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THE DETERMINANTS OF VOTING BEHAVIOR IN TURKEY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of Political Science

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the main determinants of voting behavior in Turkey. Previous research has been divided about the relative importance of religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors in vote choice among Turkey's citizens. Utilizing a large nationwide survey of 10,393 people conducted in 2010 in 59 provinces, this study finds that the most important cleavages among Turkey's voters are religious (the degree of importance they place on their faith) and ethnic (the division between Turks and Kurds). With this central motivation, the study investigates the main determinants of the voter's choice in Turkey to see (1) whether voters value their religious affiliation when they cast their votes, (2) whether the importance of ethnicity has any affect on their voting behavior, (3) whether voters' ethnic background plays any role in their political preferences, and (4) whether the socioeconomic indicators have any impact on voters' preferences. From this analysis, the study shows that the voting behavior in Turkey has evolved towards ethnic -- specifically Turk/Kurd -- and secular/religious dimensions, in the last decade.

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To my family

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

This dissertation aims to answer the key question: what are the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey? In providing the answers, this study offers a comprehensive empirical frame at the individual level by examining the factors that determine the voter's preferences in the last three national elections in the context of their religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics.

Some of the previous and most important studies on voting behavior (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, 1954; Campbell et al. 1960, 1966) posit a link between party loyalty and social characteristics in determining voting behavior. Other scholars who focus on different regions suggest that social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), values, and socioeconomic situations also play significant roles in vote choice.

With respect to Turkey, the traditional approach to the study of voting behavior discussed by Mardin (1973) supports the claim that center/periphery relations are the key factor that predicts voter's preferences. While some recent studies (e.g., Carkoglu and Hinich 2006; Baslevent et al. 2009; Ekmekci 2011; Toros 2014) posit that religiosity and ethnicity are the most significant indicators of voting behavior, some others (e.g. Esmer 2002; Sarigil 2010) highlight the importance of socioeconomic and ideological factors.

A considerable amount of these studies is unable to capture the factors that determine the voter's preferences, due to the following reasons: (1) Most studies draw inferences from a small sample size. (2) These previous studies focus mostly on either American-based voting behavior (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944, 1954; Campbell et al. 1960, 1966), or Western countries (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). For this reason, they failed to explain what was going on regarding voting behavior in developing world. (3) In the case of Turkey, most studies focus largely on the coalition periods before 2002 (e.g., Kalaycioglu 1994; Ozcan 2000; Secor 2001; Akarca and Tansel 2006). These coalition periods were seen as the core reason behind the political and economic instability in Turkey, thereby influencing the voter's decisions. (4) The studies addressing voting behavior are mainly based on the aggregate-level data, which precludes us from scrutinizing more deeply the determinants of voting behavior. In other words, considering only aggregate-level data, particularly in the developing countries such as Turkey, would omit significant part of the story in tracing the indicators of the voter's preferences.

Utilizing a large nationwide data at the individual-level, which was conducted in 2010 in 59 provinces, with 10,393 respondents, the present study shows that religiosity and ethnicity are two of the most significant indicators of the voters' preferences in the last decade. The study will also show that the voting behavior in Turkey is evolving towards ethnic -- specifically Turk/Kurd -- and secular/religious dimensions.

The following questions are relevant to this study: what are the dynamics of interaction between ethnic divisions, socio-economic situations, and religiosity in terms of voting behavior? What does the political science literature tell us about why/when one cleavage becomes more important than another? Do the predictions of the political

science literature on voting behavior explain what is going on at the micro level in Turkey?

Today, Turkey is a partial democracy with multiple parties that advance different ideological positions and differ in their religious and ethnic attitudes. As an ethnically divided Muslim country with a partial democracy, Turkey has a special geographic position between the East and the West, has a weakly institutionalized party system, has been ruled by the same party -- the Justice and Development Party (AKP) -- for almost 13 years and is (or used to be) scrambling to establish a Western-standard democracy. Therefore, it is worth considering not only politically, but also geo-strategically.

It is worth mentioning at this point that Turkey's Kurdish issue has been one of the severest and protracted intrastate conflicts of the 20th century, particularly in the last three decades. It seems that this issue will remain on the agenda not only in Turkey but also other countries in the region, at least in the middle run. The current political situation in Iraq and Syria makes the problem regional, where many actors -- such as the Islamic State (IS), Turkey, Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria, the U.S., and some other Western countries -- get involved in this process to a certain degree. Therefore, this Kurdish issue is now becoming a crucial factor in determining the identity-based policies in the relevant countries.

Understanding how people vote in such a country, with its highly polarized social structure, would help decision makers ease the tensions between groups that have unique ethnic, religious, and social characteristics -- thereby providing the politicians the opportunity to generate a more stable economic and political environment. Such an

investigation in the selected case (Turkey) would also yield generalizable findings pertaining to other countries of its kind.

With this central motivation, in particular, we will investigate, (1) whether voters value their religious affiliation when they vote for a particular party, (2) whether the identity of the voters has any affect on their vote choice, (3) whether voters' ethnic background plays any role in their political preferences, (4) whether the socioeconomic status (e.g., age, gender, income, education) of the voters has any impact on their voting behavior.

In addition to the rising of the ethno-Kurdish identity, another important component that needs to be considered in Turkish politics is the rise of pro-Islamic groups. Since the first victory of the pro-Islamic AKP in 2002, the country has been ruled by the same party. During this period, the Turkish parliament has been formed by four major parties.

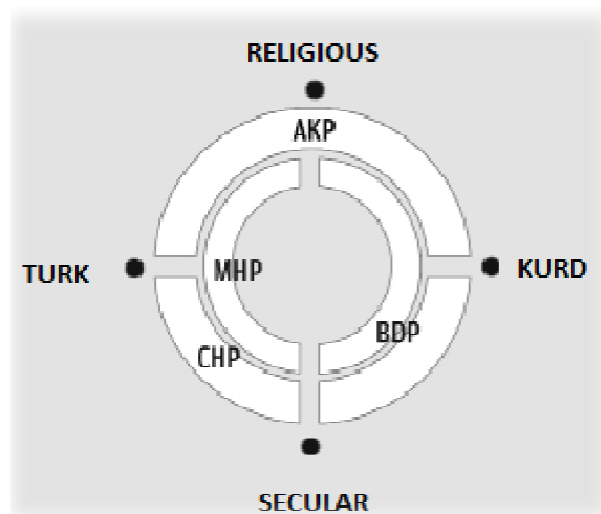


Figure 1.1: Voting matrix in Turkey

In addition to the AKP, the secular CHP, the ultra-nationalist MHP, and the ethno-Kurdish BDP have seats in the parliament. Considering these parties' relative positions as depicted in Figure 1.1, the results of the last three elections in 2002, 2007, and 2011 may be viewed as a reflection of evolving voting behavior, which brings secular/religious and Turk/Kurd cleavages into the political arena.

The chapter continues as follows. The second section presents the literature on voting behavior. Since the particular literature on voters' preferences specifically in Turkey will be demonstrated in the second chapter, the present chapter shows only the previous general research on voting behavior in the world. The third section exhibits the general framework of the study.

1.2. Previous Research on Voting Behavior

There are many studies that have been written about the determinants of voting behavior in the political science field. Among these, the following studies are of particular interest: Lazarsfeld et al. (1944, 1954); Campbell et al. (1960, 1966); Horowitz (1985, 1991, 1993); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Dalton et al (1984); Crewe and Danver (1985); Franklin et al. (1992); Evans (1999); Palmberg (1999); Bekker et al. (2001); Clark and Lipset (2001); Norris (2003); Norris and Mettes (2003); Bartels (2008); Schoen (2014).

Many of these scholars have pursued studies focusing on the main determinants of voting behavior. These include the role of social cleavages, and why and when one cleavage type becomes more important than the other. Other works examine the effects of

the key indicators of voting behavior, and how they change over time; and whether there are significant differences between developed and developing countries in terms of the factors that determine voting behavior.

The studies of voting behavior based on micro level data date back to the 1920s (Merriam and Gosnell, 1924). On the academic side, aside from Siegfried's (1913) analysis of voting behavior in France, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet write two of the earlier studies on voting behavior, in 1944 and 1954.

In *The People's Choice*, the authors utilize a seven-wave panel survey data, and find that voters knew whom they were going to vote for several months before the elections. In this first academic study on voting behavior, which is also known for its later termed "Columbia Method", Lazarsfeld et al. surveyed 600 voters in Ohio, and presented the results in *The People's Choice* in 1944. Lazarsfeld et al. claim that there was only a small number of voters who changed their existing predispositions during the campaign in the 1940 U.S. presidential election. These two studies by the Columbia school had an undeniable effect on subsequent research in this field.

Another milestone work is, *The American Voter*, which is a study on American elections conducted by Campbell et al. in 1960. Here, the authors examined the determinants of voting behavior in the 1952 and 1956 U.S. presidential elections. These same scholars published another study entitled *Elections and the Political Order* in 1966.

From the 1960s onwards, the theory of voter choice developed by Campbell et al. -- which asserts that the most voters cast their ballots on the basis of their partisan identification -- influenced most of the works in the field. The model became known as

the Michigan Model, and eventually gave rise to one of the most commonly utilized datasets in the political science literature, called the National Election Studies.

In their model, the preferences of the voters are affected by their prior experiences. From this point of view, Campbell et al. identified three proximate motivational factors as particularly important: party identification, issue orientation, and candidate orientation (Schoen, 2014). Party identification is resistant to change, and stems from the longstanding psychological attachment to a particular political party (Schoen, 2014). Thus, according to the exponents of the Michigan model, understanding the background of a voter's attitudes towards a particular party requires examining numerous historical factors that determine the voter's preferences. Campbell et al. (1960) use a metaphor called "funnel of causality",¹ in which the prior forces influence the voting choice of a person.

The findings of Campbell et al.'s study made it easier to understand the effects of social characteristics and party loyalty over time. However, such effects may not explain the entire story, since even the authors state that, "attitudes toward the objects of politics, varying through time, can explain short-term fluctuations in partisan division of the vote, whereas party loyalties and social characteristics, which are relatively inert through time, account but poorly for these shifts" (Campbell et al. 1960, p. 65).

As scholars gradually developed new concepts, research methods, and data in the subsequent decades, the Michigan model of electoral study has been reevaluated and

¹ Detailed explanation about "funnel causality" theory can be found in Campbell et al. 1960, pp. 24-37; Hofferbert, (1974); and Bartels (2008).

criticized. It may be worth mentioning, however, that none of these studies has succeeded in entirely falsifying the findings of *The American Voter*. Therefore, even though there are new sophisticated variables included in the more recent analyses on voting behavior, the Michigan model is still widely used as a reference today by the scholars in the field.

In terms of the theoretical framework, aside from the Columbia and Michigan models, scholars were able to develop a variety of separate theories in the 1960s and 1970s. Among these, ‘rational choice’ is one of the most commonly used theories in the field. In his most influential book *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), which is also an early work in rational choice theory, Downs posited the left-right spectrum. According to Bartel (2008), “Downs’s first and most important contribution was to introduce spatial models of electoral competition to the field of political science.”²

As a result, work on voting behavior, especially in the U.S., has varied and intensified considerably, depending upon the data and methods developed, ranging from a variety of public opinion surveys that primarily focus on attitudes and perceptions of individual respondents, to laboratory experiments and district and national level data.

These previous studies focusing mostly on American-oriented voting behavior influenced and inspired their European counterparts, as well as other scholars that examine developing countries. Other parts of the world of course have unique political cultures, systems, party structures, traditions, social classes, and so on. Therefore, as we include more regions into our analyses at both the aggregate and individual level, in

² In addition to these, scholars - such as Stokes (1963), Key (1966), Kramer (1971), Fiorina (1981), Goldberg (1966), Markus and Converse (1979), and Page and Jones (1979) - posit different equation models related with party identifications, issue orientations, and vote choices.

either developed or developing countries, there will be more components of voting behavior that need to be considered.

Studies focusing on voting behavior in Europe and other newer democracies naturally tend to examine the social cleavages and structures as well, since there are more ethnic and religious-based cleavages in such countries. We should note that examining the determinants of voting behavior in European and developing countries from other regions may require different elements to be included into analyses (especially in contrast to the U.S.). For instance, the classical structural theory of voting behavior, developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), emphasizes that social identities formed the basic building blocks of party support in Western Europe. This theory stems from the idea that the party structure in Western countries has been ‘frozen’ from the 1920s until the 1960s. They investigate the regional cleavages of center-periphery, the class inequalities of workers-owners, and sectarian cleavages over church and state, in the ten Western countries, Brazil and Japan. They posit that these core social cleavages have determined the class and religious-based voting behavior in Western countries up until the 1970s.

Although this study is seen as the prominent work on the cleavage theory, the authors did not provide a clear definition for their key concept. Lipset and Rokkan’s theory, which is also known as *cleavages theory*, was clearly defined by Rae and Taylor (1970, 1),

“Cleavages are the criteria which divide members of a community or sub-community into groups, and the relevant cleavages are those which divide members into groups with important political differences at specific times and places”.

Social cleavage approaches to the study of voting behavior have become crucial in many parts of the world, especially in the post-communist period. Studies considering only Western democracies, where party structure is institutionalized and frozen (for Lipset and Rokkan), may have omitted variables regarding some important indicators of voting behavior, including ethnic and religious fragmentations. The studies examining voting behavior in emerging democracies should consider investigating the effects of religious and ethnic cleavages on voting behavior, since these cleavages may have significant role in shaping political arena.

With respect to religion, there are some scholars (e.g., Lijphart 1979; Trechsel 1995) who argue that religiosity has a significant impact on voter's preferences even if it may not be the key factor; while some others (e.g. Brooks et al. 2006; van der Brug et al. 2009; Esmer and Pettersson 2007) seem to think that it is still strongly relevant in determining vote choice.

Lipset and Rokkan's *freezing* hypothesis has been criticized by some scholars (e.g., Bartoloni and Mair 1990, Mair 2001, Franklin et al. 1992) that argue that the effect of social cleavages on party choice in Western democracies is declining, and that there are other factors that need to be examined in voting behavior. We should note that because Lipset and Rokkan focus only on Western democracies, many think that their hypothesis is inadequate to explain the general picture of voting behavior in developing countries.

Yasushi (2007) for instance asserts that social mobility, the mass society, and value changes indicate that the preexisting party system is becoming less able to reflect

the changing social cleavages. In addition to this assertion, Lipset and Rokkan's hypothesis was criticized by Mair (1993; 2001) who posits that there was not enough explanation of how and why the freezing persisted after the 1920s.

Despite these challenges, Lipset and Rokkan's theory was/is one of the most influential studies in the voting behavior literature, especially in terms of social cleavages. A major criticism of this theory stems from the very nature of its limited sample size. That is, the freezing hypothesis focuses only on Western democracies, which precludes us from using it for the regions that do not have a frozen party system. As Geddes (2003) states, the freezing hypothesis does not apply to Eastern European and Latin American countries.

The freezing theory has been extended in subsequent years. Scholars focusing on voting behavior in developing countries consider the unique social and political cultures in these countries. Therefore, in addition to cleavages, other specific factors such as values are included to the studies on voting preferences, since in developing countries, values seem to be an important factor in party choice. Certain significant relationships between values and parties can be observed in emerging democracies (Yasushi 2007, p. 14).

According to Norris and Mattes (2003, 3), structural theories suggest that "in electoral democracies, the basic cleavages within each society should provide cues linking voters to parties representing each major social sector, whether divisions of ethnicity, region, class, or religion." This assertion was supported by Inglehart (1984) who argues that post-modernist values such as autonomy, trust, individualism, and self-

expression may challenge social cleavages as the key determinant of vote choice.

Norris and Mattes (2003) argue that, following the seminal structural theories of Lipset and Rokkan, “much of the literature has focused on the cleavages of social class, religion, and center-periphery that have long divided established democracies.” That is to say, these issues have long been discussed in developed democracies. However, the expected effects of these cleavages in developing democracies are ignored in a sense, and are worth investigating as well.

Together with these social cleavages, the potential affect and importance of ethnicity on voter’s party preferences in these countries is emphasized by Norris and Mattes (2003, 1) who argue, “Structural theories predict that the cues of social identity, particularly ethnicity, should exert a strong influence upon voting choices and party support in developing societies.”

The authors also posit that the policy performance, economic evaluations, and the legislature’s performance play an important role in determining voting behavior as much as the other determinants do (Norris and Mattes, 2003).³

Examining the impact of ethno-linguistic and ethno-racial characteristics on support for the governing party in a dozen African states, the authors find that ethnicity is an important determinant of voting behavior in most of the African countries (Norris and Mattes, 2003, p. 4). Similarly, one of the most prominent scholars in the field of social cleavages, Horowitz (1985, 1993), claims that ethnicity causes a strong direct impact on

³ In regard to voting behavior, while some scholars focus on economic voting (e.g., Evans (2004), Merrill III and Grofman (1999), Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2006), Duch and Stevenson (2008)), some others on the other hand focus on the rise of issue voting (see, for example, Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984; Crewe and Denver 1985; Franklin et al 1992; Evans 1999; Norris 2003)

voting behavior in ethnically segmented societies.

It is worth noting here that while some countries apply decentralization to solve their ethnic problems, some others impose extremely centralist policies over different ethnic groups. Scholars like Lijphart (1977) argue that group autonomy allows these groups to have their own social, economic, and political affairs, especially in cultural and educational manners. Other scholars, such as Kymlicka (1998) argue that decentralization will reinforce ethnic identity, inviting conflict between groups at the national level. In either case, voters' preferences in ethnically divided societies are worth examining in order to gain an understanding of ethnic awareness and its political consequences.

In light of the general framework of the voting behavior literature, we may conclude that as scholars develop new methods, and utilize comprehensive data, the results vary considerably, typically depending on the sample size they use. In addition to survey data, in recent years scholars have used laboratory experiments as well in examining voting behavior at the individual level.

In recent years, although many of these studies contain developed and developing countries in analyzing the factors that determine voting behavior, only a few of them have been focused on a single country. Therefore, analyzing the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey as a case, the present study will contribute to the theories that argue that ethnic and religious cleavages cause a strong direct impact on voting behavior in ethnically divided societies.

1.3. Framework of the Study

Utilizing a nationwide survey, the primary aim of this study is to understand the nature of vote choice and its relationship with the religiosity, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status of the respondents as a unit of analysis.

This dissertation comprises six chapters. This first chapter has provided an introduction, and has reviewed the literature on voting behavior in general. The second chapter elucidates the theoretical framework and methodology of the study. It specifically examines the rise of pro-Islamic and Kurdish identities in the last two decades, which challenge the status quo (known as military and bureaucratic tutelage) that have been ruled the country since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The chapter then reviews the previous research on voting behavior in Turkey. The second chapter also discusses the case selection procedures, and then provides the core hypotheses of the study. In addition, the chapter demonstrates the electoral system in Turkey, in order to make it easier to understand the functioning of the electoral process for those who are not familiar with the political system in Turkey. Finally, we present an explanation of some important features related to the data and method used in the empirical chapters.

Chapters three through five will present the empirical analyses. The third chapter analyzes the determinants of Kurdish voting behavior. We therefore look at the factors that motivate the Kurds in their voting preferences over the pro-Islamic (AKP) and ethno-Kurdish (BDP) parties. These two parties have gained nearly 90% of the Kurdish votes in the last decade. We further elaborate our analysis on Kurdish voting behavior by using a multinomial regression, and including other parties in the model. We compare the parties

that are associated with Kurdish votes, in order to understand which Kurds would vote for a particular political party. We conclude the chapter by presenting the results of the empirical tests.

In the fourth chapter, we first use logit estimation to analyze how Turks vote. Three political parties (AKP, CHP, and MHP) enjoyed receiving the vast amount of the Turks' votes in the last decade. Therefore, using each party as the dependent variable, we examine the determinants of the voting behavior of the Turks, separately. We then examine the main indicators of the political preferences of the Turks, in order to compare the preferences of the individuals for each relevant party.

After we investigate the determinants of the voting behavior of both the Turks and the Kurds separately in the preceding two chapters, we include all respondents into the analyses together in chapter 5, with all the parties that had a chance to enter the Turkish parliament in the last three national elections. Since there were four parties that could enter the parliament, we use multinomial logit regressions to make empirical comparisons between each party, as well as a logit model to compare two parties. In these models, we look at the interactions of some variables as well.

Chapter 6 concludes this dissertation. It summarizes and further elaborates the implications of the findings from the empirical chapters. This chapter also identifies the possible next steps in research on voting behavior.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. Overview

In context the literature on voting behavior in Turkey, this chapter examines the historical background of the rise of pro-Islamic and Kurdish identities as a challenge to the Kemalist tutelage that has dominantly ruled the country beginning with the foundation of the Turkish Republic until the 2000s. In addition, this chapter investigates the emergent identities in the voting pattern in the country. These identities are analyzed within a general framework of the voting matrix in the Turkish parliament in the last decade. This voting matrix indicates that four party-groups are represented during the last three general elections from 2002 through 2011. The next section discusses the reasons for studying Turkey as a single case in the evolving literature of voting behavior in ethnically divided developing countries. After presenting a theoretical perspective of the voting behavior in Turkey, the chapter delves into the characteristics of the data and method used in the empirical chapters of this study, and presents the main hypotheses.

2.2. The Rise of the Pro-Islamic and Kurdish Identities

The Turkish republic implemented reforms to create a homogenous secular nation-state after 1923 (Anderson 1991; Zurcher 2004). The prominent actors of the new regime attempted to form an authoritarian ideology (Kemalism) that intended to unify one

nation, and create a homogenous society. Kurdish ethnicity and some religious groups and sects such as Alevis that resisted the new regime were the first victims of this system. Society was controlled by single-party hegemony of the Republican People's Party (CHP). During this period, traditional religious schools were closed, the Gregorian calendar was adopted in place of the Islamic one, the fez (traditional hat) was outlawed by the Hat Law, the Latin alphabet was adopted, and the Islamic call for worship and reading of the Quran in Arabic was prohibited.

In Ataturk's effort to build a nation-state in the early republican period, the concept of "Turk" (Turkishness) was more like a national identity, rather than an ethnicity (Koc 2001: 5). The early republican elites referred to Turk as anybody living in Turkey, as long as they live according to norms of the state, including the Turkish language (Koc 2001: 6).

To demonstrate a dramatic example, Ismet Inonu - one of the former prime ministers of Turkey – gave a speech in 1925 in which he said: "as Turks are in the majority, other groups do not have any power. Our mission is to Turkify non-Turkish groups in the Turkish homeland. We are going to eradicate groups who oppose Turks and Turkishness" (Ozkan, 2011).

The Turkish Republic created a highly centralized nation-state that demolishes the traditional power structure in the Kurdish populated regions in Southeast Anatolia, in which the tribal chiefs had played a significant role in the Ottoman era. For instance, the Kurdish tribal leadership had maintained a certain degree of autonomy in governing their domestic affairs (Oktem 2004; Yavuz and Ozcan 2006).

There has been a severe political restriction until the last two decades towards the Kurds in terms of forbidding Kurdish language to be spoken, prohibition of children to have ‘Kurdish’ names, and renaming various towns, lakes, and places with ‘Turkish’ names. These were the primary attitudes of Turkish governments against the Kurds until the end of 1970s.

In addition, after the military intervention in 1980, most of the Kurdish-inhabited provinces in the southeastern region were governed by the martial law (*sıkıyönetim*) - defined by the Constitution in 1982 - in the name of the state of emergency (*olağanüstü hal*, OHAL). This situation led to extraordinary issues, including thousands of unsolved murders, which triggered heavy reactions against the policies of the governments in 1980s in these provinces (Figure 2.1).

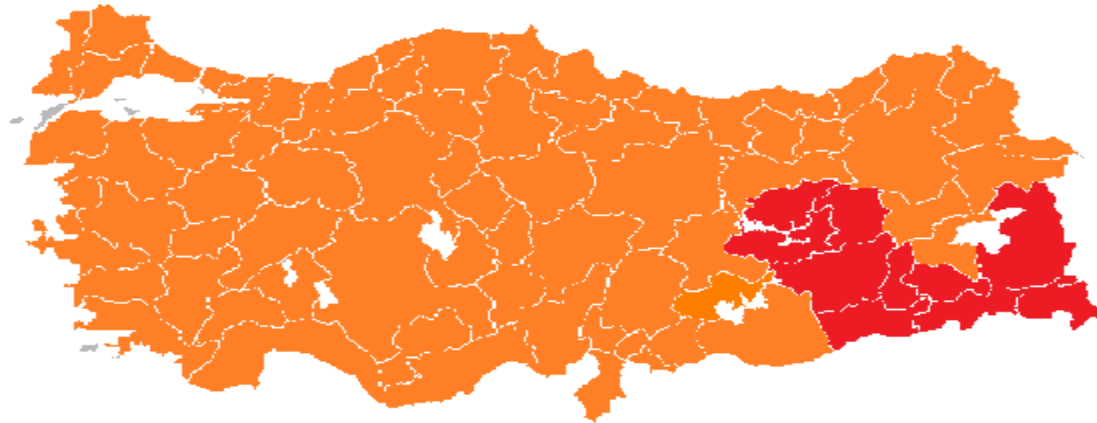


Figure 2.1: Provinces under OHAL

Source: The map is compiled and colored by the author from (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yerel-secim-2014/>). Red color area shows the provinces under OHAL from 1987 to 2002. During this period, approximately 35,000 people were killed. Data are from; (http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/chpli_degerden_ohal_raporu-1005040).

