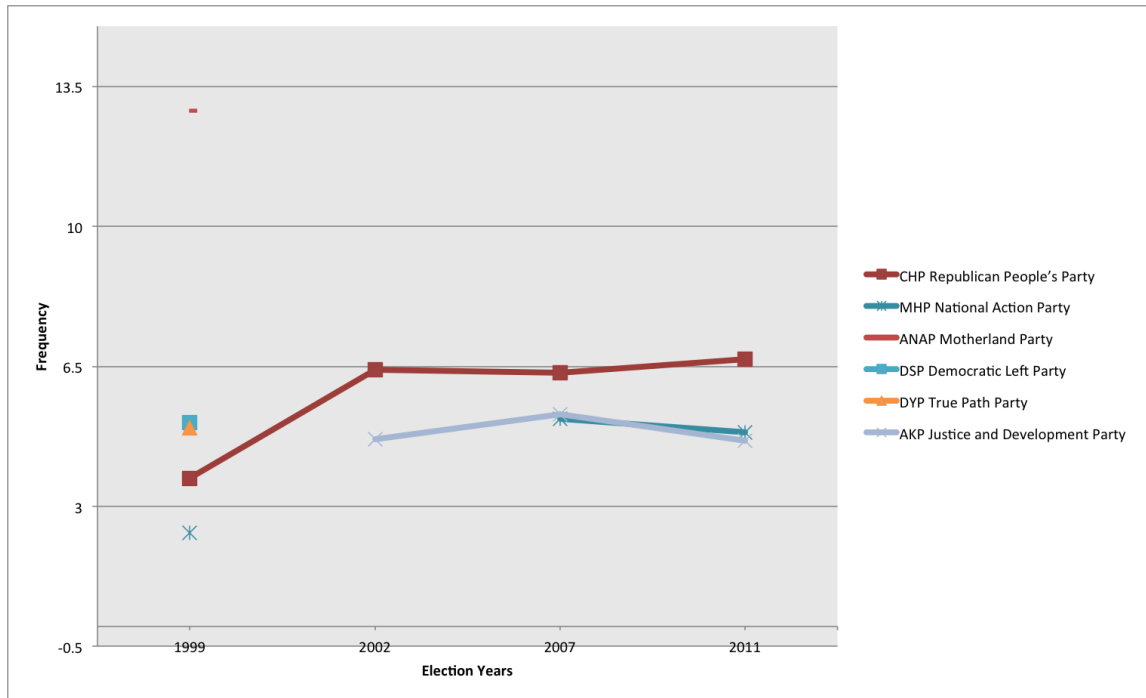
The AKP's planned economy discourse experienced a decline in 2007, compared to 2002 elections. At this point, if we look at the indicator "economic goals" (per408, figure 9), we see a huge incline in AKP's discourse. The Manifesto Project handbook defines this parameter as:

> "Broad and general economic goals that are not mentioned in relation to any other category. General economic statements that fail to include any specific goal." (2015, 21)

We should be cautious at this point, because the definition does not tell anything about the content. If we look at the coded text for this category, we see that this parameter, in Turkish case, explains the past achievements of a party. In this case, this huge frequency incline is a result of AKP's mention of its economic deeds –in a positive way in 5 years.