Similarly, religious groups were also under pressure until the 2000s. The state excluded religious groups from the public sphere, and labeled them as threatening factor for the regime. Building upon the regime principles, the state restricted women from wearing the traditional Islamic headscarf in civil service jobs, in both public and private schools including the universities, and governmental offices.

Exclusionist and eliminative discourse of the Turkish Republic has influenced the ethnic and religious compositions of society in Turkey until the last two decades. During this period, the state's denial of Kurdish identity and suppression of Kurds was an important goal of Turkish governments. Kemalist policies of secularization and homogenization of the society and the assimilation of non-Turkish ethnic identities were maintained by the Turkish governments to prevent the rise of Islamic and Kurdish identities (Zubaida 1996, Onis 1997, Ozbudun 2000).

I should note at this point that the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP*) has represented the secular/laicism side of the political spectrum since 1950s. The CHP was the only party in the political sphere until the beginning period of transition to multiparty system in 1946. Since then, its influence on the political realm has decreased continually, and it has not been in power for decades.

In 1990s, the Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) was preferred by the secular groups, and was the first party in 1999 national election, thanks to the capture of the PKK leader Ocalan. The DSP formed a coalition government, which ended with an unprecedented economic crisis in the country's history. In the following three national elections (2002,

2007, 2011), the CHP has represented the secular dimension of the voting pattern in the parliament again, since its counterparts have remained under the national threshold.

The first attempt to challenge the Kemalist policies of secularization and homogenization of the society came from a group of Kurds under the leadership of Abdullah Ocalan that formed the Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan - the Kurdistan Workers' Party, popularly known as PKK. This new group started to attack both civilians and military forces in many cities in southeast part of Turkey and some cities in the west part of the country. The Turkish Army launched responses to the PKK attacks during 1990s, which further escalated the tension in many regions. More than 40,000 people have been killed since start of PKK attacks against civilian and military forces.

This ethnic conflict shaped the prevailing center-periphery dimension of the political spectrum. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of pro-Islamist, ethno-Kurdish, and Turkish nationalist parties. Among these, the first pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP⁴) continuously increased its share of votes until the late 1990s in both national and local elections. However, the Constitutional Court closed down the RP in January 1998 because of the speech of some senior figures such as Minister Erbakan, and banned them from political activity for five years. The senior figures of the RP had changed the name of the party to the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP), and eventually this new party was closed down in June 2001 on similar grounds to those of the RP case (Carkoglu and Hinich 2006, p. 373).

⁴ RP had its roots in the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) and the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP). Both parties were closed down by the military regimes of 1971 and 1980. For further information about Islam and politics, and political parties in the late 1990s in Turkey, see, Carkoglu and Toprak (2000), Carkoglu (2007), Heper (1997), Sayari (1996), Toprak (1981).

After the first multi-party experience in 1950, almost all attempts towards democratization had been stopped by the bureaucratic and military tutelage in each 10-year period. However, the Turkish Republic's official political repression of the Kurds could no longer be maintained due to its cost to the state, not just of economically, but also politically. The national economy was affected considerably due to lack of political stability. Turkey is a candidate country for European Union (EU) membership. The EU process led to abolishment of the OHAL (extraordinary zones) in the Kurdish regions, permission to give Kurdish names to children and to teach and/or learn Kurdish at private language institutions, and regulations to allow private radios and TV channels to broadcast in Kurdish dialects (Balci, 2008).

In sum, the rise of Islamic and Kurdish identities has challenged the monolithic structure of society (Zubaida 1996, Onis 1997, Ozbudun 2000). Among these, Kurdish ethno-nationalism has emerged as one of the biggest challenges to Turkish state in the last two several decades (Gunter 1997, Cornell 2001, Cizre 2002).

In 2002, pro-Islamic political party, called Justice and Development Party (AKP), weakened the ideological discourse of the Kemalist state, which was based on the exclusion of the Kurds and religious groups. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan acknowledged, in 2005, that, "the state made mistakes about the Kurdish issue" (Ozkan, 2011). Most of the EU reforms have been undertaken under the leadership of AKP, which has been in power since 2002. Although the AKP is popularly known as a pro-Islamic party, it has been the engine of the EU reforms including the reforms on the Kurdish issue. Therefore, the AKP gained substantive votes from the Kurds. The AKP's reformist

approach had a deep impact on Kurds in both national and local elections, and the party got approximately half of the Kurdish votes (Ozkan 2011).

The AKP's reformist policies and liberalist approach toward the Kurdish issue differ remarkably from the traditional secular nationalist agenda. Even though substantive reforms have been realized in the last decade because of the influence of the European Union, there was also a high tension between PKK and the AKP government at the same period. These changes have gradually affected the big picture of how the Kurds vote.

As the pro-Islamic and Kurdish identities have risen, the voting behavior of these reemerging identities has played a significant role in shaping the current political atmosphere of the Turkish parliament, thereby influencing the voting behavior literature in Turkey. In the following section, I will review the literature on voting behavior in Turkey.

2.3. Previous Research on Voting Behavior in Turkey

The literature on voting behavior in Turkey is heavily influenced by the seminal work of Mardin (1973) who argues that the center-periphery relations are the main determinants of voting behavior.

Theoretically, Mardin addresses the factors that influence Turkish politics. He seeks the clues regarding societal dynamics towards politics, by dating them back to the Ottoman era. Mardin argues that glorifying the state and thereby putting “individual” on

the back burner stems from the social structure from the past. It is for this reason that “the wielders of political power, not the merchants, were the first citizens of the realm (Mardin 1973, p. 172). The domination of the state continued until the Independence War in 1922, although there had been some attempts towards the individual rights by the end of the nineteenth century.

The primary aim of the new republic was to establish a new national identity, which dramatically arose as result of the exclusion and suppression of the religious and Kurdish identities. Therefore, during the single-party period 1923-1946 with authoritarian policies implemented by the strong centralist administration, these two identities (religious and Kurdish) were under control, and identified with the “periphery”. Mardin underlines that “since it was considered an area of potential disaffection, the political center kept it under close observation” (Mardin 1973, p. 182).

From this point of view, the center is identified with strong bureaucracy, and the periphery is identified with the lower classes and some so-called suspicious identities such as religious and Kurdish - which have to be controlled by the center - that demand more democracy. Even though the political arena was drastically shaped by the transition to the multiparty structure in 1946, the bureaucratic code was still that “the center had to be strengthened - partly against the periphery - before everything else” (Mardin 1973, p. 183). It is mainly due to the fact that “the builders of the Turkish Republic placed the strengthening of the state first in their priorities” (p. 183).

The strong centralist structure has been the primary characteristic of the state until 2000s. Despite several attempts towards democratization such as free elections, this

characteristic has remained strong; the military has intervened in the state's administration almost every ten years during this period in the name of protection of the secular structure.

Put concisely, to Mardin, the relationship between the center and the periphery is one of the most important indicators of Turkish politics, which also plays an important role in determining the voting behavior of the citizens as well. Among other factors, the religious institution was on the borderline between the center and the periphery, and "it was increasingly identified with the periphery" (Mardin 1973, p. 172).

Based on the center/periphery cleavage, the social structure could be divided into two borders: one clustered as elitist, urban, and educated, and the other one uneducated, rural, traditional and conservatives. This division, to a certain extent, is seen as the background of the left-right dimension as well, which I shall review later. According to Kibris (2011), in this scheme, the right-wing parties have always been supporters of peripheral values like religious conservatism, family values, religious education, etc., whereas the left-wing parties have been the locomotive of the laicist values of the center.

Since Mardin's seminal work in 1973, many scholars have examined the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey (e.g., Sayari 1978; Heper 1985; Ozbudun 1975, 1980a, 1981b, 2000; Kalaycioglu 1994, 1999; Esmer 1995, 2002; Ozcan 2000; Kibris 2001; Carkoglu and Hinich 2006; Carkoglu 2007, 2008, 2012; Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu 2007; Akarca and Tansel 2006; Ercins 2007; Baslevant et al. 2009; Sarigil 2010; and Ekmekci 2011, Toros 2014).

I should note that after the military intervention in 1980, all political parties were banned until 1983. New parties have emerged and were closed during the 1980s and 1990s. Therefore, the party structure is highly fragmented, which undermines the long-term party identification as seen in developed countries. This unstable party structure also impedes us from making conclusions regarding voting preferences.

Despite these tumultuous circumstances, many scholars have attempted to study voting behavior. The literature on voting behavior in Turkey is dominated by the largely descriptive aggregate-level analyses of election results, while individual level survey-based studies are few and only recently increasing (Çarkoglu 2012, p. 513). Esmer (1995) posited similar opinion by stating, “the studies that explore electoral behavior are few in number and depend, almost entirely, on aggregate data” (Esmer 1995, p. 77). Similarly, Çarkoglu and Hinich (2006) highlight that “a sui generis character of the Turkish electorate emerges and leaves the Turkish experience unlinked to a larger body of comparative and theoretical research on voting behavior” (Çarkoglu and Hinich 2006, p. 370).

One of the first studies utilizing individual-level data was done by Kalaycioglu in 1994, and some others have followed his study, such as Kalaycioglu (1999), Esmer (2002), Baslevent et al. (2004, 2005, 2009), Çarkoglu (2008), Çarkoglu and Hinich (2006), and Çarkoglu and Kalaycioglu (2007), Sarigil (2010), Ekmekci (2011).

Some scholars like Ozbudun (1975) aimed to explain the voting behavior in Turkey in the light of modernization theory, by positing that modernization causes class conflict in society, which leads to class-base voting. Some other scholars such as Heper

(1988) and Ayata (1993) make similar assumptions, suggesting that together with religion, class is one of the most significant factors that determine voting preferences in Turkey.

Kalaycioglu (1994) made one of the major contributions to the literature at the individual level in the early 1990s, examining the factors that determine the voter's party preferences. Utilizing the data from the Turkish Values Survey of 1990 with 1030 respondents, the author finds that "the party preferences of the Turkish voters across a left-right spectrum are determined by the historical divide between the center and the periphery of the Turkish polity and rapid social mobilization" (Kalaycioglu 1994, p. 402).

Kalaycioglu substantiates Mardin's center/periphery theory by indicating that the voter's preferences are the reflection of their beliefs in the context of center and periphery values (Kalaycioglu 1994, p. 406). However, Kalaycioglu notes that even though the importance of the center in Turkish politics is diminishing, its impact seems to persist. Correspondingly, the religiosity – which is a major element of the periphery – has a significant effect in determining party preferences of the voters (Kalaycioglu 1994, p. 422).

The 2000s provides more abundant literature on voting behavior compared to previous periods. It may be partly due to the fact that (1) there is broader data available at both aggregate and individual level; (2) shaping political atmosphere attracts scholars' attention in this field; (3) eagerness to investigate the reasons behind the success of AKP as a single-party.

Esmer (2002), who examines the factors that determine individual's political preferences, contributes another important study utilizing individual-level data with a total sample size of 1,741 in ten provinces, and finds that the most important indicator of electoral behavior in Turkey is the left-right ideology (Esmer (2002, p. 110). This was another attempt in examining voter's preferences at the individual level, although it comprises only ten provinces.

Even though it seemed somewhat early to examine the success of AKP by looking at an individual survey conducted only a year after the AKP won the election in 2002, Baslevent et al. (2009) compare their results with their previous work to see the changing pattern of voters' evaluations towards the AKP. In this empirical work, using data drawn from a survey conducted in 2003 in 26 (out of 81) provinces of Turkey with a sample size of 1,806 individuals, the authors find that "economic evaluations play a significant role in party choice alongside the non-economic factors" (Baslevent et al. 2009, p. 389).

By the non-economic factor(s), they meant that religiosity is an important factor in determining voting preferences. They posit that "as in all predominantly Muslim countries, Islam plays an important role in Turkish politics, and a self-identified degree of religiosity has previously been found to be a significant influence on voters' preferences" (Baslevent et al. 2009, p. 382).

Applying spatial theory of electoral competition to survey data, Carkoglu and Hinich (2006) state that "the cognitive organization of voters' attitudes about issues and evaluations of political parties that compete for their vote" (Carkoglu and Hinich 2006, p. 369). They utilize a nationwide representative survey conducted in 2001 - when there was

severe financial economic crisis - with 1201 face-to-face interviews in 12 of the 81 provinces.

Carkoglu and Hinich's study has made substantive contribution to the literature of voting behavior with its sui generis structure in which the authors attribute a new meaning to the seminal work of Mardin. They frame the traditional center-periphery cleavage as a secular vs. pro-Islamist dimension, using Mardin's argument, which is the center-periphery relations play a significant role in determining voting behavior in Turkey. They further claim that "religiosity, more than any other variable, is found to affect Turkish voters' choice among competing parties" (Carkoglu and Hinich 2006, p. 374).

Despite its incontestable contribution to the literature on voting behavior in the last decade, there are still some certain points in it that ought not to be ignored: (1) The study excludes the AKP and its single-party period, which does not allow conclusions about the voting preferences in the last decade; (2) the study analyzes only one party, CHP, in the Turkish parliament today; the other parties examined in the study were not able to get in the parliament in the last three elections due to the national 10% threshold; (3) finally, the time period that the survey data was drawn was somewhat catastrophic, since the respondents were substantially under the influence of the severe economic crisis in 2001.

It is worth mentioning that religion is one of the most significant variables in the large part of the literature on voting behavior, particularly in the last decade (e.g., Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu 2007; Carkoglu and Toprak 2006; Esmer 1999; Grigoriadis

2009; Gunes-Ayata and Ayata 2002; Kalaycioglu, 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Kanra 2005; Somer 2007; Sunar and Toprak 2004; Yesilada and Noordijk 2010; Hale and Ozbudun 2010; Ekmekci 2011).⁵

Among two of the recent studies, Sarigil (2010), referring the studies of Yavuz (1997) and Duran (1998), argues that “the pro-Islamic approach asserts that re-emphasizing Islam as a shared value among Turks and Kurds would restrain societal polarization along ethnic lines and consequently curbs Kurdish ethno-nationalism” (p. 536). Sarigil claims, “for the pro-Islamic approach, preventing societal polarization along ethnic lines requires using Islam as cement between Turks and Kurds (p. 536). However, Sarigil finds socio-economic approach as a better determinant of voting behavior.

The religiousness approach suggests that religiosity has a significant impact on Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Thus, religiosity can be seen as a crucial determinant of voting behavior in Turkey for both Kurds and Turks (Ekmekci 2011). These two studies utilized individual-level data.

In one of the latest studies on voting behavior, Toros (2014, p. 1013) posits, “the ideological orientations, political and personal values, salient issues, media, and socioeconomic factors shape the voting behavior in Turkey”. Using the European Values Study 2008 with a sample size of 2,384 respondents, Toros argues the impact of different

⁵ There is an increasing trend in the literature on Islam and politics in Turkey. See, for instance; Yesim Arat (2001); Sencer Ayata (1996); Ali Çarkoglu and Binnaz Toprak (2000); Nilüfer Göle (1997); Metin Heper (1997); Serif Mardin (1989); Sabri Sayarı (1996); Binnaz Toprak (1981, 1988); Ilter Turan (1991); Hakan Yavuz (1997, 2003); Hakan Yavuz and John L. Esposito (2003).

social political factors that are salient in voting behavior and magnitudes of these factors on different political parties (Toros 2014, p. 1011).

Toros underlines that religiosity, ideology, and nationalism⁶ are some of the most significant key factors that determine the party choice of the citizens. Since he uses multinomial logit regression to analyze the party preferences of the voters, the effects of the variables vary considerably depending on the contrasted parties. For instance, the author finds that the level of religiosity differentiates AKP and BDP from CHP and MHP voters (Toros 2014, p. 1025).

As indicated above, since party identification is not persistent, Turkish party system cannot be easily evaluated in long-term analyses. The periodic banning of parties makes the structure of the political parties unstable. In addition to this, Secor states that “democracy in Turkey has been plagued by continued elitism, leader-dominated and internally undemocratic parties, a political culture that privileges state-building over democratic participation” (Secor 2001, p. 542). Thus, banning of political parties by the military interventions and the Supreme Court has made the Turkish electoral system suffer from high levels of volatility (Secor 2001, p. 542).

Secor (2001), focusing on socio-political cleavages, finds that, because Turkish political parties do not link economic and political issues in ‘typical’ right–left packages, a three-dimensional cleavage model best represents the characteristics of political competition in Turkey (Secor 2001, p. 539). These developments, to Secor, may be seen

⁶ Nationalism is an important political factor in analyzing the political structure in Turkey. For details, see Akdeniz and Goker 2011; Bacik 2011; Belge 2009; Bora 2003; Grigoriadis and Ozer 2010; Muftuler-Bac, and Fuat Keyman 2012.

an increasing polarization along ethnic and religious lines within the Turkish periphery (Secor 2001, p. 558).

Table 2.1: Parties and Results for 1995 and 1999 National Elections

<i>Party</i>	<i>General description</i>	<i>%Vote(1995)</i>	<i>%Vote(1999)</i>
DYP: True Path Party	Center-right	19.2	12
ANAP: Motherland Party	Center-right	19.6	13.2
DSP: Democratic Left Party	Center-Left	14.6	22.2
CHP: Republican People's Party	Center-Left	10.7	8.7
RP: Welfare Party	Islamist (1983-1998)	21.4	N/A
FP: Virtue Party	Islamist (1998-2001)	N/A	15.4
SP: Felicity Party	Islamist	N/A	N/A
AKP: Justice and Development party	Islamist	N/A	N/A
MHP: Nationalist Movement Party	Ultra-nationalist	8.2	18
HADEP: People's Democratic Party	Kurdish	4	4.8

Source: Compiled by the author from Secor (2001, table 1).

Notes: Since the names of the Kurdish parties have been changed frequently up until today, HADEP here will be used as BDP in the study. Today, the Kurdish party uses the name “HDP”, but we use it as BDP, since it was called BDP in the survey that was conducted in 2010. Of the Islamist parties, RP had run in 1995 election, and FP had run in 1999 election. They both were closed down in 1998 and 2001, respectively. Other Islamist parties, SP and AKP are at work.

As Esmer (1995) highlighted, the left-right ideological position was one of the leading indicators, if not the most important one, of voter preference in 1990s. The fact is that even though Secor’s assertion above might have been valid for the political atmosphere in 1990s, yet it should be revised for 2000s since the parties that historically identified with left-right orientation are far from being the key actors in the current political schema in the Turkish parliament.⁷

⁷ Toros (2014, p. 1014) asserts, “Practical party politics witnessed a left–right distinction primarily during the 1960s and 1970s. This is mainly due to the new constitution of 1960. Utilizing this chance, primarily the working class in Turkey started to be visible in the political system, particularly organized under left-wing organizations. As an antidote, the right-wing, which prioritized nationalist sentiments with religious and conservative tones, also found an important place in the political arena. Hence, the tension between the left and right has shaped Turkish politics during the 1970s”.

The most influential parties in 1990s - DYP, ANAP, DSP - were not even be able to get in the parliament in 2002 and the following elections (see Figure 2.2). As demonstrated in Table 2.1, the 1990s were their last influential terms. It is not only because of the 10% national threshold, but also because of the diminishing reliance and trust of the citizens towards these parties after the 2001 financial crisis.

Undoubtedly, the financial crisis in 2001 was the core factor that determines the result of the national election in 2002. Kalaycioglu (2007), using an individual level data conducted in 2006 in 23 out of 81 provinces with 1,846 respondents, finds that the voters cast their ballot based on their economic benefits rather than purely ideological beliefs. Further, he posits that “the stellar rise of support for the AKP in 2002 is indicative of the fact that its leadership and symbolism produced a movement of political attractiveness in the eyes of the tradition-bound, conservative masses of the Turkish right” (Kalaycioglu 2007, p. 239).

Kalaycioglu’s assertion is in accord with the results of the study of Akarca and Tansel (2006), in which they analyze the Turkish parliamentary and local elections since 1946. They find that the Turkish voters take changes in economic conditions into account in casting their ballots. That is, the voters prioritize growth in their income. However, to the authors, the voters seem not to consider these economic factors beyond more than a year in making their assessment (Akarca and Tansel 2006, p. 96).

Therefore, traditional left-right orientation is inadequate to explain the general framework of the electoral behavior in Turkey in the last three national elections. The Turkish parliament is dominated by the Islamist AKP, secular CHP, ethno-Kurdish BDP,

and ultra-nationalist MHP in the last decade, which brings the secular vs. pro-Islamist and Turkish vs. Kurdish identities into the political arena.

Even though the traditional center/periphery cleavage still has influence on Turkish politics to a certain degree, examining the determinants of voting behavior without including some other crucial factors such as ethnic identity would be inadequate. As underlined by Carkoglu (2008), the “center” of the Turkish polity found itself increasingly under pressure from the ethnic and Islamist “periphery” which for the first time is strongly represented in Turkish parliament (Carkoglu 2008, p. 322).

Lately, much empirical work on voting behavior either explicitly or implicitly draws on the center/periphery relations as the key component. On the other hand, a number of scholars attempt to expand the scope of this tradition, by putting sophisticated predictors into their analyses at both aggregate level and individual level. In this section, major works on electoral behavior in Turkey is reviewed. The following section will present the case selection procedure, and the hypotheses.

2.4. Case Selection and Hypotheses

Examining and testing the determinants of voting behavior in an ethnically divided country, Turkey, may contribute to the voting behavior literature by filling the gap of insufficient research in this field, particularly at individual level. Since there is little empirical evidence in this field, and the evidence on these matters tends to be inconclusive, this research may contribute to a possible solution of a real-world problem

of intrastate ethnic conflict. In addition, as a single case study it may contribute to the related literature by bringing useful insights for such studies that aim to compare similar cases, may provide generalizable findings to other countries.

Kurdish issue has become one of the most important phenomena in the Middle East, since its effects extends beyond Turkey to several countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel, and even the US. In addition, the Islamist movements also play a vital role in determining the social and political structure in Turkish, Arab, and Kurdish regions in the Middle East. With their *sine qua non* role for a healthy democracy, elections matter in developing countries. In this sense, understanding how people vote in such countries is extremely important for reducing the tension and polarization in the society and in shaping policies implemented by the governments.

From this perspective, as a country under an ethnically and religiously polarized social structure, Turkey is a suitable case to study the voting behavior of individuals. Even though this study will show only a part of the question, it may open a new window to voting patterns in Turkey, empirically and theoretically. As a Muslim country with (partial) democracy, Turkey has a special geographical position between the East and the West, has weakly institutionalized party system, has been ruled by the same party, AKP, for almost 13 years, and is scrambling to establish a Western-standard democracy. Therefore, understanding how people vote in Turkey would provide plausible insights in solving its ethnic problems, which may be a guiding light for other countries of its kind.

As discussed in the historical background section, the two main ethnic groups in Turkey are the Turks and the Kurds. Tension between these two groups began to increase

after the establishment of the Turkish Republic and the promotion of unifying nationalist policies in the 1920s. It is worth mentioning at this point that there has been much speculation regarding the Kurdish population⁸. The fact is that the Kurds are the largest “nation” in the world that has no state of their own. The closest step towards becoming a nation-state has been taken in the northern Iraq, yet it is autonomous as a federal state of Iraq. Today, the Kurdish population is dispersed in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran.

The conflict stemming from the PKK was exacerbated in the early 1980s, leading to the emergence of an armed Kurdish separatist group. Since the 1990s, with the violent acts undertaken by the armed group PKK, the Kurdish issue has become one of the most crucial problems the country has faced.

In addition, the post-Cold War era witnessed crucial events such as the first Gulf War in 1991 that shape Turkish politics, since the religious people wanted to increase their voice on such wars in Islamic world. In the 1994 local elections, and in the following general elections, religious-based political party, Refah Partisi (Welfare Party, RP) won unprecedented victory, gaining votes from both religious Kurds and Turks. AKP, another religious-based party, gained almost half of the Kurds’ votes in the last three elections.

These changes in the political realm increase the importance of the social cleavages such as ethnicity and religiosity in determining the voting behavior of the Turkish and Kurdish citizens. As the multi-party period of Turkey started after 1950s,

⁸ Naturally, it is hard to determine the number of Kurds living in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran areas. However, it is estimated at 26-34 million; with another 1-2 million living in diaspora. Approximately 55% of the Kurds live in Turkey. That is, roughly, 13-15% of the population in Turkey is Kurds.

several factors or cleavages such as secular-religious, liberal-socialist, and nationalist-centralist determined the voting behavior. With the rise of the pro-Islamic and Kurdish identities, the cleavages have crystallized as Turkish-Kurdish and secular-religious in terms of voting patterns.

In this regard, the Islamic-based AKP, and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist BDP struggle to gain the support of the Kurdish people. There is as much variation within Turks as within Kurds as a whole. Ethnic divisions are typically considered a salient social cleavage in Turkey. Turks and Kurds are themselves heterogeneous in terms of the importance they give to religion. Therefore, there are both Turks and Kurds that consider themselves very religious, and Turks and Kurds that are predominantly secular. The religious ones share a Sunni Muslim outlook, and tend to vote for a religious-based party.

The results of the 1995 and 1999 national elections could be seen as a signal of rising of Islamic and nationalistic trends, respectively. In 1995, the Islamist Refah Partisi (Welfare Party, RP) captured 21.4 percent of the votes, and in 1999, nationalist party MHP captured a high percentage of the votes, due mainly to the fact that Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, was arrested right before the election. Regarding the emergence of religious parties, Margulies and Yildizoglu (1997) highlighted that;

In nationwide local elections on March 27, 1994, the Islamist Welfare Party took over 19 percent of the popular vote and captured 26 of the 72 metropolitan municipalities in the country, including Istanbul and Ankara. In Istanbul, the party's vote was just over 26 percent. Suddenly, Islam was on the verge of making a serious bid for power in a country regarded as a fortress of secularism in the Middle East (Margulies and Yildizoglu 1997, p. 144).

The 2002 election was right after one of the worst economic crisis in Turkey, and the AKP enjoyed most of the votes, by gaining votes from almost all parts of the political dimensions. Since then, the AKP has been in power. Four parties were able to establish party groups in the parliament in the last three elections. Other than AKP, secularist CHP, Turkish ethno-nationalist MHP, and Kurdish ethno-nationalist BDP have members in the parliament.

I should note that Kurdish candidates have run for elections as independents due to the 10% national threshold, and formed a party-group in the parliament after getting elected. In addition, ethno-Kurdish political parties have different names in different elections; however, I label them as ‘BDP’ throughout this study.

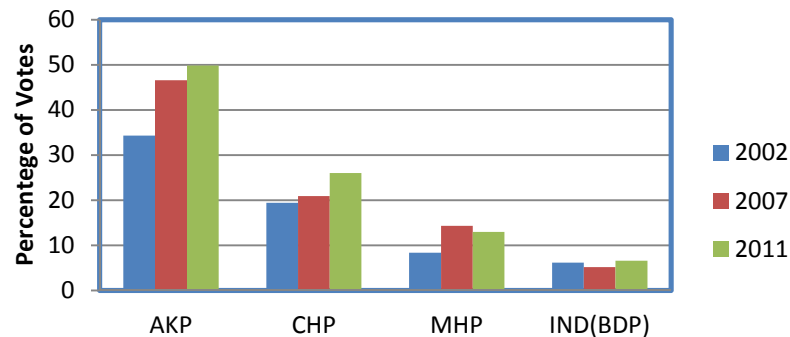


Figure 2.2: Vote Share of Parties in the Last Three Elections

Source: Compiled by the author from Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK).

As shown in the Figure 2.2, the independent Kurdish candidates are under the national 10% threshold. They would not have entered the parliament if they had joined the elections as a party-list due to the threshold. However, 10% threshold is not valid for the independent candidates. Hence, the Kurdish independent candidates have succeeded in entering the parliament.

Nationalist MHP was out of parliament in 2002 election, since its vote share was approximately 9%, which was not enough to enter the parliament. The ruling AKP won the last three elections by increasing its share of votes in each election. The secular CHP increases its share of votes in each election, and becomes the main opposition party in the parliament.

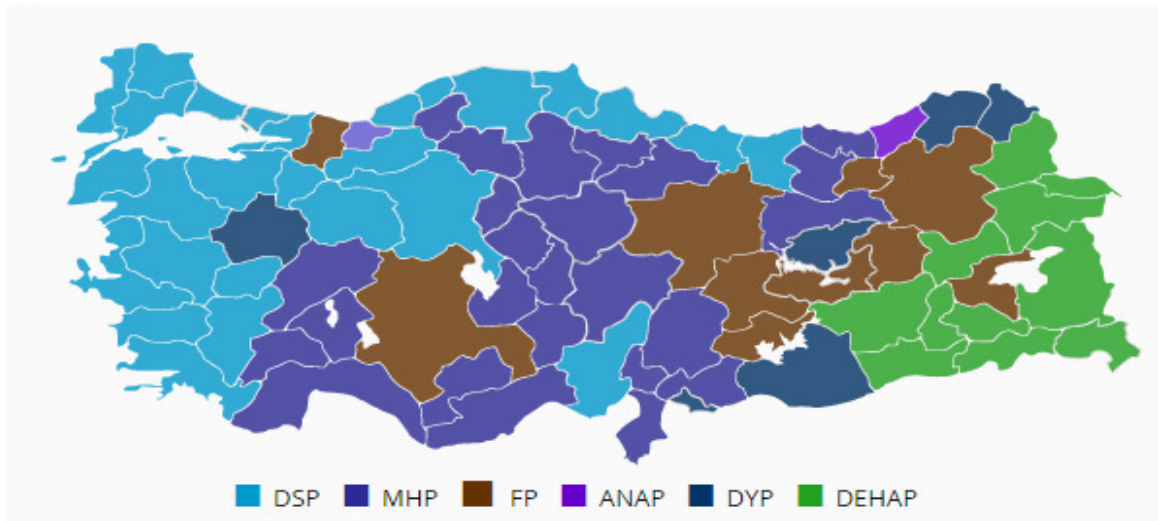


Figure 2.3: The map of 1999 national election

Source: Compiled by the author from (<http://secimharitasi.com/haritalar/11-1999-genel-secim-sonuc-haritasi>).

The results of the last three elections produce a dramatic electoral map compared to the previous elections. In 1999, the Democratic Left Party (DSP) and MHP gained high score in the half of the country, partly because of the capture of the PKK leader Ocalan right before the election (Figure 2.3). Together with the pro-Islamic Virtue Party and ethno-Kurdish (DEHAP), the center-right parties, True Path Party and Motherland Party were present in the parliament for the last time.

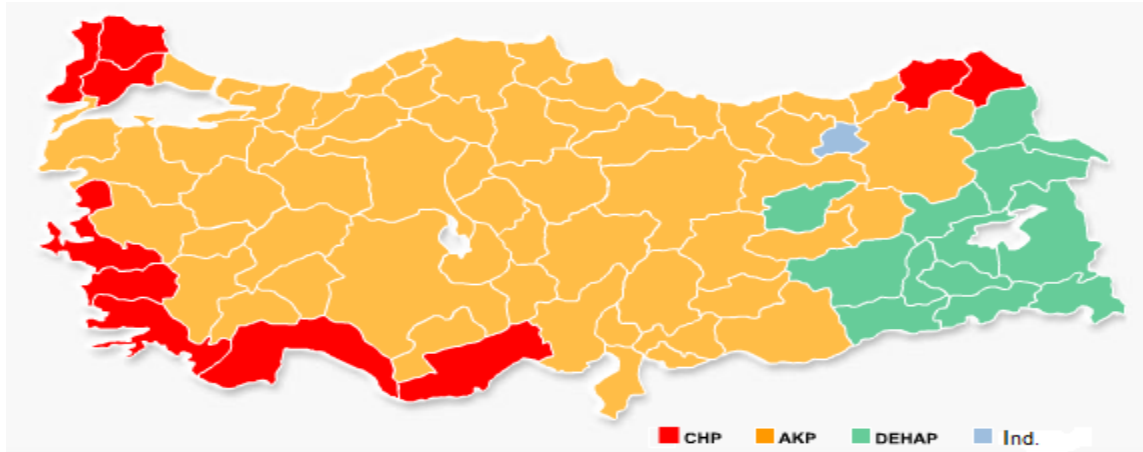


Figure 2.4: The map of 2002 national election

Source: Compiled by the author from (<http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/modules/secim2007/secim2002/>).

The provinces on the west and south coast showed a highly secular ambiance in 2002 election, when the pro-Islamic AKP won the election as single party for the first time (Figure 2.4). The secular CHP gained relatively high vote in these areas, and became the main opposition party. Besides, even though the Kurdish-inhabited areas seem to be dominated by the ethno-Kurdish political party with independent candidates, the shadow of the pro-Islamic AKP can be seen in some parts of the Kurdish area. The nationalist party, MHP, was not represented in the parliament, since it could not pass the 10 percent national threshold.

The AKP has increased its share of votes in the 2007 election, by gaining considerable amount of votes from the coastal areas and Kurdish-populated regions (Figure 2.5). Even though it dominated only two provinces, the MHP gained 14 percent of the total vote and passed the national threshold.

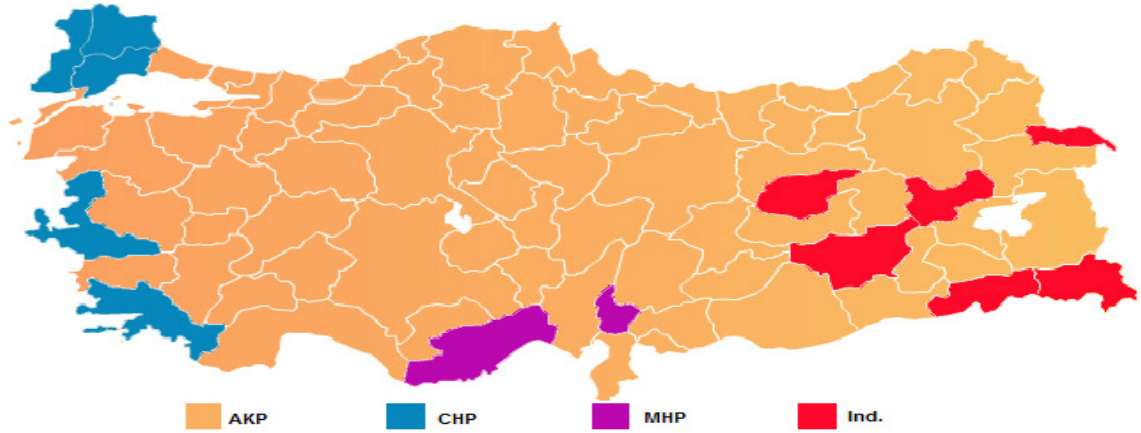


Figure 2.5: The map of 2007 national election

Source: Compiled by the author from (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/secimsonuc/default.html>).

In the last national election in 2011, the AKP gained half of the votes. Other than AKP, secularist CHP, nationalist MHP, and ethno-Kurdish BDP (with independent candidates) were able to enter the parliament (Figure 2.6).

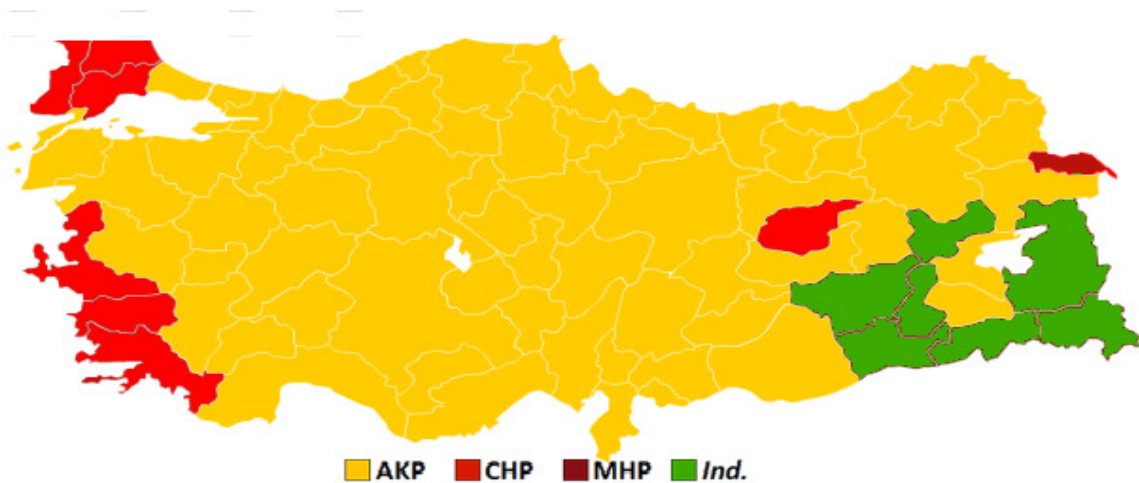


Figure 2.6: The map of 2011 national election

Source: Compiled by the author from (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/secim2011/default.html>).

The key elements of this changing voting pattern are of interest in this study. Based on these facts, using individual-level data, the present study will test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *For both Turks and Kurds, those who are more religious will be more likely to vote for the religion-based party, namely the AKP, than those who are less religious.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Those Kurds who give importance to their ethnicity are more likely to vote for the ethno-Kurdish party, namely the BDP, than those who give less importance.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *Those Turks who prioritize their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for secular and ethno-Turkish parties, namely the CHP and the MHP; and they are less likely to vote for religious-based parties, namely the AKP.*

In sum, if all of these hypotheses are correct, I conclude that the voting behavior in Turkey is evolving towards ethnic, namely Turk/Kurd, and secular/religious dimensions.

2.5. Electoral System

This section addresses the electoral system in Turkey. Even though the main aim of this study is not to examine the electoral systems, touching briefly upon electoral systems at this point would be useful for those who are not familiar with the electoral process.

Table 2.2: Electoral System in Turkey, 1946-2011

System	Year
<i>Majoritarian</i>	1946, 1950, 1954, 1957
<i>Proportional representation</i>	
d'Hondt with constituency hurdle	1961
National remainder	1965
Simple d'Hondt	1969, 1973, 1977
d'Hondt with double hurdles	1983
d'Hondt with double hurdles + contingencies	1987, 1991
d'Hondt with national hurdle	1995, 1999, 2002, 2007, 2011 ...

Source: Adopted by the author from Tuncer (2003, 117-126).

Note: Years indicate the national elections.

Turkey started multiparty elections in 1946 (Table 2.2). From the first multiparty election to 1960, when the military forces have taken over the administration of the country, a majoritarian system - under a Party Block Vote with 5% national threshold for five candidates for each multi-member district - was used. Ever since the military intervention in 1960, the different types of the d'Hondt system have been used up until the mid-1990s.

Turkey has used the d'Hondt system with 10% national threshold since 1995 national election. This system remains in force to this day. The system is based on the principles of “stability in the government”, and ‘justice in the representation”, which still remains controversial issues due to the 10 percent threshold. For instance, only two parties (AKP, and CHP) were able to enter the Turkish parliament in the 2002 elections. All the votes of the parties that remained below the threshold were allocated to the two parties in proportion to their share of votes. That is to say, approximately 47 percent of the people were not represented in the parliament in 2002.

Parenthetically, Turkey is a parliamentary democracy. There are 550 seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) that elected for five-year term. There are 81 provinces in Turkey, and 78 of these provinces correspond to 78 electoral districts. Of the remaining three provinces, Istanbul is divided into three electoral districts, whereas Ankara and Izmir are divided into two districts. That is, there are 85 electoral districts in Turkey. A total of 550 seats are distributed to each district according to their population.

2.6. Data and Method

To investigate the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey, I will employ quantitative methods in the all three empirical chapters, using logit and multi-nominal logit regressions with individual respondents as the unit of analysis.

The present study utilizes a survey dataset called *the Perception and Expectations on Kurdish Issue (Kürt Meselesi'nde Algı ve Beklentiler*, in Turkish), conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy in 2010⁹, in 59 provinces, with 10,393 respondents, to investigate the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey. Due to the some missing data on both the dependent and independent variables, the number of observations (N) varies in each chapter depending on the models.

Experienced pollsters used a structured questionnaire and carried out face-to-face interviews with respondents across the country. The survey has various types of questions that captured many crucial aspects of both the Kurds and the Turks, including their

⁹ KONDA Research and Consultancy is a public opinion research and consultancy company established in 1986. For further information about KONDA, see; <http://www.konda.com.tr/en/>, and for the report of my data, see; <http://www.konda.com.tr/tr/raporlar.php?tb=3>

identity, social background, religious affiliations, political preferences, and perceptions towards certain political issues in the country.

The survey was conducted in 2010, which was a relatively appropriate time to investigate the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey for several reasons. (1) The political atmosphere was blurry before the 1999 national elections due to the unstable coalition governments. (2) The Turkish army forced the government's resignation in 1997. (3) The first pro-Islamic party, RP - which surprisingly received the highest percentage of votes in the 1995 election - could not enter the 1999 election, since the party was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1998, and its leader and senior figures were banned from active politics for five years. (4) One of the members of the coalition government, Mesut Yilmaz, resigned amid corruption allegations, and replaced by Bulent Ecevit. (5) PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan captured in Kenya, and arrested right before the 1999 national election, which brought Turkey's most nationalist parties to power under a coalition government. (6) Turkey had experienced one of the most severe financial crises in its history in 2001, which have ultimately brought the second Islamic party, AKP, in power as a single-party government in 2002.

Indisputably, the extrinsic factors based on the above-mentioned circumstances determined the voting behavior in 1999 and 2002 national elections. Çarkoğlu and Hinich argue that the economic situation and the frustration with the existing parties were the major determinants in the vote choice of the Turkish electorate in 2002 (Çarkoğlu and Hinich, 2006). In short, in contrast to the 1990s and 2002 elections, in both 2007 and 2011 elections, the picture of macroeconomic situation and social structure appears

relatively stable and favorable to mass expectations compared to the preceding two decades (Carkoglu 2012, p. 514).

Therefore, a nationwide survey conducted in 2010, a relatively tranquil time in terms of political arena, does seem to be an appropriate guide, and would provide significant insights for understanding public opinion on the determinants of voting behavior, by questioning individual preferences over the four parties with variety of aspects. The AKP governments have ruled the country ever since its first electoral success in 2002 through 2010. During this period, 4 political parties entering the parliament in 2007 and 2011 national elections have shaped the Turkish political environment. There are of course some limitations in this study, since the data was collected in a particular snapshot in time, which may preclude us from drawing general conclusions regarding any changes over time.

A combination of factors varying degrees of importance may determine the voting behavior. Among these, socioeconomic indicators - such as age, gender, income, education - political issues, the media, religion, ethnicity, unemployment rate, inflation, democratic culture, are of importance. Using the nationwide survey with individual respondents, the present study uses and tests most of these determinants at the individual level, depending on the model specified in the empirical chapters (Table 2.3).

Traditionally, studies examining voting behavior use discrete party choice of the electorate as the dependent variable. Empirical studies in the last two decades on the determinants of the voting behavior have shown that there is a strong relationship

between the voting probability and party choice. This relationship is almost deterministic (Goldberg 2014, 314).

In harmony with the recent literature on voting behavior, the dependent variable will be “vote” in all the models in the study. *Which political party would you vote for if there were a general election tomorrow* was the question in the survey that I use for dependent variable. The variable had all of the major parties competed in 2001 election, but I dropped the parties that were unable to entry the parliament because of the threshold. For that reason, I use four parties (AKP, CHP, MHP, and BDP) as a dependent variable, specifying according to the relevant model (logit and/or multinomial logit) that I used.

Of the two key independent variables, *religion* refers to the importance of self-identification as a religious person, and is measured on a 5-point scale, in which the lowest number refers ‘not at all important’, and the highest number refers ‘very important’. *Ethnicity* is measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from ‘not at all important’ to ‘very important’. In some models in the empirical chapters, I add both the Turks and the Kurds together in the analysis. Therefore, I use a variable named “identity”, and test this with other variables to see the interaction effect between identity and ethnicity. Identity is a dummy variable coded as 1 if the respondents were Turks, and 0 if the respondents were Kurds.

I use age, gender, education, income, identity, rural vs. urban residence, and region as the socio-economic indicators. Gender is a dummy variable coded as 1 if the respondents are female and 0 otherwise. The age is coded as a three-category variable

with values 1 (18 to 28 years), 2 (29 to 43 years), and 3 (43 and above years). Household income is measured on a 6-point scale, where the lowest level of income was TL 300, and the highest level of income was TL 3000 and higher. The education is coded on a 6-point scale as well, ranging from the lowest level of education (1= illiterate) to the highest level of education (6= higher education).

Since the dependent variable used in the study is a categorical variable, I use logit¹⁰ and multinomial logit regressions for the empirical models. For the calculations, STATA was used as the statistical package program. Detailed explanations of methodology and some specific variables are given in the each relevant chapter (in chapter 3 through chapter 5).

¹⁰ The word “logit” was coined by Berkson (1944). For an introduction to logit, see, for example, Aldrich and Nelson (1984), Cameron and Trivedi (2010), Greene (2012), Jones (2007), Long (1997), Long and Freese (2014), Pampel (2000), or Powers and Xie (2008).

Table 2.3: Descriptions of the Variables

Variable	Description
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	
Vote	Respondents were asked to answers for the question, “Which political party would you vote for if there were a general election tomorrow
<i>Key Independent Variables</i>	
Religion	The importance the respondents give to religiosity at (1-5) level
Ethnicity	The importance the respondents give to ethnicity at (1-5) level
<i>Demographic variables</i>	
Gender (Famale)	Dummy variable equaling 1 for women, and 0 for men
Age	Age in three categories for the respondents; 1: (18-28), 2: (29-43), 3: (43-...)
Education	Education in years of schooling, (1-6)
Income	Household income (000 TL), (1-6)
Identity	Dummy variable equaling 1 for Turks, and 0 for Kurds
Region	1 for those who live in highly Kurdish-populated regions; 0 otherwise
Rural	1 for those who live in rural areas and 0 for those who live in urban areas
Alavi	1 for those who accept an Alavi husband/wife; 0 for otherwise
<i>Issue positions</i>	
Democratic Constitution	1 for those who support a new democratic constitution, 0 otherwise
European Union	Support for the membership in the European Union. (1-5)
Education in Kurdish	"Kurds should have right to have education in Kurdish". Respondents' attitudes at (1-6) level
<i>Kurdish/Turkey Conflict</i>	
Death	1 for those who have lost someone in family during the Kurdish/Turkey conflict; 0 otherwise
Migration	1 for those who had to migrate because of the 30-year Kurdish/Turkey conflict; 0 otherwise
Get Harmed Economically	1 for those who are harmed economically due to the Kurdish/Turkey conflict; 0 otherwise
<i>Democratic Culture (Tolerance)</i>	
Turk as Neighbor	Would you accept to see a Turk as neighbor? 1 for "yes"; 0 for "no"
Non-Muslim as Neighbor	Would you accept to see a non-Muslim as neighbor? 1 for "yes"; 0 for "no"

CHAPTER III

UNDERSTANDING THE KURDISH VOTER

3.1. Overview

The two preceding chapters addressed the theoretical framework of the study, including the literature on voting behavior both in general and in Turkey. In addition, these chapters elucidated the reasons behind the rise of pro-Islamic and ethno-Kurdish identities and their implications on Turkish politics, and demonstrated the method and data used in the study.

The first two chapters also revealed that (1) in general; as scholars extend the scope of the sample size by adding both developed and developing countries, and utilize more sophisticated data and statistical methods, the literature on voting behavior is evolving towards a multidimensional practice, and that (2) in Turkey; the socioeconomic approach is broadly used in the literature, and few studies in recent years have used the ethnic and religious cleavages to analyze the voting behavior of individuals.

The present study aims at utilizing socioeconomic and social cleavage approaches, in order to gain a thorough understanding of voting behavior in Turkey. In the light of this purpose, this chapter investigates how Kurds cast their vote in relation to their ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious characteristics. We first examine the factors that determine Kurdish voting behavior by looking at their attitudes towards ethno-

Kurdish party, the BDP. Second, we discuss the reasons why Kurds do or do not vote for a particular party, and the factors that influence this decision.

3.2. How Do Kurds Vote in Turkey?

As discussed in the second chapter, the ethnic conflict with Kurds, and foundation of PKK under the leadership of Ocalan shaped the ideological dimension of the political spectrum in Turkey. We have witnessed the emergence of ethno-Kurdish parties during and after the 1990s, although Kurdish candidates have run for elections as independents due to the 10% national threshold.