Figure 9: Frequency of economic goals (per408) indicator, 1999-2011
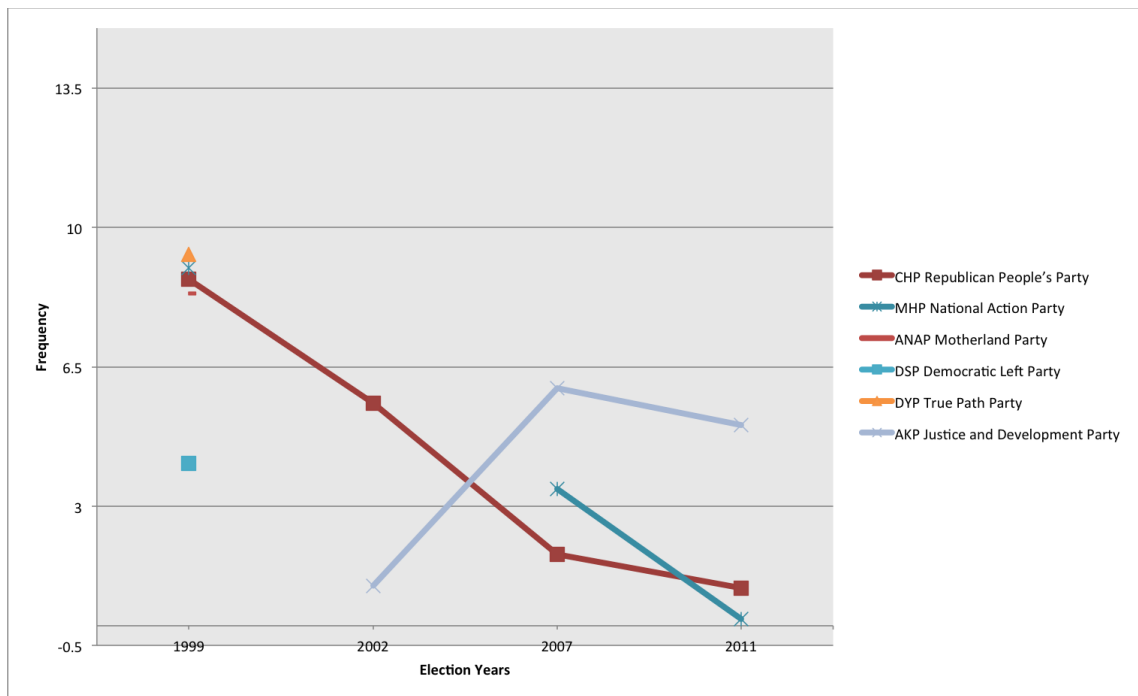
This clearly indicates that AKP, in the absence of any economic downturn, chooses to talk about its ownership over the good-performing economy. With the economic crisis that occurred right after 2007 elections and lasted until 2011, AKP's discourse again shifts to its economic plans that brought them victory in 2002 elections.

Lastly, terrorism also seems to be an effective issue for the elections in the period we study short-term effects. Figure10 shows the parameter "military: positive" (per104) frequency in the given period. The codebook define this parameter as

> "The importance of external security and defence. May include statements
>
> concerning:
>
> - The need to maintain or increase military expenditure;
> - The need to secure adequate manpower in the military;
> - The need to modernise armed forces and improve military
>   strength;
> - The need for rearmament and self-defence;
> - The need to keep military treaty obligations." (2014: 16-7)

Figure 10: Frequency of military: positive (per104) indicator, 1999-2011
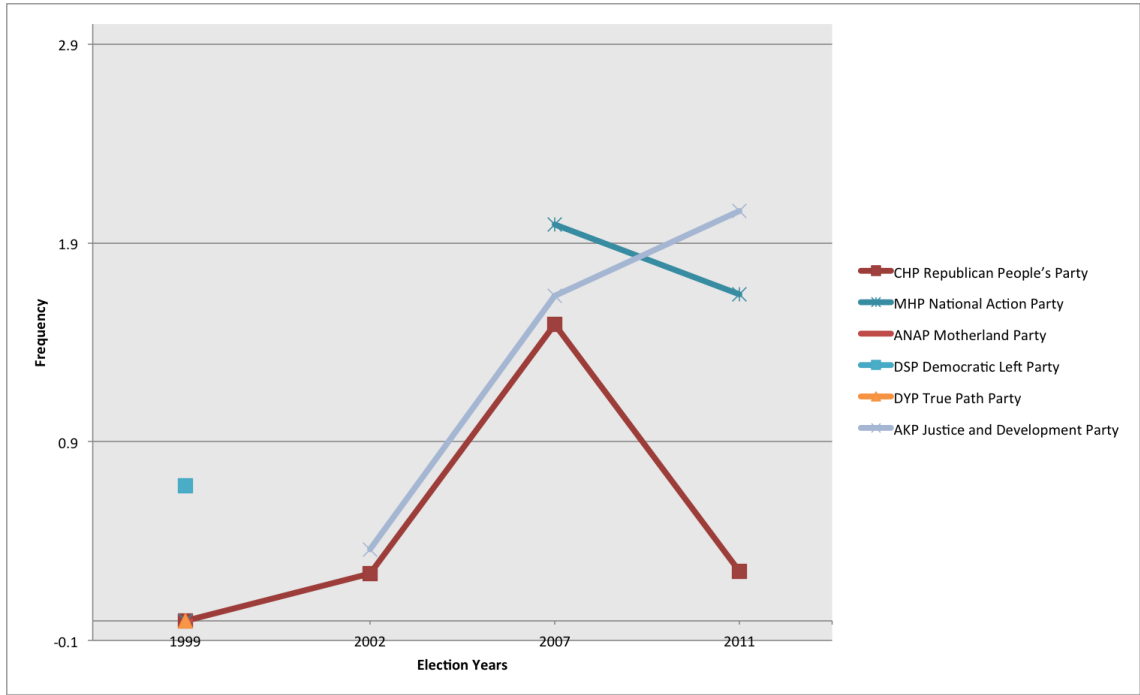
This again, just like economic goals parameter, is a tricky concept for Turkish case. If we look at the texts that are as falling under this parameter, we see that the security threats the parties mean are actually internal security threats issues, such as the Kurdish insurgency. Skyrocketing of the issue frequency in 2007 elections, and the MHP's access to parliament as a result of the salience of this issue begins to make sense after this evaluation. The CHP, as discussed earlier, adopted a more relaxed tone towards issues of periphery in terms of traditional values, and turned to its economic tone as a left-of-center party, after it experienced a leadership change. So a decline in the CHP's emphasis of positive military issues is also comprehensible. It is peculiar, however, why the MHP chose to mention less of this issue in 2011 than it did in 2007, and why it is the other way around for the AKP.