As Kurdish identity has risen, the ethnic-based voting behavior of individuals that crosscut the religious/secular cleavage seems to reflect a new trend in terms of voting pattern. This identity-based voting behavior has played an important role in the last three elections. Understanding how Kurds vote has therefore become a vital phenomenon in the political arena.

The 2002 national election was performed under the influence of the severe economic crisis and the results of it may, therefore, be seen as an outlier per se. The 2007 election on the other hand is seen a turning point in the long-lasting Kurdish conflict in terms of the representation of the “Kurdish identity” in Turkish politics. In 2007, the Kurdish political leadership chose to run their candidates as independents, and won 20 seats as independents (Carkoglu 2008, 318).

In the last general election in 2011, pro-Kurdish candidates standing as independents due to the national threshold won 35 seats in 550-member Turkish parliament. The pro-Islamic AKP won almost half of the Kurds' vote in the Kurdish regions, whereas the secular CHP - the third party in the Kurdish region - won a relatively low percent of the Kurdish votes. For this reason, the present chapter examines the attitudes of Kurds towards each of these parties.

Even though scholars have opted for different criteria to analyze Kurdish politics in the last three decades, most of the studies aiming at understanding the political preferences of Kurds measure party choice as dependent variable. For instance, the studies focusing on the determinants of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism utilize either the socio-economic factors such as the level of education and income, or religiosity and ethnicity. They use support for a pro-Kurdish party as the dependent variable. The main motivation of such studies is to examine how religious, political, and socio-economic factors affect Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

In one of the recent studies on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, Sarigil (2010) finds strong support for the socio-economic approach in explaining Kurdish ethno-nationalism. However, replicating Sarigil's study, Ekmekci (2011, 1608) finds that "religiosity and political satisfaction seem to be better predictors of support for Kurdish nationalism".

Sarigil (2010) uses the data provided by the World Values Survey, with 2967 respondents, to test the roles of socio-economic and religious factors on Kurdish ethno-nationalism. However, this data includes both Turkish and Kurdish individuals into the analysis, which may cause inaccurate results due to its incorrect sampling. Even though

there might be some non-Kurdish individuals who may surprisingly be seen as the indicators of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, this situation would however have a negligible effect on such a case.

Ekmekci (2011) has challenged Sarigil's study, by utilizing the latest fifth wave of the World Values Survey dataset in 2009. Emphasizing Sarigil's incorrect sampling, Ekmekci uses [only] ninety-nine Kurdish respondents out of 1.346. Since Ekmekci (2011) uses only Kurds in analyzing the impact of the socio-economic and religious factors on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, his study seems to be more plausible than Sarigil's, in terms of rationality. However, Ekmekci's study also has some problems because of its small sample size. It is difficult to have scientific results with only ninety-nine respondents in a public opinion survey.¹¹

There are numerous public opinion surveys such as the Euro-barometer and the World Values Surveys, which can be utilized to analyze voting behavior at both individual and state level in either developed or developing countries. However, some of them are far from explaining the unique characteristics of a single country case such as Turkey, due to their relatively small data by which they may not be able to investigate the preferences of the different ethnic groups in such a country. If one aims at studying, for instance, Kurdish issue in Turkey, the World Values Survey dataset may not be a good example to focus on, since it does not have enough Kurdish respondents in almost none of its dataset.

¹¹ For the problems of small sample size and incorrect sampling, see, Fowler (2009), Weisberg (2005), Barlett et al., (2001), Kish (1965), and Michael W. T. and W. Donsbach (2008).

We use a nationwide survey called the Perception and Expectations on Kurdish Issue (*Kürt Meselesi'nde Algı ve Beklentiler*, in Turkish), conducted in 59 provinces in 2010 with 10,393 respondents. In this chapter, we will only look at the Kurdish respondents - which are 1524 - since we investigate the main factors that determine the Kurdish voter's political attitudes.

In general, pro-Kurdish party, [BDP], and the AKP receive about 80% of the votes in Kurdish-populated cities. As illustrated in Table 3.1, the AKP had 49.95 percent of the votes in general, and the average vote the AKP gained in Kurdish-populated cities in 2011 election was 44.49 percent. In some large Kurdish-dominated cities such as Sanliurfa, the AKP has even reached 65 percent. Even though the pro-Kurdish party, BDP, has received about 70 percent of the votes in some Kurdish-populated cities such as Diyarbakir, Batman, and Hakkari, the average percentage of the BDP has received in the Kurdish-populated provinces was 37.35 percent (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Average Percentage of Votes in 2011

	Kurdish-Populated Provinces¹²	Turkey
AKP	44.49	49.95
BDP	37.35	6.58
CHP	7.61	25.94

Source: Calculated by the author from the data:
(<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/secim2011/default.html>)

¹² I have calculated the vote percentages for all the nine cities in the Southeastern Anatolia Region (Sirnak, Siirt, Diyarbakir, Batman, Mardin, Adiyaman, Sanliurfa, Gaziantep, and Kilis), and some of the Kurdish-populated cities (Ardahan, Kars, Igdir, Agri, Van, Hakkari, Bitlis, Mus, and Bingol) in the Eastern Anatolia Region. Even though high numbers of Kurds live in some metropolitan cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin, Ankara, Bursa, Antalya, and Adana, we have excluded them, since these are not Kurdish-inhabited cities.

3.2.1. Operationalization of the Variables and Methodology

We will test the determinants of Kurdish voting behavior, by using “vote choice” as the dependent variable. Utilizing *support for a Kurdish ethnic party* seems plausible to seek the reasons behind the rise of Kurdish identity. This also will provide a profound understanding of Kurdish voting behavior. It should be noted however that the determinant of Kurdish ethno-nationalism is not limited only with this variable. There are many other crucial factors - such as the conflict between the two groups, and PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party, founded by Abdullah Ocalan in the late 1970s) attacks - that may influence Kurdish ethno-nationalism as well. However, we will not examine Kurdish ethno-nationalism in detail, since it is not the main aim of this study.

In the survey data, the question “*if there was a national election today, which political party would you vote for*” is used as the dependent variable. Even though the dependent variable is “vote choice” and originally includes several political parties, we recoded it as a binary variable in which 1 refers to the people who would vote for BDP, and 0 otherwise.

Of the socio-economic variables, *education* is measured on a scale of 1 to 6, in which 1 is referring to illiterate respondents, and 6 is referring to the respondents who have a university or a higher degree. Our dummy variable *gender* is coded as 1 for female, and 0 for male. *Age* is a categorical variable, coded as 1 if a respondent’s age is between 18 and 28, 2 if it is between 29 and 43, and 3 if it is greater than 43. *Income* is measured on a scale of 1 to 6, in which 1 is referring to a low income, and 6 is referring to a higher income.

We should note at this point that even though some of the scholars such as Carkoglu (2012) use *ideology* as a key independent variable to investigate voting preferences in Turkey, I have not used it for two reasons. (1) There was not a question about ideology in the dataset. (2) Scholars focusing on Turkish politics seem to avoid measuring of ideology due to the country's unique political culture. For instance, Aydogan and Slapin (2002, p. 1) find that "ideology in Turkish politics is reversed, with the nominally center-left CHP employing more populist rhetoric typically associated with right wing parties in the West, and vice versa".¹³

Two important aspects need to be considered when we talk about religious cleavage. One of which is the religious community an individual belongs to (religious denomination), and second one is how religious a person is independent of the denomination – which is measured by church attendance (Goldberg 2014, p. 307). In some countries, however, measuring religiosity may vary, as is seen in Turkish case. A person who is identified as very religious in a particular country may not be seen as a religious person in some other countries, due to their *sui generis* social and political culture. Therefore, it is normal that each country may have different criteria to measure religiosity.

Our data allows us to measure religiosity in harmony with the relevant literature in Turkey. Religious denomination is measured using the question whether respondents consider themselves as a religious person - on a scale of 1 to 5 in which the lowest number refers to 'not at all important', and the highest number refers to 'very important'.

¹³ For further information about policy positions and left-right ideology segment in Turkey, see, for instance, Küçükömer (2002), Ayata and Ayata (2007), Klemmensen et al (2007).

Similarly, the other key independent variable, *ethnicity*, is measured on scale of 1 to 5, in which the lowest number refers to ‘not at all important’, and the highest number refers to ‘very important’.¹⁴

We employ binary logit regression analysis to test the determinants of Kurdish voting behavior in Turkey. Regression models for binary outcomes provide us to understand how each independent variable affects the probability of the event occurring (Long and Freese 2003: 109).¹⁵ Another advantage of the logit model is its ability to provide valid estimates, regardless of study design (Harrell 2001). The equation for binary logit estimation is presented below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote choice} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{religiosity})_i + \beta_2(\text{ethnicity})_i + \beta_3(\text{region})_i + \beta_4(\text{income})_i + \\ & \beta_5(\text{age})_i + \beta_6(\text{education})_i + \beta_7(\text{female})_i + \beta_8(\text{democratic constitution})_i + \beta_9(\text{education in} \\ & \text{Kurdish})_i + \beta_{10}(\text{European union})_i + \beta_{11}(\text{death})_i + \beta_{12}(\text{migration})_i + \beta_{13}(\text{economic loss})_i + \\ & \beta_{14}(\text{Turk neighbor})_i + \beta_{15}(\text{non-Muslim neighbor})_i \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

3.2.2. Analysis of Results: Vote for BDP

The binary logit analyses are on individual level data. The models considered here explore how voter’s choice towards a particular party (namely BDP) is affected by given the values of the each explanatory variable (e.g. estimate probability of “education”).

¹⁴ Operationalization of the other control variables such as *issues* and *democratic culture* can be seen in the methodology section in the second chapter.

¹⁵ For further information on binary variables, see Park (2009).

Table 3.2: Determinants of Kurds' Voting Behavior: Vote for BDP

	Model 1 Ethnicity&Religion without any controls			Model 2 Ethnicity&Religion+Social Background			Model 3 Ethnicity&Religion+All Control Variables		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	-0.61	0.08	***	-0.60	0.09	***	-0.34	0.11	***
Ethnicity	0.82	0.09	***	0.84	0.10	***	0.64	0.11	***
<i>Social Background</i>									
Age				-0.14	0.10		-0.11	0.11	
Gender				-0.14	0.14		-0.16	0.17	
Education				0.14	0.06	***	0.17	0.07	**
Income				-0.16	0.06	***	-0.21	0.08	***
Region				2.30	0.33	***	2.13	0.38	***
<i>Issue Positions</i>									
Dem. Constitution							-1.15	0.18	***
Support for EU							0.06	0.08	
Education in Kurdish							0.87	0.12	***
Death							0.89	0.22	***
Migration							0.64	0.22	***
Economic loss							0.36	0.18	**
<i>Democratic Culture</i>									
Turk neighbor							-0.25	0.21	
Non-Muslim neighbor							0.38	0.19	**
_cons	-1.12	0.30	***	-3.10	0.61	***	-6.68	0.89	***
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.7			0.13			0.28		
Nagelkerke R2	0.12			0.23			0.45		
% Correctly predicted	62.5			66.8			76.2		
N	1243			1124			1038		

Note: The models represent the result of binary logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and level of significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * p.05. The dependent variable is vote for BDP.

Table 3.2 shows the results of the multivariate modeling for voter's support for the BDP.¹⁶ The first model examines the direct effects of ethnicity and religiosity upon voter's preferences without any controls. The second model adds the socio-economic controls, which are commonly utilized by the scholars that aim to gauge the indicators of voting behavior. The third model then adds numerous relevant controls measuring voting behavior.

The results in Model 1 show that both ethnicity and religiosity are statistically significant predictors of support for the BDP. However, these two variables alone may not explain a great deal of variance in voter's preferences by its relatively low R square. As we add more controls, the models explain a greater deal of variance in vote choice. Empirically, both ethnicity and religiosity do matter for vote choice of Kurds in all models.

Ethnicity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and positive effect in all models, suggesting that the more the importance the respondent gives ethnicity, the more likely he or she would vote for the BDP. Therefore, this result demonstrates the similar outcome, which is claimed by the scholars who posit that ethnicity causes a strong direct impact on voting behavior in ethnically segmented societies (e.g. Horowitz 1985, 1993). Specifically, a one-unit increase in the importance the respondent gives ethnicity increases the log-odds of supporting for the BDP by 0.64. It is even higher in the first two models.

¹⁶ We tested the correlation of independent variables, and find that the independent variables were not correlated each other. Since the correlation scores were low, we can say that multicollinearity is not a problem in our models.

By contrast, religiosity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.001$) and negative effect in all models, suggesting that a self-identified degree of religiosity has a significant influence on a Kurd's vote choice, as was claimed by many scholars in the field such as Esmer (1995) and Kayalcioglu (1999). However, the effect of religiosity on voter's preference is negative. In other words, a one-unit increase in religiosity decreases the log-odds of voting for the BDP by 0.34.

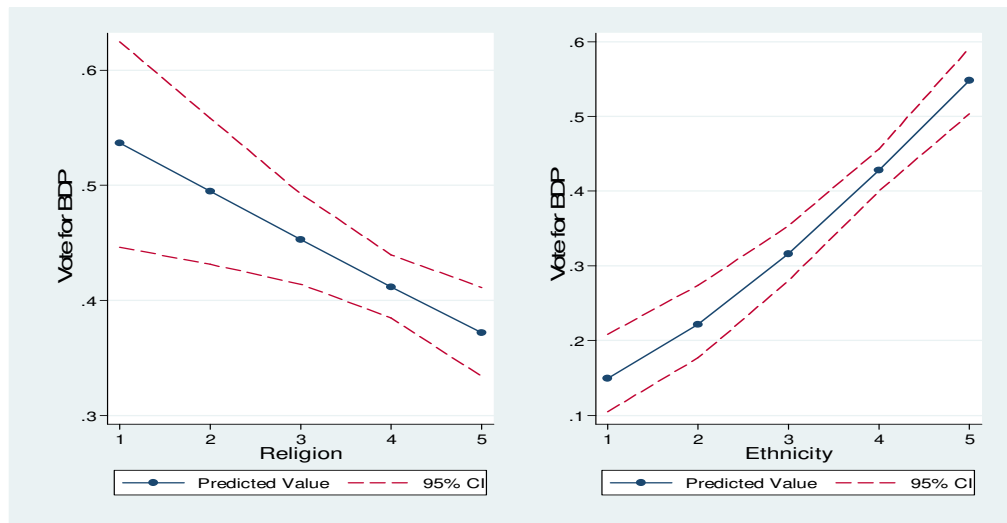


Figure 3.1: Predicted Probability of Vote for BDP and Religion/Ethnicity

Figure 3.1 illustrates the predicted values for ethnicity and religiosity with 95% confidence interval, revealing that as the self-identified degree of religiosity decreases, the probability of voting for the BDP decreases.¹⁷ This result is consistent with the religiosity approaches in the field (e.g. Ekmekci 2010). Conversely, as the importance of ethnicity increases, the probability of supporting for the pro-Kurdish party increases.

¹⁷ Studies indicate that Kurds who are living in Kurdish populated cities in the Southeast are more religiously conservative than Kurds who live in large metropolitan cities (Ergil 2000: 129).

Among the socio-economic variables, age and gender do not produce statistically significant results in any of the models as seen in Table 3.2, suggesting that these two factors have no impact on the likelihood of voting for the BDP. By contrast, income is statistically significant in all models ($p < 0.01$); however, it has negative impact on voter's preference. That is to say, Kurds with higher income are less likely to vote for the BDP, which may be explained by the fact that these individuals seem to support the economic policies of the incumbent party, [AKP].

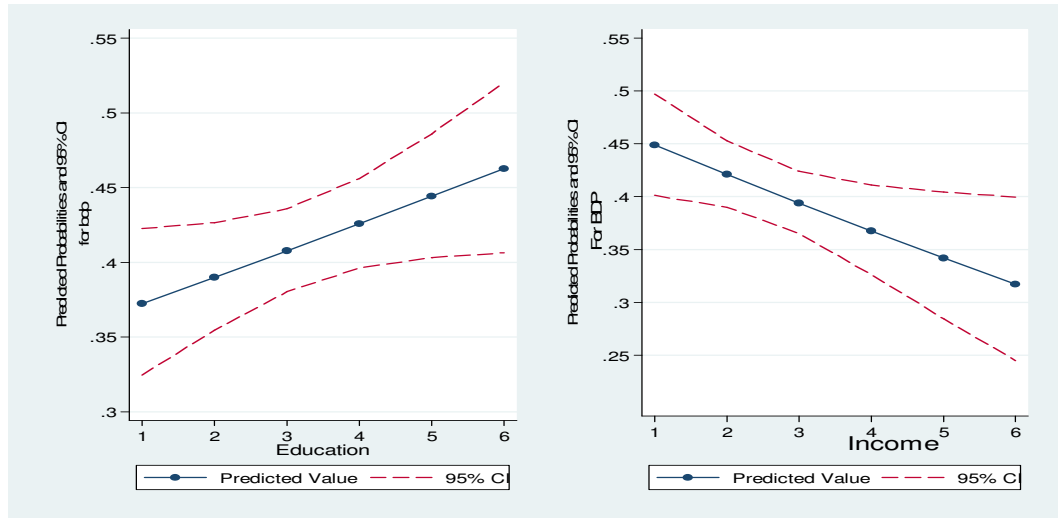


Figure 3.2: Predicted Probability of Vote for BDP and Education/Income

Education has a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and positive effect on voting behavior, as shown in the model 2, suggesting that better educated Kurds are more likely to vote for the BDP. Specifically, a one-unit increase in the level of education increases the log-odds of supporting for the BDP by 0.17, controlling for the other independent variables.

As illustrated in Figure 3.2, education and income are two of the significant

predictors of voting behavior, one of which is education that has a positive effect on the likelihood of supporting for the BDP; and the other one is income that has a negative impact. The 95% confidence interval is also shown in Figure 3.2. These results reveal that as the level of education increases, the probability of voting for the BDP increases. Conversely, the higher income decreases the probability of voting for the BDP.

Among the six variables categorizing under the “issue positions”, only the support for the membership of the European Union is statistically insignificant. Other issue variables are statistically significant. Support for a democratic constitution has a negative effect on the likelihood of to vote for the BDP, suggesting that a Kurdish individual who support for a democratic constitution is less likely to vote for the pro-Kurdish party. This is consistent with the idea that incumbent party that proposes the democratic constitution gets a great deal of votes from Kurds who support government’s attempt for a new constitution.

Other issue variables have positive effects on the probability of voting for the BDP, which reveals that the Kurds who support for education in Kurdish, move to the other regions due to the ethnic conflict, lost any family members during the conflict, and face economic lost are more likely to vote for the BDP. These people seem to blame for the incumbent party for their lost, and tend to support for the pro-Kurdish party.

Put simply, as a pro-Kurdish party, BDP gets stronger support among the less religious, the more educated, the poorer classes, Kurdish-populated cities. It also gets stronger support from the Kurds that see their identity very important, and that face political and economic difficulties during the ethnic conflict.

3.2.3. Multinomial Analysis of Kurdish Voting Behavior

In this section, different political parties will be compared in terms of voting behavior of individuals. We therefore use multinomial logit regression model for the estimation, which is a model that is utilized for such an analysis by many scholars in the field (e.g., Alvarez and Nagler 1998; Dow and Endersby 2004; Baslevant et al. 2009, Toros 2014).

Table 3.3: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Kurdish Voting Behavior

<i>Base Category: BDP</i>						
	AKP			CHP		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	0.55	0.13	***	0.19	0.16	
Ethnicity	-0.79	0.13	***	-0.30	0.15	*
Social Background						
Alevi	-0.31	0.22		1.60	0.38	***
Age	-0.06	0.13		0.38	0.19	**
Gender	0.17	0.19		0.36	0.28	
Education	-0.31	0.08	***	0.14	0.13	
Income	0.23	0.09	***	0.27	0.13	**
Region	0.05	0.11		0.05	0.15	
Issue Positions						
Democratic Constitution	2.28	0.23	***	-2.00	0.36	***
Support for EU	-0.01	0.09		-0.39	0.13	***
Support for Education in Kurdish	-0.90	0.13	***	-1.11	0.15	***
Death	-0.97	0.25	***	-0.64	0.33	*
Migration	-0.69	0.26	***	-0.96	0.41	**
Economic loss	-0.42	0.20	**	-0.28	0.32	
Democratic Culture						
Turk neighbor	0.45	0.23	*	-0.49	0.42	
Non-Muslim neighbor	-0.43	0.22	*	-0.16	0.34	
_cons	3.91	0.92	***	3.02	1.23	**
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.33			0.33		
Nagelkerke R2	0.61			0.61		
N	1004			1004		

Note: The model represents the results of multinomial logit regressions, including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 *. P.05. The base category dependent variable is vote for the BDP. The total N was 1524. However, since we dropped the parties that were not able to enter the parliament, and excluded the “non-answers” from the analysis, the remained N is 1004.

The results of the multinomial estimation are reported in Table 3.3. We should note that we added a new variable called “Alevi”¹⁸, since we will examine the relationship between Alevi respondents and the CHP, to see if this variable has any affect on voting behavior. Baslevant et al. (2009) find that Alevis are more likely to vote for the CHP. Similarly, Carkoglu (2005) finds that Alevis are predominantly concentrated within the CHP. With respect to BDP versus AKP, there is a statistically significant effect of both religiosity and ethnicity on voting for the AKP relative to BDP. Specifically, if a person were to increase his self-identified degree of religiosity by one point, the multinomial log-odds for the AKP relative to BDP would be expected to increase by 0.55 unit, while holding all other variables in the model constant. However, among Kurdish respondents, there is no statistical effect of religiosity on voting for the CHP relative to BDP.

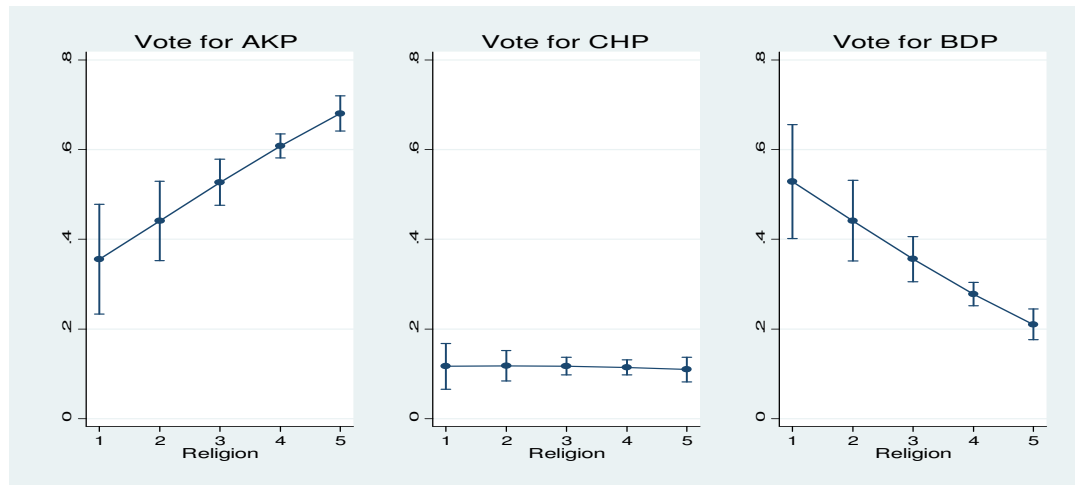


Figure 3.3: Probabilities of Kurds' Vote Related to Religion with 95% CIs

¹⁸ In general, scholars (e.g., Carkoglu 2005) use the question, “what sect of Islam do you belong to”, to measure Alevi variable. However, there was no such question in our survey data. Instead, there was a question in the data asking to respondents whether they admit to get married with an Alevi or not. Thus, we will use this variable only in Table 7 -- not in other estimations in the following chapters -- to see if it has a significant effect on Kurdish votes.

Figure 3.3 reports the results for religiosity with 95% confidence intervals, and suggests that as religiosity increases, a person is more likely to vote for the AKP instead of BDP. As indicated, the coefficient of religiosity in regards to CHP is not statistically significant. Conversely, ethnicity has statistical effect on both voting for the AKP and the CHP relative to BDP. We should note however that it is barely significant for the CHP. Specifically, a one-unit increase in the variable ethnicity is associated with a .79 decrease in the relative log-odds of voting for the AKP compared to BDP.