As a final point in short-term issue ownership section, let us look at the importance of issue salience and the correlation between salience and party discourses. I created the Table 8below based on Çarkoğlu & Aytaç's (2015) report on pre-election survey in May 2015, prior to June 2015 elections. The numbers are percentages, and are rough estimates deducted from the line graphs they provided in the document they published

online. This is a great resource, since it shows issue concerns of voters in a comparative way (from 2002 to 2015 elections). The questions they asked are in line with the questions regarding voters' perception of parties and most important issues, as we discussed above (41-3). I grouped issues under the categories we have discussed throughout the short-term issue ownership section. So namely, the categories are economic performance and terrorism.

Table 9. The most important problem of Turkey (2002-2011)

	2002	**2007**	**2011**
Economic performance	77	40	60
Terrorism	1,4*	23	20

Source: Çarkoğlu & Aytaç (2015)

*: taken from Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu (2007: 154)

When we compare these data to our earlier discussion with the data from the Manifesto Project, we see a positive relationship between two. Rise and fall of the salience of issues in the eyes of the public is reflected as the rise and fall of parties' discourse regarding these issues. Further analyses with regard to issue coverage of media, and media's effect on shaping issue perceptions of public will reveal better insights about performance issues. The recent literature on election coverage of media (Balkir et al., 2008; Toker, 2015; Somer: 2010, 2011) does not give such an insight, and they are mostly focused on issue cleavages and newspapers' tones towards campaigns. However, as discussed earlier, Alonso et al.'s (2012) discussion on how parties reflect their manifestos in their campaigns enable us to make assumptions on the relationship among the party manifestos, media coverage, and voter preferences, -at least for the time being, and within the limited scope of this paper.

6. DISCUSSION

This thesis endeavored to provide a descriptive account for the presence and applicability of issue ownership theory in Turkey. Analyses show us that issue ownership with regard to parties is not prevalent in the Turkish case unlike the US and Western European democracies. The literature findings rather suggest that the volatile nature of Turkish party system made performance issues more important determinants than long-term issue ownerships. However, long-term issue ownership with regard to social cleavages (rather than to parties) is also an important phenomenon. Although the volatility has been decreasing in the last decade, the upward trend towards stabilization of issues on different social cleavages (or as what I named them after Mardin's words, a dichotomous center-periphery cleavage) is still on the go. Whether this would be a permanent trend is a good question to ask at this point.