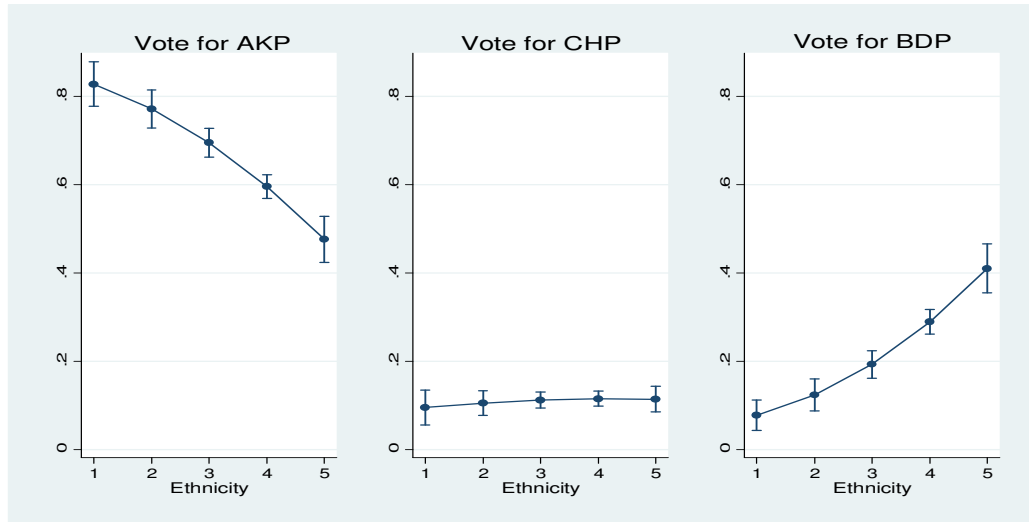


Figure 3.4: Probabilities of Kurds' Vote Related to Ethnicity with 95% CIs

As shown in Figure 3.4, as ethnicity increases, a person is less likely to vote for the AKP and more likely to vote for the BDP. Specifically, if a person were to increase the importance he or she gives ethnicity by one point, the predicted probabilities of vote for the AKP relative to the BDP would be expected to decrease. In the case of voting for the BDP, individuals at the highest ethnicity level differ by about 0.33 percent from those at the lowest ethnicity level. It is about 0.27 percent for the AKP. That is to say, as the

importance of ethnicity increases, the BDP is more likely to get Kurdish votes than others parties do.

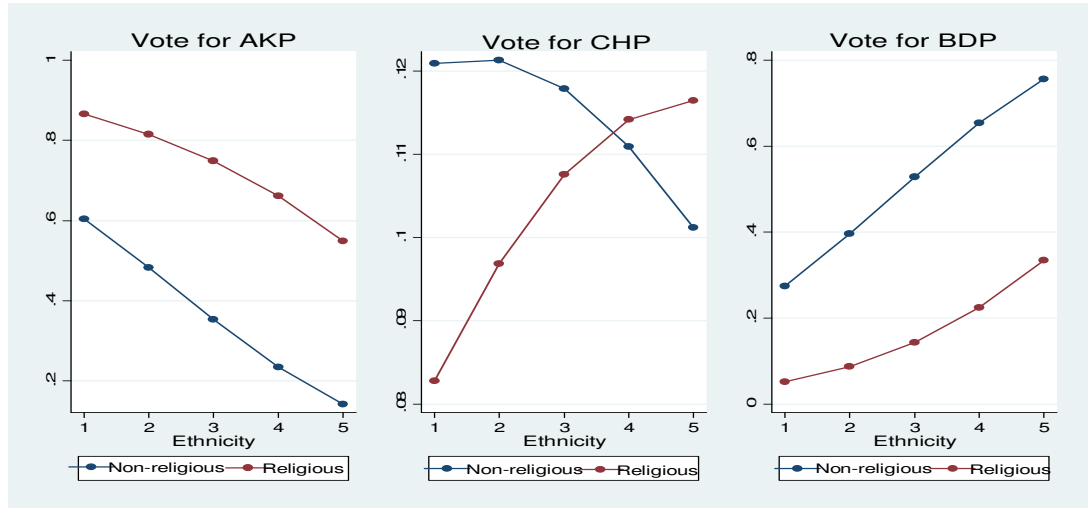


Figure 3.5: Probabilities of Kurds' Vote Related to Ethnicity*Religion

Figure 3.5 reports the predictive margins in regards to the voting pattern of the least religious and the most religious respondents, as well as their each possible combination with the levels of ethnicity for all three parties. To compute these predictive margins, we first run our multinomial logit model, and then we specify the values for ethnicity from 1 to 5, and for non-religious (blue) individuals that referred to 1 and religious ones (red) that referred to 5, on a scale of 1 to 5. By so doing, we simultaneously fix covariates ethnicity and religiosity at the values specified.

We see that as ethnicity increases, the expected differences between the least religious and most religious individuals are gradually becoming much larger in related to voting for both the AKP and the BDP. For instance, in the case of voting for the BDP, at the point where the level of ethnicity is at the highest level, the difference between the

least religious and most religious individuals is about 0.46 percent. It is about 0.21 percent at the lowest ethnicity level. Therefore, we can say that the BDP is more popular among the less religious Kurds, and individuals who score at the highest level of ethnicity.

With regard to the socio-economic variables, only education and income are statistically significant for AKP, and Alevi, age, and income are statistically significant for CHP. Specifically, if a person were to increase his level of education by one point, the multinomial log-odds for the AKP relative to the BDP would be expected to decrease by 0.31 points, while holding all other variables in the model constant. In addition, as income increases, a person is more like to vote for the AKP as opposed to BDP.

In the case of BDP versus CHP, those respondents who are open-minded about Alevi citizens are more like to vote for the CHP. In addition, as age and income increase, people tend to be more likely to vote for CHP instead of BDP.

Not surprisingly, the issues stemming from the ethnic conflict make Kurds tendentious to vote for the BDP. As demonstrated in Table 3.3, the Kurds who support for education in Kurdish, move to the other regions due to the ethnic conflict, lost a family member during the conflict, and face economic lost are more likely to vote for the BDP instead of AKP and CHP.

As a result, in light of our findings on the effects of religiosity and ethnicity, controlling for issues and socio-economic situations, we conclude that both religiosity and ethnicity are two of the statistically highly significant indicators of Kurdish voting behavior, which is consistent with the opinions discussed in the theoretical framework.

Besides, the ethnic conflict and its consequences in the last three decades matter for Kurds in supporting for a particular political party.

3.3. Summary

This chapter provides empirical tests of our theoretical model that whether and to what extent the voting preferences of a Kurdish individual depend on his religious, ethnic, and socio-economic characteristics. The multinomial logit estimation shows that both ethnicity and religiosity have a significant effect on Kurdish voting behavior. Among these, ethnicity is positively associated with voting for the BDP, whereas religion is negatively associated with voting for the BDP. Statistically, as the importance a person gives ethnicity increases, he or she is more likely to vote for the BDP. In other words, as hypothesized (H2), the more the importance a Kurdish individual gives ethnicity, the more he or she is inclined to vote for a party by associated with his or her ethnicity, namely the BDP.

Conversely, as religiosity increases, the probability of voting for the pro-Islamic AKP increases. Therefore, Kurds may be divided as religious and ethnic-oriented, in which religious Kurds are more likely to vote for the AKP and ethno-nationalist and less religious Kurds are more likely to vote for the BDP.

Our results show that of the socio-economic variables, income has a negative impact on the likelihood of voting for the BDP. Specifically, as income increases, a person is more likely to vote for the AKP and CHP, instead of BDP. By contrast, as the

level of education increases, a person is more like to vote for the BDP, as opposed to AKP. Finally, age and gender do not have a significant effect on Kurdish voting behavior.

Previous studies (e.g., Sarigil 2010; Ekmekci 2011; Toros 2014) tend to separate the socio-economic, ideological, and religious factors, to see whether they have any impact on Kurdish voting behavior. We find that ethnicity and religiosity are better predictors of Kurd's vote choices in most cases. However, these variables do not capture the entire story about the Kurds. We therefore included some crucial political variables into the analysis that thoroughly captured Kurdish political grievances in Turkey¹⁹. Our results suggest that the Kurds that support for education in Kurdish, and that were affected by the ethnic conflict are more likely to vote for the pro-Kurdish party, namely BDP, instead of AKP and CHP.

¹⁹ For further information about the political grievances of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism, see Ergil (2000); Baslevant et al. (2009); and Olson (2009).

CHAPTER IV

TESTING THE FACTORS THAT DETERMINE TURKS' VOTING BEHAVIOR

4.1. Overview

This fourth chapter aims to provide empirical evidence that supports the hypothesis that the Turks prioritizing their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for the secular and ethno-Turkish parties, namely the CHP and MHP; and less likely to vote for the religious-based party, namely the AKP.

In providing statistical estimation to this argument, this chapter (1) employs logit models for each relevant party, to see the effects of ethnicity and religiosity, and other control variables -- socio-economic status (e.g., age, gender, education and income) and issue variables (e.g., support for democratic constitution, the EU, and education in Kurdish) -- upon Turks' voting behavior, and (2) provides a multinomial logit analysis in predicting Turkish individuals' vote choice.

4.2. Nature of the Dependent Variables

Since we use the political parties that could enter the Turkish parliament in the last three national elections, we dropped all the parties that were not able to form a party-group in the parliament. In addition, we dropped the pro-Kurdish party (BDP) as well, since we

examine the voting behavior of Turks in this chapter, and in the survey, there were only fourteen Turks who said they would vote for the BDP. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of the votes for the dependent variables (voting for AKP, CHP, and CHP) used in this chapter.

Table 4.1: Vote Percentage of the Dependent Variable(s)

Vote	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
AKP	2,978	50.96	50.96
CHP	1,951	33.38	84.34
MHP	915	15.66	100
Total	5844	100	

The center/periphery relations in Turkish politics discussed by Mardin (1973) have deeply changed and restructured in 1990s. In particular, the first surprising outcomes came in the 1995 election when the Islamist Welfare Party gained 21.4 percent of the votes, by defeating the classical centrist parties on both the right and the left (Esmer 2002). Some of the senior figures of this Islamist party including Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Abdullah Gul have formed the new centrist and Islamist AKP, and this party has won the three national elections since 2002. It is worth mentioning here that this party has gained votes from both the Turks and Kurds.

The second surprising outcome came in 1999 national election when the extreme Turkish nationalist [MHP] received 17.9 percent of the votes. It should be noted however that the 1999 election was unusual, since the PKK leader, Ocalan, was captured right before the election, which has ultimately played a significant role in increasing the

Turkish nationalist votes. Despite its declining vote shares since then, the MHP has become a crucial party in Turkish politics. In particular, the MHP gets votes in the western-central Black Sea coastal and Aegean regions as well as the central Anatolia regions. These are Turkish-dominated areas, which are also considered as relatively nationalist regions.

The secular and leftist groups have mainly supported the Democratic Leftist Party (DSP) during the 1990s. However, the CHP has been the core secular party since the beginning of the Turkish Republic. After the victory of the AKP in the 2002 election as a single party, the leftist and secular groups have substantially begun to support the CHP. Hence, the CHP has represented the secular and leftist groups in the parliament since 2002. The CHP gets votes from the secularist constituencies in the coastal regions. It is worth mentioning that the CHP cannot get pleasing votes from the Kurdish-inhabited provinces.

4.3. Logit Analysis on Turkish Voter

We employ logit regression analyses to understand the Turkish voter. Since the operationalization of the key independent (ethnicity and religiosity) and socio-economic variables are similar variables used in the Equation 1 in the previous chapter, we will not present them here. However, we added a new socio-economic variable called *rural* to see if a person's urban-rural residence has any effect on the likelihood of his voting preferences. This dummy variable is coded 1 for those who live in rural areas and 0 for those who live in urban areas. The equation for the logit estimation is presented below:

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Vote choice} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{religiosity})_i + \beta_2(\text{ethnicity})_i + \beta_3(\text{region})_i + \beta_4(\text{income})_i + \\
& \beta_5(\text{age})_i + \beta_6(\text{education})_i + \beta_7(\text{gender})_i + \beta_8(\text{rural})_i + \beta_9(\text{democratic constitution})_i + \\
& \beta_{10}(\text{education in Kurdish})_i + \beta_{11}(\text{European union})_i + \beta_{12}(\text{Kurd neighbor})_i + \beta_{13}(\text{non-} \\
& \text{Muslim neighbor})_i
\end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

The results of the estimation are reported in Table 4.2. Using the same independent variables for each model, the first model examines the probability of voting for the AKP. The second and third models examine the probability of voting for the CHP and BDP, respectively.

As demonstrated in Model 1, both ethnicity and religiosity are statistically significant predictors of support for the AKP. Ethnicity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and negative effect on voters' preferences, suggesting that the more the importance a respondent gives ethnicity, the less likely he or she is to vote for the AKP.

Specifically, a one-unit increase in the importance the respondent gives ethnicity decreases the log-odds of supporting for the AKP by 0.16. By contrast, religiosity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and positive effect, suggesting that a self-identified degree of religiosity has a significant influence on a Turk's vote choice. In other words, a one-unit increase in religiosity increases the log-odds of voting for the AKP by 0.30. This is consistent with the common theory that the AKP is more popular among religious Turks, as among religious Kurds that were addressed in the third chapter.

Table 4.2: Logit Analysis of Turks' Voting Behavior

	Model 1: AKP			Model 2: CHP			Model 3: MHP		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	0.30	0.05	***	-0.43	0.05	***	0.24	0.06	***
Ethnicity	-0.16	0.05	***	0.09	0.05	*	0.07	0.05	
<i>Social Background</i>									
Age	-0.02	0.05		0.29	0.05	***	-0.41	0.06	***
Gender	-0.05	0.08		0.39	0.08	***	-0.44	0.09	
Education	-0.23	0.04	***	0.17	0.04	***	0.00	0.04	
Income	-0.05	0.08		0.05	0.04		-0.04	0.04	
Region	-0.13	0.12		0.05	0.12		0.17	0.15	
Rural	-0.06	0.10		-0.00	0.09		-0.04	0.10	
<i>Issue Positions</i>									
Dem. Constitution	3.29	0.08	***	-2.54	0.08	***	-1.51	0.09	***
Support for EU	0.22	0.04	***	0.13	0.03	***	-0.26	0.04	***
Education in Kurdish	0.10	0.04	***	0.04	0.03		-0.27	0.04	***
<i>Democratic Culture</i>									
Kurd neighbor	0.13	0.11		0.02	0.10	***	-0.19	0.12	*
Non-Muslim neighbor	-0.29	0.11	***	0.55	0.10		-0.41	0.12	***
_cons	-2.32	0.38	***	-0.72	0.36	**	0.25	0.43	
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.39			0.28			0.15		
Nagelkerke R2	0.57			0.41			0.22		
% Correctly predicted	83.6			79.3			85.4		
N	5349			5349			5349		

Note: The models represent the results of binary logistic regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05,
The dependent variable is vote for AKP in model 1, CHP in model 2, and MHP in model 3.

Among the socio-economic indicators, only education is statistically significant in the first model. A one-unit increase in the level of education decreases the log-odds of voting for the AKP by 0.23 unit. However, the incumbent party, the AKP, gets votes from those who consider some political issues of importance. Specifically, supporting for a new democratic constitution and the membership of the European Union has a statistical significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for the AKP.

Of the two democratic culture variables, a Turk's tolerance for having a Kurdish neighbor has no impact on the likelihood of voting for the AKP. However, a Turk's tolerance for having a non-Muslim neighbor has a statistically significant and negative effect on the likelihood of voting for the AKP.

Model 2 in Table 4.2 reports the results for the CHP. As a secular party, CHP is not popular among religious people. As expected, religiosity has a negative effect on the likelihood of voting for the CHP. Specifically, a one-unit increase in religiosity decreases the log-odds of voting for the secular CHP by 0.43. This result is consistent with the main findings in some of the recent studies (e.g., Carkoglu 2012; Pelin 2014; and Toros 2014) in which the scholars posit that religious respondents tend not to vote for the CHP. Ethnicity, the other key independent variable, has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for the CHP.

Among the socio-economic variables, age, gender, and education have a statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that older people, better-educated people, and females are more likely to vote for the CHP. In addition, those who support for a new constitution are less likely to vote for the CHP. It is probably because they

think that changing the constitution might lead to collapse of the dominant secular regime that comes from the very beginning of the new Turkish republic.

With respect to MHP in Model 3, religiosity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and positive effect, suggesting that a self-identified degree of religiosity has a significant effect on the likelihood of voting for the MHP. In other words, a one-unit increase in religiosity increases the log-odds of voting for the MHP by 0.24. Among the socio-economic variables, only age is statistically significant. That is to say, older people are less likely to vote for MHP. Finally, for the political issues and culture, we can say that those who support for a new democratic constitution, the membership of the European Union, and education in Kurdish are less likely to vote for the MHP. In addition, a Turk's tolerance for having a Kurdish neighbor and a non-Muslim neighbor has a statistically negative effect on the likelihood of voting for the MHP.

4.4. Multinomial Logit Analysis on Turkish Voter

Originally, the survey data includes all the parties contesting in the national elections in the last decade. However, we dropped the parties that were not represented in the Turkish parliament, as well as the pro-Kurdish party, BDP. Here, since we aim to compare and predict the probabilities of the outcomes of individuals' vote choices over the three political parties (AKP, CHP, and MHP) -- given a set of independent variables -- we use multinomial logit regression model for the estimation.

Table 4.3: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Turks' Vote Choice

	<i>Model 1: AKP(Base)</i>						<i>Model 2: CHP(Base)</i>		
	CHP			MHP			MHP		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	-0.50	0.06	***	-0.09	0.07		0.40	0.06	***
Ethnicity	0.18	0.06	***	0.17	0.07	***	-0.00	0.06	
<i>Social Background</i>									
Age	0.18	0.06	***	-0.30	0.07	***	-0.48	0.06	***
Gender	0.25	0.09	***	-0.30	0.11	***	-0.56	0.10	***
Education	0.27	0.04	***	0.17	0.05	***	-0.10	0.05	**
Income	0.07	0.04		0.01	0.05		-0.06	0.04	
Region	0.12	0.14		0.23	0.17		0.11	0.17	
Rural	-0.01	0.11		-0.04	0.12		-0.03	0.11	
<i>Issue Positions</i>									
Democratic Constitution	-3.66	0.10	***	-3.13	0.11	***	0.53	0.11	***
Support for EU	-0.09	0.04	**	-0.34	0.05	***	-0.25	0.04	***
Support for Education in Kurdish	-0.05	0.04		-0.29	0.05	***	-0.24	0.05	***
<i>Democratic Culture</i>									
Kurd neighbor	-0.09	0.13		-0.25	0.14	*	-0.15	0.13	
Non-Muslim neighbor	0.53	0.13	***	-0.07	0.15		-0.60	0.13	***
_cons	1.30	0.44	***	2.18	0.52	***	0.88	0.47	*
McFadden's Adj. R2		0.33			0.33			0.33	
Nagelkerke R2		0.57			0.57			0.57	
N		5060			5060			5060	

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The base categories are AKP in model 1, and CHP is in model 2. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R₂ and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

Table 4.3 shows the results of the multinomial logit analysis of Turks' voting behavior. In the first model where AKP is the base category, we compare the effects of the independent variables on the likelihood of voting for the AKP versus the CHP and MHP. In the second model where CHP is the base category, we compare the probabilities of voters' intentions for the CHP versus MHP.

As demonstrated in the Model 1, there is a statistically significant relationship between religiosity and vote choice with respect to comparison between AKP and CHP. Specifically, religiosity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and negative effect, suggesting that if a person were to increase his degree of religiosity by one point, the multinomial log-odds for the CHP relative to the AKP would be expected to decrease by 0.50 unit, while holding all other variables in the model constant. That is to say, AKP is more popular than CHP among religious Turks. On the other hand, religiosity is not a significant predictor of vote choice in the case of AKP versus MHP.

In the second model where we compare CHP and MHP, religiosity has a statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that if a person were to increase his degree of religiosity by one point, the multinomial log-odds for the MHP relative to the CHP would be expected to increase by 0.40. In sum, these results indicate that the least religious individuals, compared to the AKP and MHP, tend to support the CHP. These findings are consistent with the theories in the relevant studies (e.g., Carkoglu and Toprak 2006; Esmer 1999; Somer 2007) that underline the significant influence of religiosity on voting behavior.

On the other hand, plotting the predictive margins²⁰ would provide clearer picture regarding the effects of religiosity on respondents' vote choice for each party. The predictive margins by the level of religiosity are shown in Figure 4.1. As can be seen in the left two plots, as the level of religiosity increases, the probability of voting for the AKP and MHP increases. Conversely, as religiosity increases, the probability of voting for the CHP decreases (in the right plot).

Specifically, the AKP gets 54.86 percent of the votes among those who score at the top of the five-point religiosity scale. That is to say, AKP is the most popular party among the most religious Turkish voters. Of the two other parties, while the CHP gets 26.35 percent of the votes among those who score at the top of the five-point religiosity scale, the MHP gets only 18.79 percent.

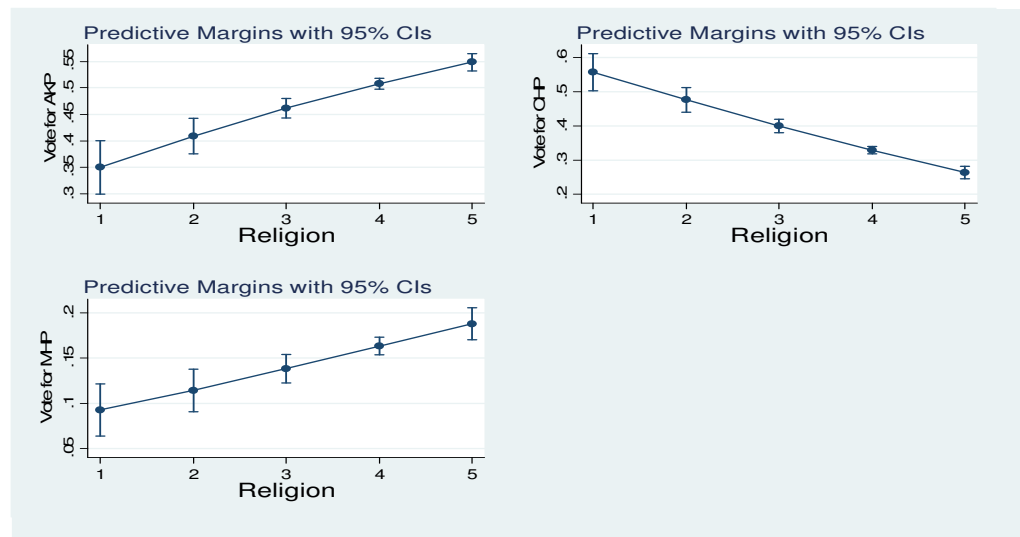


Figure 4.1: Predictive Margins of Turk's Vote Choice relative to Religion with 95% CIs

²⁰ Some of the covariates are not fixed in the estimation. We therefore report the predictive margins here. In addition, since we use multinomial analysis here, we run margins for each outcome to plot the marginal effects. In all estimates, predictive margins of the covariates were statistically significant.

On the other hand, the AKP gets 34.98 percent of the votes among those who score at the lowest level of religiosity. As a secular leftist party, the CHP gets 55.74 percent of the votes among those who score at the lowest level of religiosity, whereas the MHP gets 09.28 percent. This result is consistent with the theories in the literature (e.g., Cagaptay 2014), that suggests that the CHP is the most popular party among the least religious groups.

With respect to ethnicity, only the outcomes of the Model 1 in Table 4.3 are statistically significant. Firstly, there is a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and vote choice with respect to comparisons between AKP and CHP. Specifically, ethnicity has a statistically significant ($p = 0.000$) and positive effect, suggesting that if a person were to increase the importance he gives ethnicity by one point, the multinomial log-odds for the CHP relative to AKP would be expected to increase by 0.18 unit, while holding all other variables in the model constant. Secondly, a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for the MHP rather than AKP by 0.17.

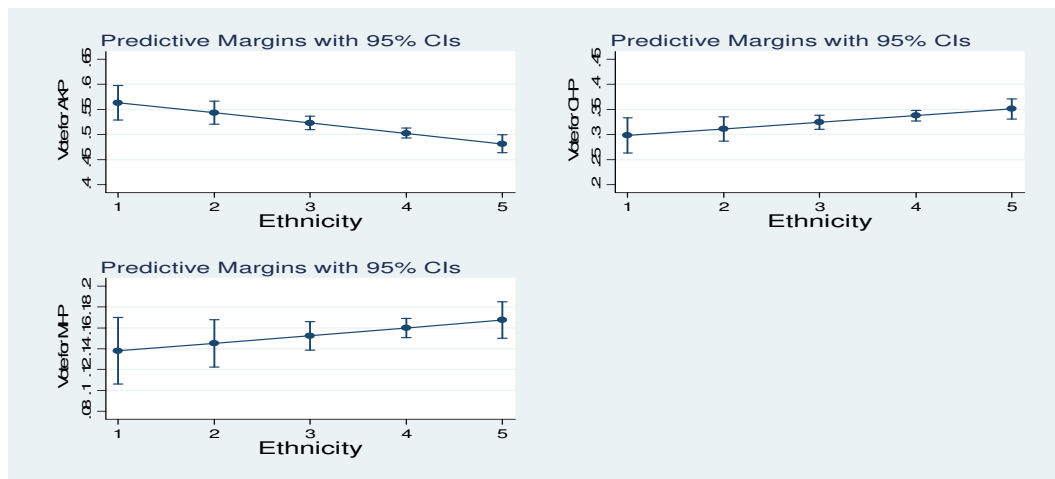


Figure 4.2: Predictive Margins of Turk's Vote Choice relative to Ethnicity with 95% CIs

Figure 4.2 illustrates the predictive margins of Turks' vote choice relative to ethnicity with 95 percent confidence intervals. As shown in the three plots, every one-unit increase in the importance a person gives ethnicity increases the probability of voting for the CHP and MHP; and decreases the probability of voting for the AKP. These outcomes are consistent with the arguments in our theoretical chapter (e.g., Esen and Ciddi 2011; Cagaptay 2014; Carkoglu 2014), in which it is revealed that both the secularist CHP and the Turkish-nationalist MHP get their support essentially from the nationalist and secular groups living in the western and southern coastal provinces. Therefore, increasing ethnicity level among these groups increases the probability of their support for the CHP and MHP.

As demonstrated in Table 4.3, of the six socioeconomic variables, age, gender, and education are statistically significant in all models. As seen in the Model 1, keeping all other variables constant, every additional unit in the categories of age, gender, and level of education, increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for CHP by 0.18, 0.25, and 0.27 respectively, as opposed to voting for AKP. Therefore, it is seen that females and older adults with higher levels of education are more likely to vote for the CHP instead of AKP.

On the other hand, with respect to MHP versus AKP, keeping all other variables constant, every additional unit in the categories of age and gender, decreases the multinomial log-odds of voting for MHP by 0.30 and 0.30 respectively, as opposed to voting for AKP. That is to say, females and older adults are less likely to vote for the MHP instead of AKP. However, education has a statistically significant and positive

effect, suggesting that one-unit increase in the level of education increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for the MHP by 0.17, as opposed to voting for AKP.

As seen in the Model 2 where we compare the results for the CHP and MHP, age, gender and education have statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that every additional unit in the categories of age, gender, and the level of education decreases the multinomial log-odds of voting for the MHP by 0.48, 0.56, and 0.10 respectively, as opposed to voting for CHP.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the predictive margins of Turks' vote choice relative to level of education with 95 percent confidence intervals. As seen, every one-unit increase in the level of education increases the probability of voting for the CHP and MHP, and decreases the probability of voting for the AKP. These results indicate that the AKP is the most popular party at the lowest level of education, and CHP is the popular party among older adults, and females with higher levels of education.

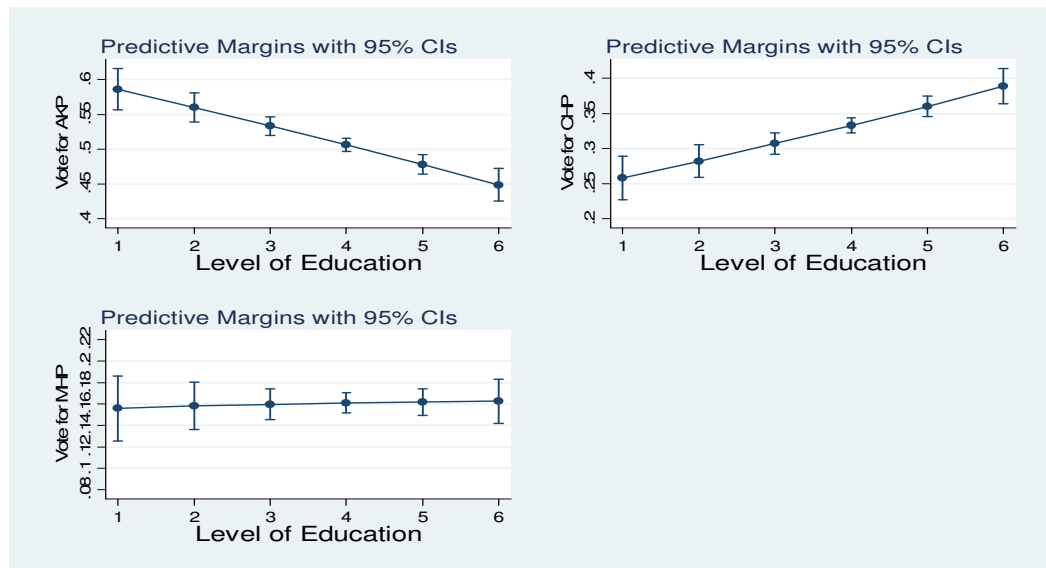


Figure 4.3: Predictive Margins of Turk's Vote Choice Relative to Education with 95% CIs

Thus far, we have examined the effects of religiosity, ethnicity, and statistically significant socioeconomic variables on voting behavior. In Figure 4.4, the predictive margins by the level of religiosity are shown for female and male respondents in all age categories. As can be seen in the left plot, every one-unit increase in the level of religiosity increases the probability of voting for the AKP for both male and female respondents in all age categories. Conversely, as illustrated in the right plot, every one-unit increase in the level of religiosity decreases the probability of voting for the CHP for both male and female respondents in all age categories. With respect to AKP, there is not much difference between male and female respondents in all age categories at the each level of religiosity, in the context of predictive margins.

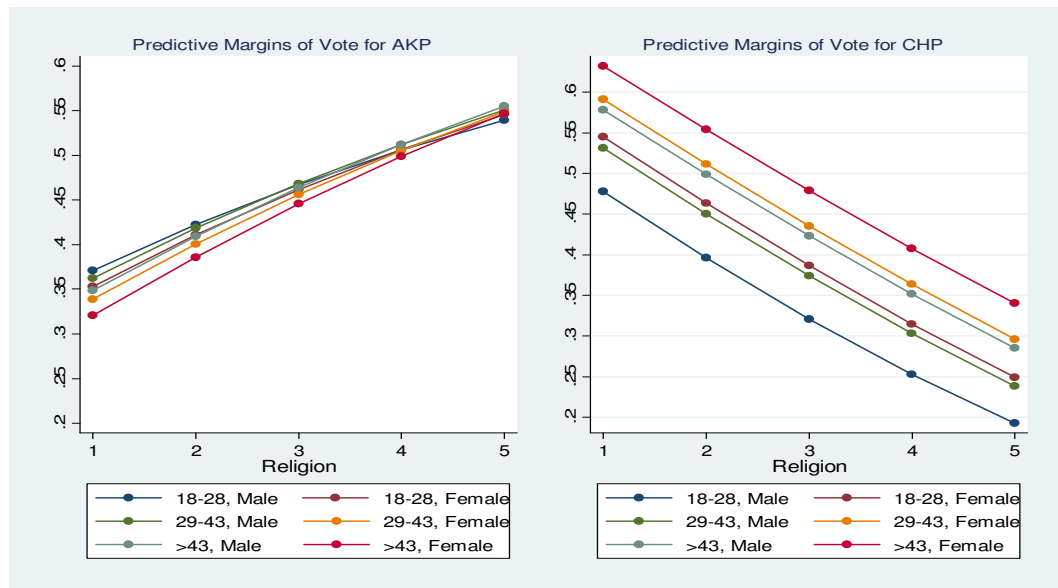


Figure 4.4: Predictive Margins of Turk's Vote Choice Relative to Religion/Age/Gender

With respect to CHP, however, there is about 10 percent difference between younger and older male respondents, and 8 percent difference between younger and older

female respondents at each religiosity level. This is because the role the religiosity plays on vote choice is much stronger for the AKP compared to CHP. The socioeconomic factors more or less influence the role of religiosity upon vote choice, which is not the case for the AKP. In sum, under any circumstances, the effect of religiosity on vote choice remains very powerful among the AKP voters.

In Figure 4.5, the predictive margins by the level of ethnicity are shown for female and male respondents in all age categories. These results suggest that every one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the probability of voting for both the CHP and MHP, and decreases the probability of voting for both the AKP -- for both the male and female respondents in all age categories. The effects of gender and age on voting behavior contingent upon ethnicity seem relatively strong for the CHP and MHP, since there is a significant difference between the male and female respondents in different age groups at each ethnicity level.

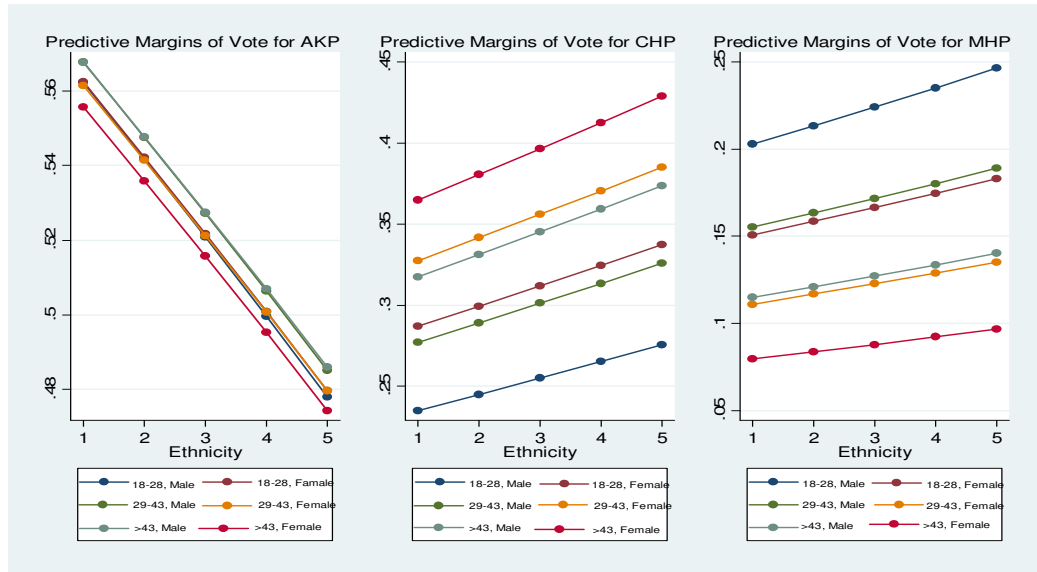


Figure 4.5: Predictive Margins of Turk's Vote Choice Relative to Ethnicity/Age/Gender

Finally, with respect to the political issues and culture as demonstrated in Table 4.3, we can say that those who support for a new democratic constitution and the membership of the European Union are less likely to vote for the CHP compared to AKP. In addition, a Turk's tolerance for having a non-Muslim neighbor has a statistically positive effect on the likelihood of voting for the CHP, suggesting that the CHP supporters are much more tolerant of other religious beliefs than the AKP supporters.

On the other hand, with respect to MHP versus AKP, those who support for a new democratic constitution, the membership of the European Union, and education in Kurdish are less likely to vote for the MHP compared to AKP. This is because the MHP and Kurdish groups are seen as two uncompromising opponents in Turkish politics (Tremblay 2015), and are having difficulties in coming to agree on identity-based policies. Lastly, with respect to MHP versus AKP, those who support for a new democratic constitution, the membership of the European Union, and education in Kurdish are less likely to vote for the MHP compared to AKP.

4.5. Summary

This chapter investigates the main factors that determine the Turks' vote choice. The empirical results of both logit and multinomial logit analyses confirm the hypothesis that the Turks prioritizing their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for the secular and ethno-Turkish parties, namely the CHP and MHP; and less likely to vote for the religious-based party, namely the AKP.

These results also confirm our main argument that religiosity and ethnicity are very important indicators of voting behavior. The estimation shows that both ethnicity and religiosity have a statistically significant effect on Turks' vote choice. The AKP is the most popular party among the religious groups, whereas the CHP is popular among those who score at the lowest religiosity level. In addition, ethnicity is positively associated with voting for the CHP and MHP, and is negatively associated with voting for the AKP.

Our results show that of the socio-economic variables, income has no statistically significant impact on Turks' vote choice. On the other hand, education, gender, and age have statistically significant effects on vote choice. The results for education are consistent with the previous research (e.g., Toros 2014) arguing that the people with higher education levels tend to vote for the CHP. Finally, with respect to age and gender, the MHP is popular among the younger male adults, whereas the CHP is popular among the older male and female respondents.

CHAPTER V

VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN TURKEY

5.1. Overview

The previous two chapters have examined the determinants of both the Kurdish and the Turkish voting behavior, respectively. In the theoretical chapter, it was suggested that both religious Turks and Kurds are positively associated with a religious-based party, and both secular Turks and Kurds are negatively associated with a religious-based party, namely the AKP. Using all four political parties represented in the Turkish parliament in the last decade, this fifth chapter investigates whether this hypothesis is supported by our individual level data by looking at the effects of religiosity and ethnicity on both the Turks and Kurds' vote choice – controlling for the socioeconomic predictors. In providing statistical estimation to this argument, this chapter employs a logit and multinomial logit regressions to compare the coefficients of each covariate in the models.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Table 5.1 reports the results of the weighted frequencies for all four political parties (AKP, CHP, MHP, and BDP) represented in the Turkish parliament in the last three national elections. The percentage of vote share of each party is also presented below.

Table 5.1: The Percentages for the Dependent Variable

Vote	Frequency	%	Cumulative (%)
AKP	3,900	50.23	50.23
CHP	2,306	29.70	79.93
MHP	1,008	12.98	92.92
BDP	550	7.08	100
Total	7,764	100	

The descriptive statistics of the variables used in this chapter are reported in Table 5.2. This table shows the observation numbers for each independent variable, as well as the mean values, which refer to the sum of the values of a variable divided by the total number of values. The standard deviations for each variable are also reported in this table, which reflect the deviation from the mean. Finally, the table shows the minimum and maximum values that each variable get. For instance, Identity is coded as 1 for the Turks, 0 for the Kurds. Age is a three-category variable recoded as 1 for the ages between 18 and 28; 2 for ages between 29 and 42; and 3 for ages between 43 and above. Gender is coded as 1 for female, 0 for male.

Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variable	Observation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Religiosity	7026	3.992	0.950	1	5
Ethnicity	7036	3.785	0.981	1	5
Identity	7120	0.823	0.382	0	1
Age	7053	2.051	0.805	1	3
Gender	7073	0.450	0.498	0	1
Education	7008	3.875	1.341	1	6
Income	6796	3.046	1.173	1	6
Democratic Constitution	6795	0.567	0.496	0	1
Support for EU	7036	3.227	1.111	1	5

Note: The detailed information about the operationalization of the variables can be found in the second chapter.

5.3. Testing Voter Preferences in Turkey

We employ multinomial logit, as well as the logit regression analyses to test the key factors that determine the voting behavior in Turkey. Aside from the two key predictors - religiosity and ethnicity -- we added a new variable called identity, which is recoded as 1 for Turk and 0 for Kurd respondents. Thus, we will be able to see the effects of identity and its interaction with ethnicity on vote choice. As socioeconomic variables, we use age, gender, income, and education. Finally, we use support for the full membership of the European Union and a new democratic constitution as issue variables. The main equation for the estimation is presented below:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote choice} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{religiosity})_i + \beta_2(\text{ethnicity})_i + \beta_3(\text{identity})_i + \beta_4(\text{income})_i + \\ & \beta_5(\text{age})_i + \beta_6(\text{education})_i + \beta_7(\text{gender})_i + \beta_8(\text{democratic constitution})_i + \beta_9(\text{European} \\ & \text{Union})_i \end{aligned} \quad (3)$$

The results of the multinomial estimation are presented in Table 5.3 through Table 5.7. In addition, the results of the logit estimation is reported in Table 5.8. Since four political parties represented in the parliament will be compared in the analysis, we demonstrate the results of the multinomial estimation in five separate tables. In total, twenty columns are needed to demonstrate the results of the multinomial logit estimation, since we use four different methods for five comparisons -- which would make the table very complicated. Therefore, we use five separate tables with four models for each comparison to make it easier to follow the outcomes.

In the tables 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, we first compare the results for the CHP, MHP, and BDP relative to AKP, respectively. For that reason, we run the models by taking the AKP

as the base category. Second, the tables 5.6 and 5.7 compare the results with respect to CHP versus MHP and BDP. In this estimation, we excluded the AKP from the analysis, and then ran the models by taking the CHP as the base category dependent variable. Finally, the table 5.8 provides the results of the logit estimation between MHP and BDP, by recoding the BDP as 1 and the MHP as 0.

Each table has four models. The first model examines the effect of religiosity upon vote choice, controlling for socio-economic indicators and issue positions. The second model looks at the effect of ethnicity, whereas the third model looks at the effects of both ethnicity and religiosity on vote choice, without any interaction terms. The last model examines the effect of ethnicity and its interaction with identity upon vote choice, controlling for other variables. The results are reported below for each comparison.

5.3.1. AKP versus CHP

Table 5.3 shows the results of our models for the comparison between AKP and CHP. Model 1 shows the results of the effect of religiosity on voting behavior. As expected, religiosity has a statistically significant ($p= 0.000$) and negative effect, suggesting that a one-unit increase in the level of religiosity decreases the multinomial log-odds of voting for CHP compared to AKP by 0.40. This result is consistent with the hypotheses in the recent literature (e.g., Carkoglu and Hinich 2006; Toros 2014) in which scholars show that both religious Turks and Kurds are more likely to vote for a religious-based party, namely AKP.

Table 5.3: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote for CHP Relative to AKP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	-0.40	0.05	***	---	---	---	-0.52	0.06	***	---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	-0.06	0.04		0.21	0.05	***	0.18	0.12	
Identity	0.89	0.16	***	0.82	0.15	***	0.86	0.16	***	1.83	0.47	***
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.28	0.12	**
Social Background												
Age	0.20	0.06	***	0.21	0.06	***	0.21	0.06	***	0.21	0.06	***
Gender	0.25	0.09	***	0.26	0.09	***	0.24	0.09	***	0.26	0.09	***
Education	0.28	0.04	***	0.33	0.04	***	0.30	0.04	***	0.33	0.04	***
Income	0.08	0.04	**	0.11	0.04	***	0.09	0.04	**	0.11	0.04	***
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	-3.73	0.09	***	-3.78	0.09	***	-3.72	0.09	***	-3.79	0.09	***
Support for EU	-0.08	0.04	**	-0.09	0.04	**	-0.08	0.04	**	-0.09	0.04	**
_cons	0.68	0.37	*	-0.84	0.35	**	0.33	0.38		-1.71	0.52	***
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.39			0.38			0.39			0.38		
Nagelkerke R2	0.66			0.66			0.70			0.66		
N	6221			6229			6196			6229		

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05: The base category is AKP. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R₂ and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

Even though the effect of ethnicity is not statistically significant in Model 2, it is significant in Model 3 when we run it together with religiosity. Specifically, ethnicity has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for CHP instead of AKP. Similarly, identity has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for CHP instead of AKP, suggesting that being a Turk (compared to Kurd) increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for CHP instead of AKP by 0.86, when controlling all the other factors in the model.

On the other hand, when ethnicity is interacted with identity, as demonstrated in Model 4, the effect is statistically significant and negative, suggesting that the effect of ethnicity decreases as identity (for Turks) increases. This result simply suggests that as the importance a Turkish respondent gives ethnicity increases, the probability of voting for AKP decreases, and the probability of voting for CHP increases.

All socioeconomic variables in the four of the models have a statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that older adults with higher levels of education, and that have higher income are more likely to vote for CHP rather than AKP. When gender is concerned, being a female increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for CHP instead of AKP by approximately 0.26. Finally, those who support for a new democratic constitution and the membership of the European Union are less likely to vote for the CHP compared to AKP.

5.3.2. *AKP versus MHP*

Table 5.4 shows the results of the models for the comparison between AKP and MHP. Religiosity has no impact in any of the models, whereas both ethnicity and identity have a statistically significant and positive effect. This result suggests that Turks are more likely than Kurds to vote for MHP instead of AKP. In addition, a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for MHP compared to AKP by 0.27, as seen in the Model 3.

This result is consistent with the theory that the MHP, as a Turkish-nationalist party, is popular among Turks who give importance to their ethnicity. Besides, the results for identity suggest that being a Turk, compared to being a Kurd, increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for MHP instead of AKP by 2.35, which indicates approximately more than 90% probability. Not surprisingly, MHP is much more popular among Turks than Kurds.

Of the socioeconomic indicators, age, gender, and education have statistically significant effect, suggesting that the multinomial log-odds for females relative to males is 0.31 unit lower for supporting MHP instead of AKP, given all other variables in the model are held constant. The results also suggest that better educated young adults are more likely to vote for MHP compared to AKP. Lastly and not surprisingly, those who support for a new democratic constitution and the membership of the European Union are less likely to vote for the MHP compared to AKP.

Table 5.4: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote for MHP Relative to AKP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	0.09	0.06		---	---	---	-0.07	0.07		---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	0.25	0.05	***	0.27	0.06	***	0.20	0.28	
Identity	2.38	0.32	***	2.35	0.32	***	2.35	0.32	***	2.26	1.06	**
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.02	0.28	
Social Background												
Age	-0.32	0.07	***	-0.31	0.07	***	-0.31	0.07	***	-0.30	0.07	***
Gender	-0.31	0.10	***	-0.32	0.10	***	-0.31	0.10	***	-0.32	0.10	***
Education	0.19	0.05	***	0.20	0.05	***	0.20	0.05	***	0.20	0.05	***
Income	0.02	0.05		0.02	0.05		0.03	0.05		0.02	0.05	
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	-3.26	0.11	***	-3.25	0.11	***	-3.24	0.11	***	-3.24	0.11	***
Support for EU	-0.36	0.04	***	-0.36	0.04	**	-0.36	0.04	***	-0.36	0.04	***
_cons	-0.91	0.51	*	-1.52	0.49	***	-1.36	0.52	***	-1.35	1.09	
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.39			0.38			0.39			0.38		
Nagelkerke R2	0.66			0.66			0.70			0.66		
N	6221			6229			6196			6229		

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The base category is AKP. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R₂ and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

5.3.3. *AKP versus BDP*

Table 5.5 reports the results of the comparison between AKP and BDP. Model 1 shows the results of the effect of religiosity on vote choice, without controlling the effect of ethnicity. This result shows that religiosity has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that if a person's self-identified level of religiosity were to increase by one point, the multinomial log-odds for BDP relative to AKP would be expected to decrease by 0.23 unit while holding all other variables in the model constant.

As shown in Model 2 where we examine the effect of ethnicity without controlling for religiosity, ethnicity has a statistically significant and positive effect, suggests that a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for BDP compared to AKP by 0.50. However, identity has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that Turks are less likely than Kurds to vote for BDP instead of AKP. There is no doubt that the BDP, as a Kurdish-dominated party, is the most popular party among those Kurds who give importance to their ethnicity.

On the other hand, when ethnicity is interacted with identity, as seen in Model 4, the effect is statistically significant and negative, suggests simply that the Kurds who prioritize their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for BDP compared to AKP. Finally, of the socioeconomic indicators, gender, education, and income have statistically significant effect, suggesting that better educated people are more likely to vote for BDP instead of AKP, whereas the respondents with higher income are less likely to vote for BDP compared to AKP, given all other variables in the model are held constant.

Table 5.5: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote for BDP Relative to AKP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	-0.23	0.07	***	---	---	---	-0.68	0.10	***	---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	0.50	0.08	***	0.82	0.10	***	0.64	0.09	***
Identity	-5.00	0.29	***	-5.16	0.29	***	-5.09	0.29	***	-1.65	0.97	*
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.91	0.26	***
Social Background												
Age	-0.11	0.10		-0.08	0.10		-0.09	0.10		-0.07	0.10	
Gender	-0.27	0.14	*	-0.28	0.15	*	-0.27	0.15	*	-0.29	0.15	**
Education	0.13	0.06	**	0.20	0.06	***	0.17	0.06	***	0.20	0.06	***
Income	-0.21	0.07	***	-0.16	0.07	**	-0.20	0.07	***	-0.17	0.07	**
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	-2.43	0.17	***	-2.51	0.17	***	-2.51	0.17	***	-2.57	0.17	***
Support for EU	0.20	0.07	***	0.16	0.07	**	0.18	0.07	***	0.16	0.07	**
_cons	2.23	0.55	***	-0.84	0.56		0.62	0.60		-1.36	0.59	**
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.39			0.38			0.39			0.38		
Nagelkerke R2	0.66			0.66			0.70			0.66		
N	6221			6229			6196			6229		

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The base category is AKP. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R2 and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

The results also suggest that those who support for a new democratic constitution are less likely to vote for BDP, and those who support for the membership of the European Union are more likely to vote for the BDP compared to AKP.