To go into more detail, findings suggest that both center and periphery parties have been going towards more consistent issue positions. The fluctuations still remain, but major breaks occur during times of crises, and the discourses of parties seem to be shifting back to the original issue positions once the crisis is over. Being an incumbent or in the opposition also have effects on some issue positions of parties. Although some issues erode over time (e.g. agriculture and farmers) or some issues are even nonexistent throughout multiparty era (e.g. positive Marxist analysis), we see that these erosions and absences stem from demographic changes and political nature the country has been in. One must not forget that the dataset I use is structured to allow for comparison among many different countries. Some issues are overly abstract for our subject matter, and some have very different connotations in the Turkish case.

 In his 1998 study, Çarkoğlu found that pre-1980 stability and consistency with regard to issue emphases in manifestos was higher than post-1980 period up until 1995 elections. Findings in my thesis show a trend in the contrary in as of 2011. These differences apparently stem from the changes in party system between 1995 and 2011. The AKP's rise to power and its establishment of a pre-dominant party system is clearly a game-changer. The high volatility in Turkish politics in 2000s (Sayarı, 2007) has been halted and put on decline especially after 2011 elections where the AKP victory brought with it a dominant party system (Çarkoğlu 2011). Coupled with Kalaycıoğlu's

kulturkampf theory (2012), it could be argued that polarization in the society is not only on cultural level, but party system and issue positions of parties also seem to have been consolidating on different ends. There are many cleavages in the literature where we could group parties under, yet these cleavages resemble each other in terms of their dichotomous nature and the issues they have been assigned to them.

Turkish party system is indeed very different than US, UK, and European democracies where long history of main parties and atypical nature of niche parties allows students room for comparative observations. However in the Turkish case, parties come and go; yet their stance with regard to issues is pre-defined and thus they could appeal to masses even though they are newly established. 55% of PMs in the Turkish Grand National Assembly are members of two parties that have been established in the last 14 years, one of them (Halkların Demokratik Partisi [People's Democratic Party], HDP) being only 14 months old. Apart from these parties' organic ties to their predecessors, their stance with regard to issues they own or oppose is another factor behind their mass appeal.

The success of the HDP in the last elections in 2015, gaining 13% of the votes by surpassing stable ethnic Kurdish voting which has been around 6-7%, is an interesting phenomenon to study, with regard to issue position of the party, and the issues the party owns –if there is any. Scholars of Turkish politics have been arguing that we observe more and more cleavages in the society as demographic and political climate change, yet the trend could very well be on the opposite direction. The future of Turkish party system might witness a convergence of cleavages, that is, cleavages would vanish into one cleavage that rules them all. Çarkoğlu's (1998) local/traditional vs. universalist cleavage theory seems to be a good candidate for naming such a phenomenon. Although sounding highly speculative, such a trend is not impossible.

Students of Turkish politics, especially those of party systems and voting behavior are highly encouraged to conduct more thorough research on the issue ownership theory in Turkish politics. Not only does Turkey offer a unique case where the universal literature might expand upon, but it also is a fruitful resource to make comparative studies with developing democracies. Issue ownership theory is a particularly unexplored terrain for Turkish politics. Fields of research might vary from media studies to retrospective

discourse analysis, and from public opinion surveys to statistical analyses of manifestos, campaign speeches, leaders' interviews, and even tweets.

7. CONCLUSION

Students of Turkish politics have always experienced some complications in explaining voting behavior of the Turkish electorate. This hardship stems from the fact that Turkish polity could not be compared to other democracies in terms of conceptualization as well as methodology. For the conceptualization difficulties, we could talk about a couple of anomalies in the Turkish case. First, theories that try to explain social cleavages in Turkey by economic factors face with an untypical left-right dichotomy, which is highly affected by moral and religious values. Second, theories that argue mobilization in Turkish case would cause volatility in voter behavior and in turn force parties to converge on issue positions hit the obstacle of increasing clashes between various cleavages within the society, or ever-changing party system, all reflected in the political arena.

As for the methodology part, the Turkish case is hard to compare with its Western counterparts. In countries like the US and the UK, parties have not changed for centuries, and resources to obtain data from are abundant to make longitudinal research on politics. In the European democracies' case, parties, although not as old as their US and UK counterparts, have a relatively long history and issue positions they represent seem to be solid. Increase in effective number of parties is merely caused by establishment of niche parties that are mostly anti-system and try to alter the political agenda (Meguid, 2005). In the Turkish case, however, we see that newly established parties are mostly successors of the older parties that are removed from politics by "centrist" forces such as the military or judiciary, or they represent a part of a rooted cleavage within the society, and appeal to a wider constituency, even trying to become catchall parties. Thus, effective number of parties in the Turkish case increases (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2007: 35-38) as politicians position themselves vis-à-vis the changing and emerging cultural cleavages within the society. Their aim is not always to change the agenda but to convince others that they are on the right side.