5.3.4. CHP versus MHP

The results of the comparison between CHP and MHP are reported in Table 5.6. An interesting result comes out when we examine the effect of ethnicity without controlling for religiosity. As shown in Model 2, ethnicity is statistically significant only if we add religiosity into the model.

This result denotes that religiosity is the key predictor of vote choice when it comes to compare CHP and MHP. This is partly because both parties get their votes mostly from the Turks, not Kurds; therefore, there is not much variance between the two parties in terms of ethnicity. In this regard, religiosity is the key factor that separates CHP and MHP voters.

Religiosity has a statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that if a person's self-identified level of religiosity were to increase by one point, the multinomial log-odds for MHP relative to CHP would be expected to increase by 0.47 unit while holding all other variables in the model constant. This result is also consistent with the theory that the CHP is not a popular political party among religious groups.

Table 5.6: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote for MHP Relative to CHP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	0.51	0.05	***	---	---	---	0.47	0.06	***	---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	0.31	0.05	***	0.06	0.06		0.02	0.27	
Identity	1.51	0.33	***	1.55	0.33	***	1.51	0.33	***	0.44	1.03	
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.29	0.27	
Social Background												
Age	-0.51	0.06	***	-0.51	0.06	***	-0.51	0.06	***	-0.51	0.06	***
Gender	-0.54	0.09	***	-0.58	0.09	***	-0.53	0.09	***	-0.58	0.09	***
Education	-0.08	0.05	*	-0.12	0.04	***	-0.08	0.05	*	-0.12	0.04	***
Income	-0.05	0.04		-0.08	0.04	**	-0.05	0.04		-0.08	0.04	*
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	0.46	0.11	***	0.53	0.11	***	0.47	0.11	***	0.53	0.11	***
Support for EU	-0.28	0.04	***	-0.28	0.04	***	-0.28	0.04	***	-0.28	0.04	***
_cons	-1.79	0.50	***	-0.78	0.48		-1.87	0.51	***	0.31	1.06	
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.37			0.36			0.37			0.36		
Nagelkerke R2	0.60			0.59			0.60			0.59		
N	3104			3113			3093			3113		

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The base category is CHP. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R2 and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted

With respect to identity, it has a statistically significant and positive effect in all models, suggesting that the Turks are more likely than Kurds to vote for MHP instead of CHP. This result confirms that it is highly unlikely that the MHP, as a Turkish-nationalist party, get votes from Kurds.

Of the socioeconomic indicators, age and gender have statistically significant and negative effect in all models, suggesting that the older adults and female respondents are more likely vote for CHP instead of MHP. Here again, MHP is popular among young and male respondents. With respect to education and income, both have a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that better educated people with higher income are more likely to vote for CHP instead of MHP. It should be noted however that income is a significant predictor of vote choice only if religiosity is not controlled, as seen in Models 2 and 4.

Finally, of the issue variables, supporting for a new constitution has a statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that those who support for a new democratic constitution are more likely to vote for MHP instead of CHP. On the other hand, supporting for the membership of the European Union has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that those who support for the membership of the EU are less likely to vote for the MHP compared to CHP.

5.3.5. *CHP versus BDP*

Table 5.7 shows the results of the comparison between CHP and BDP. Model 1 reports the effect of religiosity on vote choice, and suggests that religiosity has no impact on vote choice when ethnicity is not controlled. When ethnicity is considered, it has statistically significant and positive effect, suggesting that a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for BDP relative to CHP by 0.32, as seen in Model 2. Here, religiosity is not controlled in the model.

Model 3 shows the results of the whole equation without any interactions. With regard to this, religiosity has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that if a person's self-identified level of religiosity were to increase by one point, the multinomial log-odds for BDP relative to CHP would be expected to decrease by 0.25. In addition, a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the multinomial log-odds of voting for BDP compared to CHP by 0.45. With respect to identity, we can say that it has a statistically significant and negative effect in all models, suggesting that the Turks are less likely than Kurds to vote for BDP instead of CHP. Again, this result confirms the theory that the BDP is more popular party than both CHP and MHP among Kurds. When ethnicity is interacted with identity, as seen in Model 4, the effect is statistically significant and negative, suggests that²¹ Turks are more likely and Kurds are less likely to vote for CHP as ethnicity increases.

²¹ Interpreting the interaction terms may not be easy in logit estimations. Ai and Norton (2003, p.129) posit that the interaction effect cannot be evaluated simply by looking at the sign, magnitude, or statistical significance of the coefficient on the interaction term. Therefore, we demonstrate the results in the "plotting the results" section as well.

Table 5.7: Multinomial Logit Analysis of Vote for BDP Relative to CHP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	0.01	0.10		---	---	---	-0.25	0.12	**	---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	0.32	0.10	***	0.45	0.13	***	0.38	0.11	***
Identity	-5.95	0.31	***	-5.95	0.30	***	-5.93	0.31	***	-3.75	0.99	***
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.58	0.27	**
Social Background												
Age	-0.44	0.15	***	-0.42	0.15	***	-0.44	0.15	***	-0.42	0.15	***
Gender	-0.42	0.22	**	-0.38	0.22	*	-0.39	0.22	*	-0.38	0.22	*
Education	-0.23	0.09	**	-0.18	0.09	*	-0.22	0.10	**	-0.17	0.09	*
Income	-0.28	0.09	***	-0.26	0.09	***	-0.28	0.09	***	-0.27	0.09	***
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	1.53	0.25	***	1.43	0.25	***	1.56	0.25	***	1.44	0.25	***
Support for EU	0.31	0.09	***	0.28	0.09	***	0.29	0.10	***	0.28	0.09	***
_cons	2.49	0.78	***	1.07	0.77		1.68	0.82	***	0.86	0.79	
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.37			0.36			0.37			0.36		
Nagelkerke R2	0.60			0.59			0.60			0.59		
N	3104			3113			3093			3113		

Note: The models represent the results of multinomial logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The base category is CHP. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R₂ and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

Finally, all the socioeconomic and issue variables are statistically significant in all models. Specifically, gender, age, education, and income have statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that a person who has higher levels of education, female, and has higher income is less likely to vote for BDP compared to CHP, given all other variables in the model are held constant. The results also suggest that those who support for a new democratic constitution and the membership of the European Union are more likely to vote for BDP compared to CHP.

5.3.6. MHP versus BDP

Table 5.8 reports the results of the comparison between Turkish-nationalist party [MHP] and ethno-Kurdish party [BDP]. The results show that ethnicity is not statistically significant in any of the models. This is because it is not likely that the Kurds who give importance to their ethnicity to vote for the MHP, and that the Turks who give importance to their ethnicity to vote for the BDP. Religiosity has a negative effect on vote choice, but it is barely statistically significant, as shown in Model 1 and 3. This result suggests that if a person's self-identified level of religiosity were to increase by one point, the log-odds for BDP relative to MHP would be expected to decrease by 0.51 unit, while holding all other variables in the model constant. The results also show that identity is the key predictor of vote choice when comparing MHP and BDP. It has a statistically significant and negative effect in all models, suggesting that Turks are more likely than Kurds to vote for MHP. Finally, none of the socioeconomic variable is statistically significant in any of the models.

Table 5.8: Logit Analysis of Vote for BDP Relative to MHP

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Religion	-0.37	0.21	*	---	---	---	-0.51	0.26	*	---	---	---
Ethnicity	---	---	---	-0.05	0.21		0.23	0.26		0.41	0.27	
Identity	-7.39	0.43	***	-7.45	0.43	***	-7.35	0.43	***	-4.31	1.37	***
Interactions												
Ethnicity*id	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	-0.83	0.37	**
Social Background												
Age	0.29	0.29		0.30	0.29		0.29	0.29		0.28	0.29	
Gender	0.33	0.44		0.36	0.44		0.31	0.44		0.42	0.44	
Education	-0.05	0.19		-0.02	0.19		-0.05	0.20		0.00	0.19	
Income	-0.28	0.19		-0.23	0.19		-0.28	0.19		-0.25	0.19	
Issue Positions												
Dem. Constitution	0.57	0.43		0.51	0.43		0.59	0.43		0.49	0.43	
Support for EU	0.43	0.18	**	0.42	0.18	**	0.41	0.18	**	0.38	0.18	**
_cons	3.67	1.61	**	2.19	1.56		3.34	1.66	**	0.57	1.59	
McFadden's Adj. R2	0.85			0.85			0.85			0.84		
Nagelkerke R2	0.92			0.92			0.92			0.93		
N	1266			1270			1262			1270		

Note: The models represent the results of the logit regressions including unstandardized beta coefficients (B), standardized error (S.E.), and their significance (Sig.): *** p.001 ** p.01 * P.05. The BDP is coded as 1. The models summarize the overall fit of the model provided by the Nagelkerke R₂ and the percentage of cases (%) correctly predicted.

5.4. Plotting the Results

Since some of the covariates are not fixed, we use predictive margins instead of conditional margins to show the probabilities of voters' preferences. As underlined by Cameron and Trivedi (2010, 502), “The *margins* (in STATA) can be used to compute the average predicted probability of a given outcome, along with an associated confidence interval.” Thus, we show the results by plotting the predicted margins of the predictors of vote choice.²²

These plots are based on the last *margins* command run. Since we utilize multinomial estimation in this chapter, we first ran our multinomial logit regression model to predict all outcomes for the each party. We then specify the desired values (adjusted) for each covariate in the model. By so doing, we compute the adjusted predictions for individuals who have those values. This estimation gives you predictive margins of responses for specified values of covariates, as well as their 95 percent confidence intervals, p-values, and standard deviations.

²² Some of the covariates are not fixed in the estimation. We therefore report the predictive margins here. In addition, since we use multinomial analysis here, we run *margins* for each outcome to plot the marginal effects. In all estimates, predictive margins of the covariates were statistically significant. For detailed information about margins, see Rising (2012) and Williams (2012).

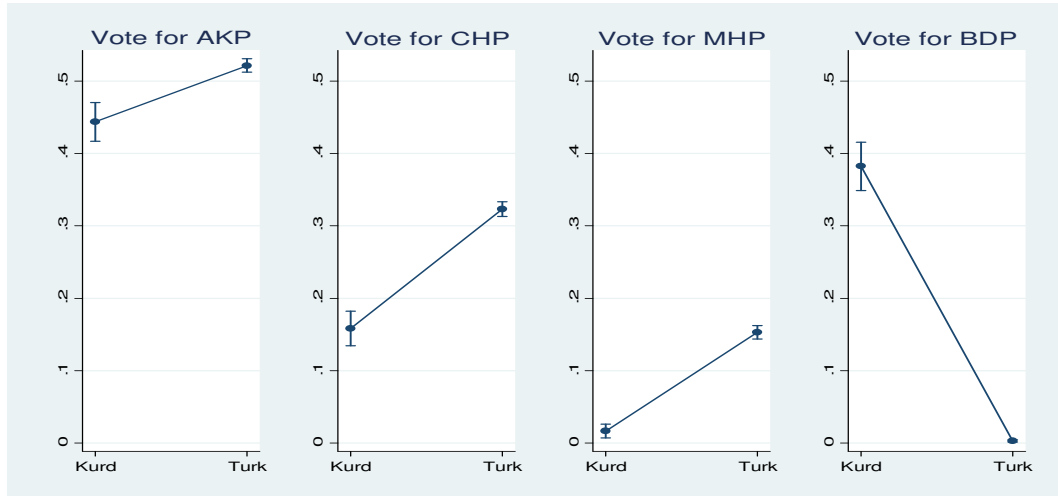


Figure 5.1: Probabilities of Vote Choice contingent upon Identity with 95% CIs

Figure 5.1 shows the probabilities of voters' preferences contingent upon their identity with the 95 percent confidence intervals. These results suggest that AKP gets 44.3% of the Kurdish votes. As a Kurdish-dominated party, BDP gets 38.2 percent of the Kurdish votes. Interestingly, CHP gets 15.8 percent of the Kurdish votes. This is probably because some of the Alevi Kurds tend to vote for CHP. Not surprisingly, as a Turkish nationalist party, MHP gets only 1.6 percent of the Kurdish votes. In some of the Eastern provinces such as Malatya and Erzurum, a few numbers of Kurds seem to support MHP.

The relationship between identity and the importance both the Turks and Kurds give their ethnicity is important to explain the vote choice. Thus, the predictive margins with 95 percent confidence intervals by ethnicity are shown for Turk and Kurd respondents in Figure 5.2. As seen in the left plot, every one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity decreases the probability of voting for AKP for both Kurd and Turk

respondents. Besides, as ethnicity increases, CHP and MHP get more votes from Turks, whereas BDP gets more votes from Kurds.

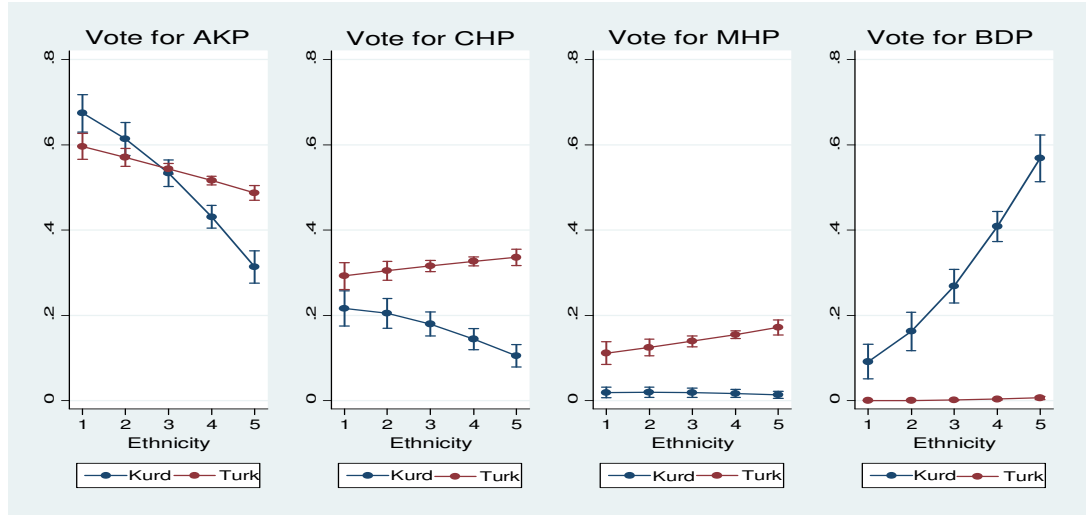


Figure 5.2: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Ethnicity and Identity with 95% CIs

These results suggest that while 67.4 percent of the Kurds who score at the lowest level of ethnicity vote for AKP; 21.6 percent of them vote for CHP, 1.9 percent of them vote for MHP, and 9.1 percent of them vote for BDP. Put simply, AKP is the most popular party among Kurds who score at the lowest level of ethnicity.

On the other hand, BDP gets 56.7 percent of the Kurdish votes from those who score at the highest level of ethnicity. While 31.3 percent of the Kurds who score at the highest level of ethnicity vote for AKP, 10.6 percent of them vote for CHP and 1.3 percent of them vote for MHP. Obviously, MHP is the least popular party among Kurds at all levels of ethnicity. For AKP, the difference between the highest and lowest levels of ethnicity with respect to Kurdish votes is about 36.1 percent. That is, AKP loses 36.1

percent of its votes, as the level of ethnicity increases from 1 to 5. By contrast, BDP increases its votes by 47.6 percent, as the level of ethnicity increases from 1 to 5.

With respect to Turks, 59.6 percent of the Turks who score at the lowest level of ethnicity vote for AKP, 29.2 percent of them vote for CHP, 11.1 percent of them vote for MHP, and 0 percent of them vote for BDP. In addition, 48.7 percent of the Turks who score at the highest level of ethnicity vote for AKP, 33.6 percent of them vote for CHP, 17.1 percent of them vote for MHP, and 6 percent of them vote for BDP. Put simply, skipping from the lowest level of ethnicity to the highest level decreases AKP's votes by 12.1 percent, and increases both CHP's and MHP's votes by 4.4 percent and 6 percent respectively.

In sum, ethnicity does matter in vote choice of both Kurds and Turks. This result is consistent with the structural theories suggesting that ethnicity causes a strong direct impact on voting behavior in ethnically segmented and developing societies (Norris and Mattes 2003; Horowitz 1985, 1993). This result also confirms once again our second hypothesis that the more the importance a Kurdish individual gives ethnicity, the more he should be inclined to vote for a party by associated with his ethnicity, namely the BDP.

More importantly, this results confirm our third hypothesis that the Turks attributing importance to their ethnic identity tend to vote for secular and ethno-Turkish parties, namely the CHP and the MHP; and also they are less likely to vote for religious-based party, namely the AKP.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, religion is one of the most important determinants of voting behavior in Turkey (Heper 1988; Ayata 1993; Kalaycioglu 1994;

Carkoglu and Hinich 2006; Toros 2014). How the effect of religiosity on vote choice changes between Kurds and Turks is also worth examining. Therefore, the predictive margins with 95 percent confidence intervals by the level of religiosity are shown for Turk and Kurd respondents in Figure 5.3.

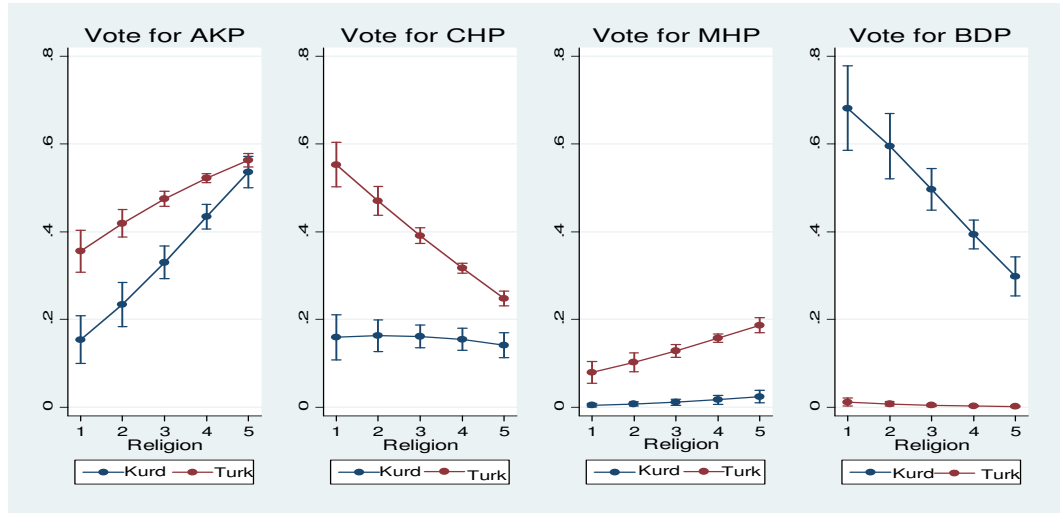


Figure 5.3: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Religion and Identity with 95% CIs

As seen in the left plot, both Kurds and Turks tend to vote for AKP as religiosity increases. However, every one-unit increase in the level of religiosity decreases the vote share of CHP and BDP. These results are consistent with the theory that religiosity is the key factor that affects voters' choice (Carkoglu and Hinich 2006, p. 374). These results confirm our first hypothesis that both religious Turks and Kurds are positively associated with a religious-based party, and both secular Turks and Kurds are negatively associated with a religious-based party, namely [AKP].

Specifically, AKP gets 35.6 percent of the votes from Turks who score at the lowest level of religiosity. Besides, 55.2 percent of those Turks who score at the lowest

level of religiosity would vote for CHP, and 1.2 percent of them would vote for BDP. This result confirms once again that the CHP, as a secular party, is the most popular party among the non-religious Turks.

On the other hand, as a pro-Islamic party, AKP gets 56.3 percent of the votes from Turks who score at the highest level of religiosity. That is, AKP increases its votes by about 21 percent as the level of religiosity increases from 1 to 5. By contrasts, as the level of religiosity increases from 1 to 5, CHP loses its votes by 30.4 percent, which confirms that CHP is not a popular party among the most religious Turks.

With respect to Kurds, BDP gets 68.2 percent of the votes from Kurds who score at the lowest level of religiosity, and gets 29.8 percent of the votes from Kurds who score at the highest level of religiosity. Therefore, BDP loses its votes by 38.4 percent as the level of religiosity increases from 1 to 5. Despite its relatively high vote share at each level, BDP loses its popularity among religious Kurds, since AKP gets 53.6 percent of the votes from the most religious Kurdish voters. This result confirms our hypothesis that both religious Kurds and Turks tend to vote for AKP almost at an equal rate. However, AKP loses its position to CHP among the non-religious Turks and to BDP among the non-religious Kurds.

In addition, we also report the predictive margins in regards to the voting pattern of the least religious and the most religious respondents, and its interaction with the levels of ethnicity in Figure 5.4. Without interactions, as the level of ethnicity increases from 1 to 5, the AKP loses its votes from Kurds by 37 percent.

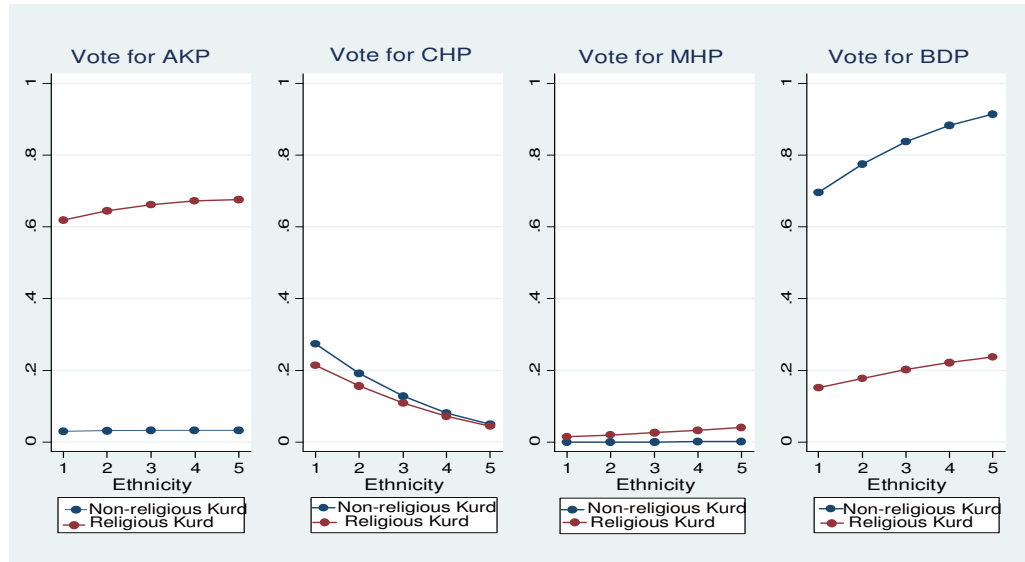


Figure 5.4: Predictive Probabilities of Interactions between Religion and Ethnicity

When ethnicity is interacted with the least and highest levels of religiosity as seen in the left plot in Table 5.4, we see that as ethnicity increases, the expected differences between the least religious and most religious individuals become much larger. This indicates that for religious Kurds, the level of ethnicity is not very important. With respect to the BDP, when ethnicity is interacted with religiosity, the difference between the least and most religious Kurds become much larger.

Specifically, as the level of ethnicity increases from 1 to 5, the predicted probabilities of the difference between the least religious and most religious Kurds increases by 67 percent – which was about 46 percent with no interaction. In sum, for Kurds, the importance of ethnicity becomes more important than religiosity when they are interacted, in the case of voting for the BDP. Conversely, religiosity is more than the level of ethnicity for the religious Kurds. I should note at this point that I also did the

interaction between religiosity and ethnicity for Turks, but the coefficient of the interaction was not significant.

We have demonstrated so far that both ethnicity and religiosity have a strong effect on vote choice. Now, we show how the effects of these two predictors on vote choice change when they are combined with socioeconomic indicators. In Figure 5.5, the predictive margins by the level of religiosity are shown for Turk and Kurd respondents in each age category. These plots suggest that none of the age categories can influence the main effect of religiosity on vote choice.

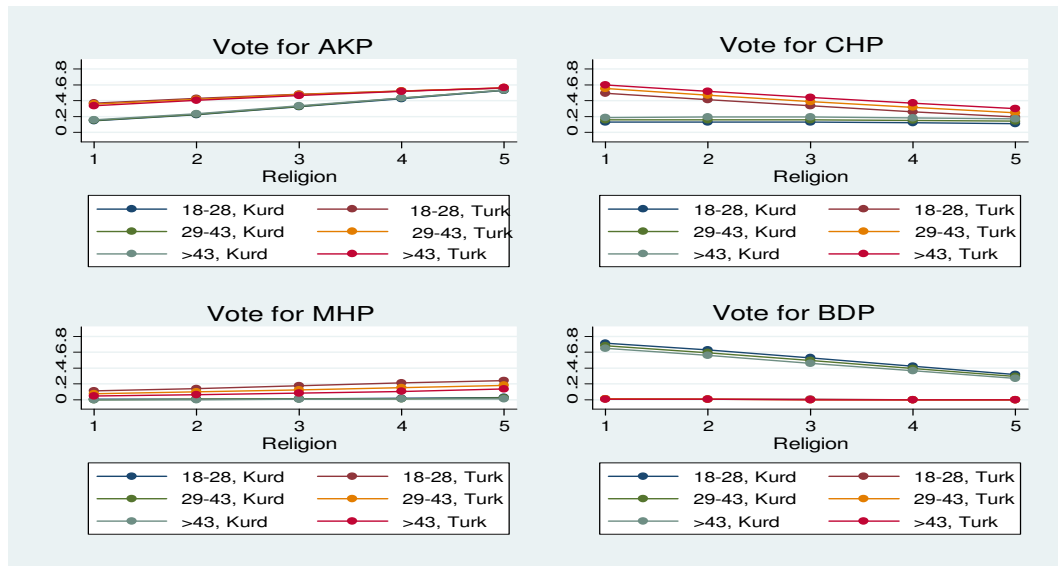


Figure 5.5: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Religion and Identity*Age

Similar results can be seen in Figure 5.6 in which the predictive margins by the level of ethnicity are shown for Turk and Kurd respondents in each age category. Here again, age cannot change the effect of ethnicity with respect to AKP and BDP. However, for the Turks who tend to vote for CHP and MHP, there are some differences between the

older and younger adults in terms of the effect of ethnicity on vote choice. Specifically, as the level of ethnicity increases, the difference between the younger adults and older adults increases, suggesting that younger adults are more likely than older adults to vote for MHP. Conversely, older adults [Turk] are more likely than younger adults to vote for CHP.

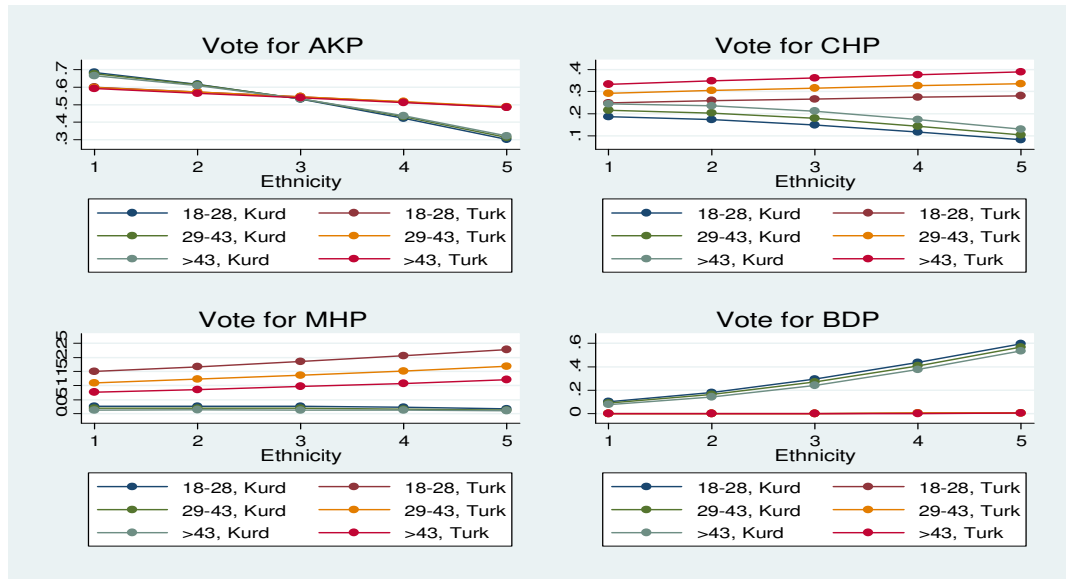


Figure 5.6: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Ethnicity and Identity*Age

When we consider the effect of gender on vote choice as presented in Figure 5.7, we see that even though gender itself cannot change the effect of religiosity, it still has a significant impact on vote choice. Specifically, both AKP and MHP are popular among Turkish male respondents, whereas CHP gets more votes from Turkish females than males. On the other hand, while both AKP and CHP are popular among Kurdish females, BDP is more popular among Kurdish males than females.

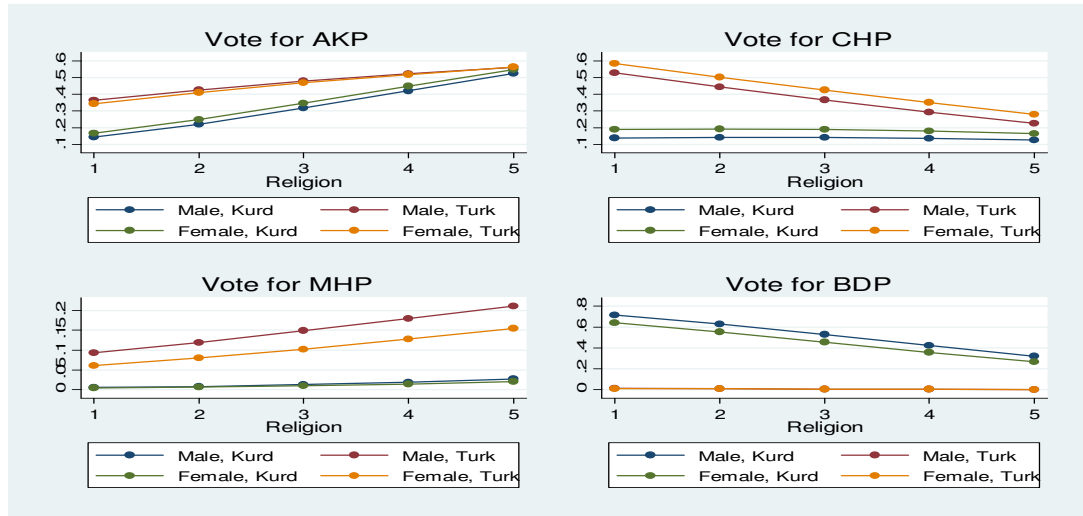


Figure 5.7: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Religion and Identity*Gender

The results of combination between gender and identity with respect to ethnicity level are shown in Figure 5.8. These results suggest that the effect of gender on ethnicity is slightly stronger than its effect on religiosity.

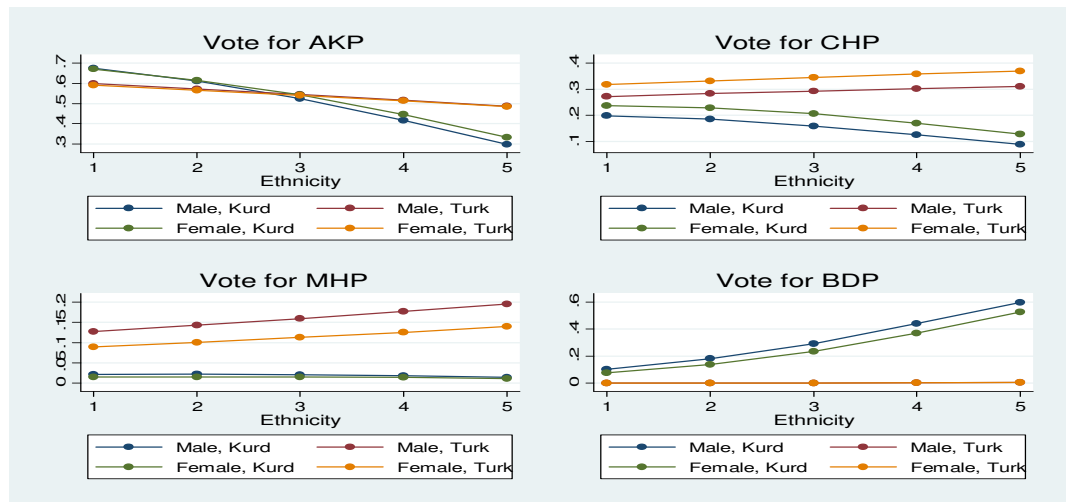


Figure 5.8: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Ethnicity and Identity*Gender

The results of the combination between identity and education level are shown in Figure 5.9. These results suggest that every one-unit increase in the level of education increases the probability of vote for CHP for both Turk and Kurd respondents, increases the probability of voting for MHP for Turk respondents. In addition, increasing education level decreases the probability of vote for AKP for both Turk and Kurd respondents and for BDP for Kurd respondents.

The secular CHP gets votes from the better educated Turks and Kurds, and is the most popular party among better-educated individuals. Conversely, as the level of education increases from 1 to 6, AKP loses its votes by about 18 percent with respect to both Turks and Kurds. Besides, even though BDP's votes are not much affected by education level, increasing education level increases BDP's votes that comes from Kurds. In sum, AKP gets 61 percent of the votes from Turks and 52 percent of the votes from Kurds who score at the lowest level of education -- which shows that the AKP is the most popular party among the less educated groups.

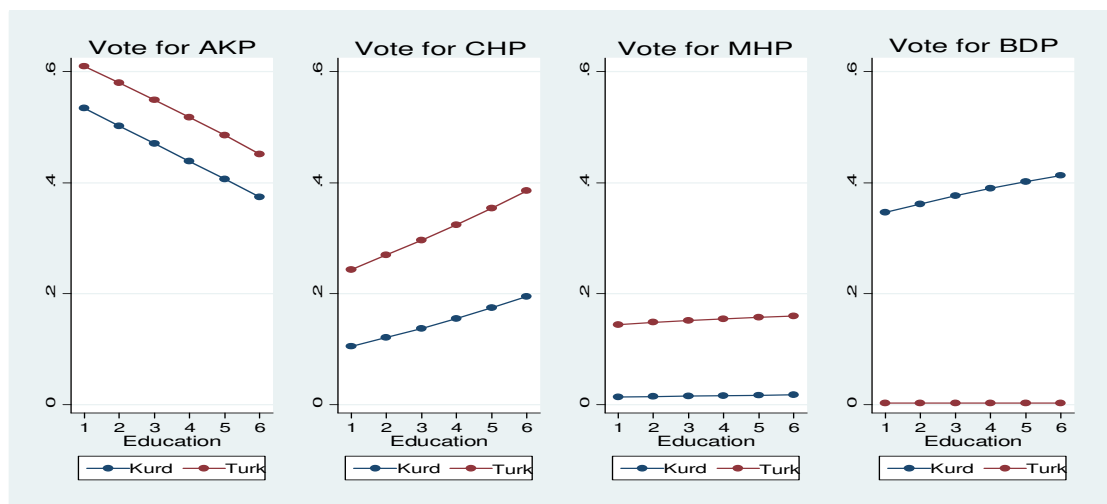


Figure 5.9: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Education and Identity

At the highest level of education, the AKP gets about 45 percent of the Turkish votes and 38 percent of the Kurdish votes. The difference between the two is about 7 percent. It is a small difference when we compare it with the difference at the highest level of religiosity. With respect to Kurds, as the level of education increases, the vote share of Kurds does not change significantly. The importance of education is not as important as the level of ethnicity for Kurdish voter.

Lastly, Figure 5.10 shows the results of the combination between identity and the level of income. The effects of income and education seem quite similar for CHP with respect to both Turk and Kurd respondents. That is, every one-unit increase in the level of income increases the probability of vote for CHP. Both results are consistent with the theory that CHP is popular in the most developed and wealthy provinces (Cagaptay 2014).

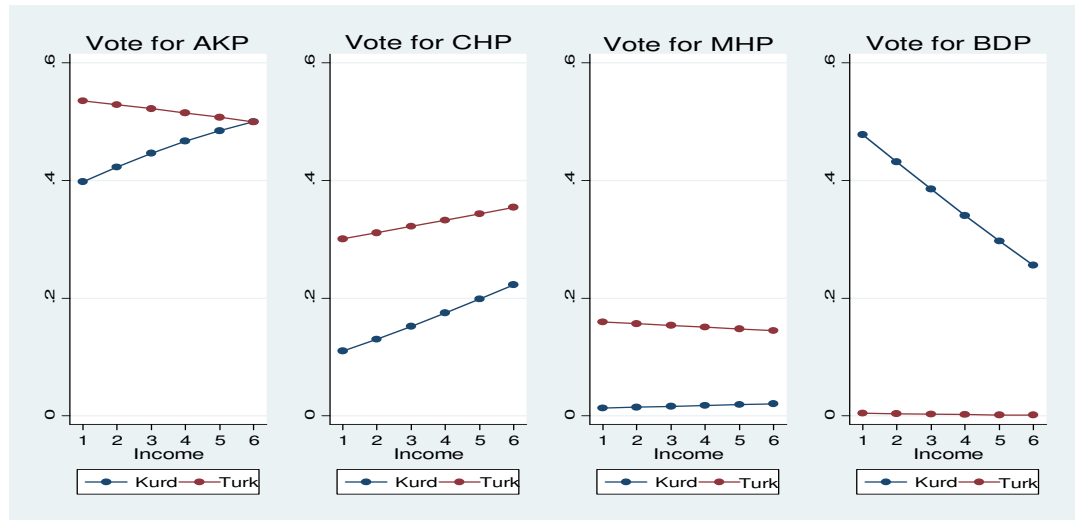


Figure 5.10: Probabilities of Vote Choice related to Income and Identity

On the other hand, AKP loses its votes, which come from the Turks, to CHP, as the level of income increases. However, AKP increases its votes, which come from the Kurds, as the level of income increases. This is probably because Kurds who have higher income tend to reward the incumbent party, AKP. Interestingly, those Kurds and Turks who score at the highest level of income vote for AKP evenly. By contrast, BDP, as a Kurdish-dominated party, loses its votes by about 24 percent as the level of income increases from 1 to 6.

5.5. Summary

This chapter empirically investigates the main factors that determine voting behavior in Turkey. The findings of the multinomial logit estimation confirm the hypothesis that both religious Turks and Kurds are positively associated with the religious-based party, and both secular Turks and Kurds are negatively associated with the religious-based party, namely the AKP.

These results prove that in addition to the significant effects of religiosity and ethnicity on vote choice, identity has also statistically significant effect in all models used in this chapter. The AKP is the most popular party among both the religious Turks and the religious Kurds, whereas CHP is popular among those who score at the lowest level of religiosity.

In addition, BDP is the most popular party among less religious Kurdish groups. These results are consistent with the theory that “the level of religiosity differentiates

AKP and BDP from CHP and MHP voters” (Toros 2014, p. 1025). Besides, these results confirm the theory that the religiosity has a significant effect in determining party preferences of the voters (Heper 1988; Ayata 1993; Kalaycioglu 1994).

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation aimed to examine the main determinants of the voting behavior in Turkey. Using a large individual survey data compared to previous research, this study showed that religiosity and the importance an individual gives ethnicity are two of the important predictors of voters' preferences in Turkey, which is consistent with the findings of the recent prominent studies (e.g., Carkoglu and Hinich 2006; Baslevent et al. 2009; Ekmekci 2011; Toros 2014). Considering the general picture of the Turkish parliament in the last decade, I concluded that the voting behavior in Turkey has evolved towards ethnic -- specifically Turk/Kurd -- and secular/religious dimensions.

The traditional approach to the study of voting behavior discussed by (Mardin 1973) posits that center/periphery relation is the key factor that predicts voters' preferences. In this sense, center represents the strong bureaucracy and elites, whereas periphery represents the lower classes and conservative/religious groups. It should be noted that even though the elites have controlled the main branches of the state from military to judiciary for decades, the role that peripheral masses have played on both national and local elections could not be disregarded, since most of the coalition governments from 1950 to mid-1990s were formed by the centre-right. These parties have received most of their votes from the peripheral masses.

As Kalaycioglu (1994, 406) highlights, the voters' preferences are the reflection of their beliefs based on center and periphery values. Carkoglu and Hinich (2006) added a new dimension to this argument by taking the traditional center-periphery cleavage as a secular vs. pro-Islamist dimension. In fact, it is plausible to consider secular/pro-Islamist dimension as a crucial cleavage in political spectrum, since the pro-Islamic identity has emerged as a challenging phenomenon since the first victory of the Islamist Welfare Party in the 1994 local election. As a second wave of Islamist movement, the AKP has maintained its influential role over Turkish politics, under the pressure of the main secular opposition party, CHP.

On the other hand, what is missing in these discussions is that they either overlook or underestimate the role of Kurdish identity, which challenges the dominant centralized structure of the state that stems from the principles of the new republic. In particular, with the foundation of the PKK, Kurds have demanded for more rights to live as equal citizens. Therefore, such studies should consider not only the rise of pro-Islamist movements but also the Kurdish identity as well. As Carkoglu (2008, 322) underlines in his more recent study, the "center" of the Turkish polity found itself increasingly under pressure from the ethnic and Islamist "periphery", which is strongly represented in Turkish parliament in the last decade.

Practically, a new four-party system has emerged in Turkish parliament in the last decade, in which the AKP represents the Islamist and middle-class groups, the CHP represents secular, elite, and centre-left groups, the MHP represents the Turkish nationalists, and the BDP represents the Kurdish nationalists. In sum, the emergence of the pro-Islamist and ethno-Kurdish identities has shaped the prevailing center-periphery

dimension of the political spectrum. Therefore, the literature on voting behavior has to consider these new dimensions in understanding voter choice.

With this central motivation, to test my theoretical arguments, I investigated the main determinants of voter choice in Turkey to see (1) whether voters value their religious affiliation when they cast their votes, (2) whether ethnicity has any affect on their voting behavior, (3) whether voters' ethnic background plays any role in their political preferences, and (4) whether the socioeconomic indicators have any impact on voters' preferences.

Chapter 3 investigated how Kurds cast their vote with respect to their ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious characteristics. The core hypothesis that “the more the importance a Kurd gives ethnicity, the more he should be inclined to vote for a party by associated with his ethnicity, namely the BDP” was formalized and elaborated in the third chapter.

The ethnic conflict starting with the foundation of PKK under the leadership of Ocalan has raised the influence of “Kurdish identity” on political spectrum in Turkey. Accordingly, we have witnessed the emergence of ethno-Kurdish parties during and after the 1990s. Considering general characteristics of the Kurdish voter, Kurds can be clustered as religious and nationalist groups, in which religious Kurds are more likely to vote for the pro-Islamist AKP and nationalist and less religious Kurds are more likely to vote for the BDP.

Our findings revealed that ethnicity has a statistically highly significant effect of Kurds' vote choice. The importance a Kurd gives ethnicity increases the probability of

supporting pro-Kurdish party, BDP. Conversely, religiosity has a statistically significant, but negative effect on the likelihood of supporting the BDP. Specifically, a one-unit increase in self-identified degree of religiosity decreases the probability of voting for the BDP. This is because religious Kurds tend to support the AKP.

On the other hand, when certain social issues stemming from the ethnic conflict are considered, it seems highly unlikely that those Kurds who were affected by the ethnic conflict would support a party other than the BDP. In this regard, our outcomes showed that the Kurds who support for education in Kurdish, move to the other regions due to the ethnic conflict, lost a family member during the ethnic conflict, and face economic lost are more likely to vote for the BDP compared to other parties.

In sum, as a pro-Kurdish party, the BDP gets strong support from the less religious individuals that are better educated, that have lower income, and that live in Kurdish-populated cities. It also gets strong support from the Kurds that see their identity very important, and that face political and economic difficulties during the ethnic conflict.

This study offers evidence supporting the greater explanatory power of religiosity and ethnicity approaches over alternatives such as socioeconomic approach, even when we consider the Turks alone. The empirical analysis presented in the fourth chapter proves that the Turks who give particular importance to their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for secular and ethno-Turkish parties, namely the CHP and the MHP; and less likely to vote for religious-based parties, namely the AKP. The estimation shows that the AKP is the most popular party among the religious groups, whereas the CHP is

popular among those who score at the lowest religiosity level. In addition, our results show that of the socio-economic variables, education, gender, and age have statistically significant effects on vote choice. The results for education are consistent with the recent work by Toros (2014) who argues that the people with higher education levels tend to vote for the CHP. Finally, with respect to age and gender, the MHP is popular among the younger male adults, whereas the CHP is popular among the older male and female respondents.

The empirical analysis presented in Chapter 5 allowed us to investigate all of the parties represented in the Turkish parliament in the last decade. Using a multinomial analysis with both Kurd and Turk respondents, we aimed to examine the effects of religiosity, ethnicity, the interaction between ethnicity and identity, and the socioeconomic predictors on the probability of voting for each party, in comparison to each reference category. Specifically, we posited that both religious Turks and Kurds are positively associated with a religious-based party, and both secular Turks and Kurds are negatively associated with a religious-based party, namely the AKP.

The results prove that in addition to the significant effects of religiosity and ethnicity, identity has also statistically significant effect on vote choice. Specifically, religiosity has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that a one-unit increase in self-identified degree of religiosity decreases the probability of voting for the CHP and the BDP compared to the AKP. These results confirmed the theory that the religiosity has a significant effect in determining party preferences of the voters (Heper 1988; Ayata 1993; Kalaycioglu 1994; Carkoglu and Hinich 2006).

The results also revealed that ethnicity has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for the CHP, MHP, and BDP instead of the AKP. That is, a one-unit increase in the level of ethnicity increases the probability of voting for the CHP, MHP, and BDP compared to the AKP. Therefore, the AKP is not a popular party among those Kurd and Turk respondents who give importance to their ethnic identity.

On the other hand, identity has a statistically significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for the CHP instead of the AKP, suggesting that being a Turk (compared to Kurd) increases the chances of voting for the CHP instead of AKP. Conversely, when we consider AKP and BDP, identity has a statistically significant and negative effect, suggesting that Turks are less likely than Kurds to vote for the BDP instead of AKP. When ethnicity is interacted with identity, the effect is statistically significant and negative, suggesting that the Kurds who prioritize their ethnic identity are more likely to vote for the BDP compared to AKP.

With respect to education and income, the results showed that the CHP gets votes from the better educated Turks and Kurds; therefore, it is the most popular party among better-educated individuals. Conversely, the ruling AKP gets its votes from the less educated Turks and Kurd groups. As the pro-Kurdish party, BDP gets votes from Kurds who have higher education levels. In addition, every one-unit increase in the level of income increases the probability of vote for the CHP, which revealed that the CHP is popular among wealthy individuals. While the AKP loses its votes that come from the Turks, it increases its votes that come from the Kurds, as the level of income increases.

As a result, there are four parties represented in the Turkish parliament in the last decade, and the AKP is the most popular party among both the religious Turks and the religious Kurds, whereas CHP is popular among those who score at the lowest level of religiosity. CHP is also popular among better-educated individuals who have higher income level. As a Kurdish-dominated party, BDP is the most popular party among the less religious Kurdish groups that value their ethnic identity.

6.1. Contributions and Limitations

This study makes two major contributions to the study of voting behavior: (1) Most studies draw inferences from a small sample size. However, we utilize a large nationwide survey data that includes most of the electoral districts, and that has different ethnic groups. (2) Much of the previous work on voting behavior focuses on the established democracies, which precludes us to make inferences regarding the voting behavior in developing world. We examine this issue in Turkey, which is a proper example of an ethnically divided developing country.

An intrastate ethnic conflict is one of the biggest problems that an ethnically segmented country could face. Understanding how and under what conditions people vote in such a country would help decision makers ease the tensions between groups that have unique ethnic and religious characteristics, thereby providing the politicians the opportunity to generate a more stable economic and political environment.

There are some limitations in this study. First, the data was collected in a particular snapshot in time. Therefore, it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding any changes over time. The second important limitation in this study could be that there was no specific question in the data regarding the ideological positions of the respondents. Thus, we were unable to control the effect of ideology on voting behavior.

6.2. Suggestions for Future Research

This study utilizes individual level data. For further research, I suggest including district and national level data such as unemployment rate, GDP per capita, and inflation rate to employ multilevel analysis on voting behavior. Such an analysis could provide more general picture regarding the determinants of the voting behavior in a single country. In addition, a multilevel analysis could reveal the effects of the state-level predictors, and the effects of the interaction between the state-level and individual-level predictors.

On the other hand, a single-country study may raise questions about the generalizability of the outcomes. In order to achieve generalizable results, future research could investigate the determinants of voting behavior in some other developing countries that have ethnically divided social structure as Turkey. Hence, using cross-national data, we could see if the findings of this study show any differences or similarities between these countries. This type of research could provide important insights about the robustness of a single country study.

In addition, it would be useful to investigate and measure possible changes in voters' preferences over time by looking at the earlier survey data. This type of study could either use a multi-wave survey data (if any), or utilize a data that has similar questions conducted prior to national elections in the past. Hence, we could analyze the changes in voter's preferences over time.

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