This thesis seeks to employ a methodology that produces comparative and comparable findings that situates the Turkish party politics within the context of democracies and democratizing societies. Such a methodology also enables us to identify how Turkish party and electoral politics compare and contrast with other democratic and

democratizing party and electoral politics cases in the world. The most important finding is that the Turkish parties are aware of the issues they need to emphasize to gain support of a certain type of constituency (as in the case of long-term issue ownership theory). Some issues are tied to some parties in a deterministic way, and thus help parties shape their campaign discourse accordingly. We also see an upward trend for both center and periphery parties regarding their issue consistency throughout time. This means, parties –whether rooted or newly established, have been more keen on keeping their issue positions. Performance issues, tied to changes in short-term issue ownerships, seem to affect voter preferences. Performance issues are reflected in public opinion surveys through asking voters what is the most problem that they think which the country faces. Parties in return respond to these concerns by focusing more on salient issues, not just for the sake of it, but by taking their long-term issue competencies into consideration as well.

Retrospective analytic research on issue perceptions from voters' perspective is impossible, yet secondary sources (such as interviews of leaderships, campaign speeches, press releases, television discussions, address to nation [ulusa sesleniş] scripts, and so forth) would be sufficient to analyze the discourses of the political parties more thoroughly. Further research will definitely tell us more about the relationship between issue emphases of different parties, and establish a better understanding of issue emphasis of parties that belong to a particular side of a cleavage. Further research are highly encouraged for students of Turkish politics on issue perceptions of voters *not necessarily* during election periods, asking questions on n*ot necessarily* the most important problems but more general questions about issues and parties' capabilities with regard to them. Issue ownership theory has been an underexplored terrain of Turkish politics and offers a wide array of possibilities concerning further research.

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9. APPENDIX

Table 10: Periphery block correlation and significance for economy domain, 1950-2011

	Free Enterprise: Positive	Incentives: Positive	Market Regulation: Positive	Economic Planning: Positive	Corporatism: Positive	Protectionism: Positive	Protectionism: Negative	Economic Goals	Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	Economic Growth	Technology and Infrastructure: Positive	Controlled Economy: Positive	Nationalisation: Positive	Economic Orthodoxy: Positive	Marxist Analysis: Positive	Anti-Growth Economy: Positive
Free Enterprise: Positive	**1,**															
Incentives: Positive	**0,41071**	**1,**														
	0,12833															
Market Regulation: Positive	**-0,08013**	**0,07656**	**1,**													
	0,7765	0,78624														
Economic Planning: Positive	**0,38144**	**0,19992**	**-0,11157**	**1,**												
	0,16065	0,47499	0,69222													
Corporatism: Positive	**-0,40771**	**0,21492**	**0,05908**	**0,14515**	**1,**											
	0,13142	0,44176	0,83435	0,60575												
Protectionism: Positive	**-0,3006**	**0,29534**	**0,14404**	**0,02341**	**0,30031**	**1,**										
	0,27631	0,28521	0,60854	0,934	0,2768											
Protectionism: Negative	**-0,21808**	**-0,04705**	**0,23811**	**0,15846**	**0,04765**	**0,51439**	**1,**									
	0,43491	0,86777	0,39278	0,57272	0,86608	0,04978										
Economic Goals	**-0,15569**	**-0,34394**	**-0,21964**	**0,17641**	**0,11092**	**0,13302**	**0,04181**	**1,**								
	0,57953	0,20939	0,43155	0,52941	0,69393	0,63649	0,8824									
Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	**0,01965**	**-0,2506**	**-0,36937**	**0,04856**	**0,06587**	**-0,26509**	**-0,26312**	**0,10412**	**1,**							
	0,94458	0,36765	0,17542	0,86355	0,81558	0,33965	0,34338	0,71192								
Economic Growth	**0,55613**	**0,494**	**0,01195**	**0,06348**	**-0,13995**	**-0,35632**	**-0,27139**	**-0,56299**	**-0,12843**	**1,**						
	0,03133	0,06125	0,96629	0,82216	0,61886	0,19238	0,32787	0,02888	0,64829							
Technology and Infrastructure: Positive	**-0,02466**	**0,097**	**0,01079**	**-0,18285**	**0,24338**	**-0,24989**	**-0,17087**	**0,35146**	**0,16989**	**0,08318**	**1,**					
	0,93049	0,73093	0,96955	0,51423	0,38208	0,36907	0,5426	0,19895	0,54496	0,76821						

Controlled Economy: Positive	**-0,26591**	**-0,23455**	**0,08458**	**0,14664**	**0,04326**	**0,36699**	**0,88603**	**0,34799**	**-0,328**	**-0,37694**	**-0,09869**	**1,**				
	0,3381	0,4001	0,76441	0,60201	0,87833	0,17844	0,00001	0,20372	0,23267	0,16607	0,72639					
Nationalisation: Positive	**-0,2172**	**-0,03836**	**0,56733**	**0,19302**	**-0,25217**	**0,43576**	**0,48691**	**-0,05278**	**-0,42648**	**-0,35014**	**-0,40056**	**0,38126**	**1,**			
	0,4368	0,89205	0,0274	0,49068	0,36456	0,10445	0,06566	0,8518	0,1129	0,20075	0,13899	0,16088				
Economic Orthodoxy: Positive	**-0,10513**	**-0,36921**	**-0,39618**	**-0,3252**	**-0,08379**	**-0,07816**	**-0,23198**	**0,47656**	**0,46806**	**-0,45854**	**0,22992**	**-0,14868**	**-0,40028**	**1,**		
	0,70925	0,17564	0,14377	0,23693	0,76656	0,78188	0,40544	0,0725	0,07848	0,08559	0,40975	0,59693	0,13929			
Marxist Analysis: Positive	**-0,19964**	**-0,28106**	**0,80076**	**-0,12079**	**-0,08083**	**-0,2012**	**-0,03475**	**-0,13904**	**-0,26413**	**-0,10755**	**-0,07631**	**-0,07948**	**0,45098**	**-0,28638**	**1,**	
	0,47563	0,31023	0,00033	0,66807	0,7746	0,47211	0,90215	0,62118	0,34148	0,70283	0,78693	0,77827	0,09156	0,30077		
Anti-Growth Economy: Positive	**0,04383**	**0,23323**	**-0,12111**	**-0,18262**	**-0,23694**	**-0,21972**	**-0,14353**	**-0,57215**	**-0,24809**	**0,73454**	**-0,01387**	**-0,24334**	**-0,11854**	**-0,30954**	**-0,14043**	**1,**
	0,87676	0,40283	0,66722	0,51476	0,39519	0,43138	0,60983	0,02583	0,37265	0,00182	0,96089	0,38215	0,67392	0,26157	0,61766	

This table presents correlations between issue frequencies under economy domain of all center parties (CHP, DSP, and SHP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one center party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for p<0.05

Table 11: Center block correlation and significance for economy domain, 1950-2011

	Free Enterprise: Positive	Incentives: Positive	Market Regulation: Positive	Economic Planning: Positive	Corporatism: Positive	Protectionism: Positive	Protectionism: Negative	Economic Goals	Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	Economic Growth	Technology and Infrastructure: Positive	Controlled Economy: Positive	Nationalisation: Positive	Economic Orthodoxy: Positive	Marxist Analysis: Positive	Anti-Growth Economy: Positive
Free Enterprise: Positive	1,															
Incentives: Positive	**0,41071**	1,														
	0,12833															
Market Regulation: Positive	**-0,08013**	**0,07656**	1,													
	0,7765	0,78624														
Economic Planning: Positive	**0,38144**	**0,19992**	**-0,11157**	1,												
	0,16065	0,47499	0,69222													
Corporatism: Positive	**-0,40771**	**0,21492**	**0,05908**	**0,14515**	1,											
	0,13142	0,44176	0,83435	0,60575												
Protectionism: Positive	**-0,3006**	**0,29534**	**0,14404**	**0,02341**	**0,30031**	1,										
	0,27631	0,28521	0,60854	0,934	0,2768											
Protectionism: Negative	**-0,21808**	**-0,04705**	**0,23811**	**0,15846**	**0,04765**	**0,51439**	1,									
	0,43491	0,86777	0,39278	0,57272	0,86608	0,04978										

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Economic Goals	**-0,15569**	**-0,34394**	**-0,21964**	**0,17641**	**0,11092**	**0,13302**	**0,04181**	**1,**							
	0,57953	0,20939	0,43155	0,52941	0,69393	0,63649	0,8824								
Keynesian Demand Management: Positive	**0,01965**	**-0,2506**	**-0,36937**	**0,04856**	**0,06587**	**-0,26509**	**-0,26312**	**0,10412**	**1,**						
	0,94458	0,36765	0,17542	0,86355	0,81558	0,33965	0,34338	0,71192							
Economic Growth	**0,55613**	**0,494**	**0,01195**	**0,06348**	**-0,13995**	**-0,35632**	**-0,27139**	**-0,56299**	**-0,12843**	**1,**					
	0,03133**	0,06125	0,96629	0,82216	0,61886	0,19238	0,32787	0,02888**	0,64829						
Technology and Infrastructure: Positive	**-0,02466**	**0,097**	**0,01079**	**-0,18285**	**0,24338**	**-0,24989**	**-0,17087**	**0,35146**	**0,16989**	**0,08318**	**1,**				
	0,93049	0,73093	0,96955	0,51423	0,38208	0,36907	0,5426	0,19895	0,54496	0,76821					
Controlled Economy: Positive	**-0,26591**	**-0,23455**	**0,08458**	**0,14664**	**0,04326**	**0,36699**	**0,88603**	**0,34799**	**-0,328**	**-0,37694**	**-0,09869**	**1,**			
	0,3381	0,4001	0,76441	0,60201	0,87833	0,17844	0,00001**	0,20372	0,23267	0,16607	0,72639				
Nationalisation: Positive	**-0,2172**	**-0,03836**	**0,56733**	**0,19302**	**-0,25217**	**0,43576**	**0,48691**	**-0,05278**	**-0,42648**	**-0,35014**	**-0,40056**	**0,38126**	**1,**		
	0,4368	0,89205	0,0274**	0,49068	0,36456	0,10445	0,06566	0,8518	0,1129	0,20075	0,13899	0,16088			
Economic Orthodoxy: Positive	**-0,10513**	**-0,36921**	**-0,39618**	**-0,3252**	**-0,08379**	**-0,07816**	**-0,23198**	**0,47656**	**0,46806**	**-0,45854**	**0,22992**	**-0,14868**	**-0,40028**	**1,**	
	0,70925	0,17564	0,14377	0,23693	0,76656	0,78188	0,40544	0,0725	0,07848	0,08559	0,40975	0,59693	0,13929		
Marxist Analysis: Positive	**-0,19964**	**-0,28106**	**0,80076**	**-0,12079**	**-0,08083**	**-0,2012**	**-0,03475**	**-0,13904**	**-0,26413**	**-0,10755**	**-0,07631**	**-0,07948**	**0,45098**	**-0,28638**	**1,**
	0,47563	0,31023	0,00033**	0,66807	0,7746	0,47211	0,90215	0,62118	0,34148	0,70283	0,78693	0,77827	0,09156	0,30077	

Anti-Growth Economy: Positive	0,04383	0,23323	-0,12111	-0,18262	-0,23694	-0,21972	-0,14353	-0,57215	-0,24809	0,73454	-0,01387	-0,24334	-0,11854	-0,30954	-0,14043	1,
	0,87676	0,40283	0,66722	0,51476	0,39519	0,43138	0,60983	0,02583	0,37265	0,00182**	0,96089	0,38215	0,67392	0,26157	0,61766	

This table presents correlations between issue frequencies under economy domain of all periphery parties (DP, AP, MSP, ANAP, DYP, RP, FP, and AKP) across 1950-2011. When there is more than one periphery party in a given election, the frequency of a domain is the average frequency of all center parties for that given domain.

Each junction represents the overall correlation between frequencies of the domain in the row and the domain in the column in elections across 1950-2011, and their relative significance. Correlation coefficients are in bold face. Values below them indicate p-values of the correlation.

**: Significant for p<0.05