

**DO TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES PLEDGE IN LINE WITH
THEIR PARTY FAMILY IDEOLOGIES? A QUANTITATIVE
ANALYSIS OF TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES'
MANIFESTO DOCUMENTS**

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ABSTRACT

In the Western political science literature, modern political parties are grouped into party families, i.e., social democrat, socialist, communist, Christian democrat, liberal, radical, conservative, farmer-peasant, right-wing extremist, regional-ethnic parties and environmental movements. Categorizing a large number of political parties into a small number of party families is important not only for scientific reasons but also for practical ones. A correct categorization would help voters to better evaluate political parties and make more conscious voting decisions. Nevertheless, despite its central importance, the party family is one of the least empirically researched topics in the political science literature. More specifically, the literature on party family particularly lacks sufficient empirical investigations into the link between parties' issue positions and their family locations. Moreover, to my knowledge, no previous study has investigated to what extent the Western party family phenomenon able to group political parties in a non-Western country. In order to fill this gap, this study aims to answer the following research question: Do Turkish political parties' issue positions, as revealed in their manifesto documents, align with their expected party family locations? Answering this research question I hypothesize that Turkish political parties' issue positions do not correspond to their expected party family locations. Results of the empirical analysis of the Manifesto Project data largely supported this hypothesis and one can now safely argue that Turkish political parties do not pledge in line with values suggested by the Western party family categorization.

Keywords: Political Parties, Party Family, Issue Positions, Ideology, Turkish Politics.

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INTRODUCTION

In the mid-twentieth century, it was projected that, owing to higher levels of global wealth and democracy, ideology-based revolutionary movements would not be able to attract anymore the interest of the masses and this would bring an end to ideologies. This argument was further reinforced by the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the end of the century. Some theorists went too far to argue that humankind reached its ideological peak, the rules of Western liberal democracy were universalized, and this is the end of the history (Bell, 1965; Fukuyama, 2006). In this scenario, the traditional economic left/right divide was expected to blur, and traditional party families to retire. These predictions were realized to a certain extent. Although it did not disappear completely, the traditional economic left/right divide weakened. New fault lines, which were drawn by new values, ethnic/religious concerns, emerged. The traditional economic left was replaced by many minor left-wing ideologies, including radical left, left-wing liberal, left-socialism, green, environmentalist, feminist and anti-nuclear movements. These new left movements did not wholeheartedly support the traditional arguments of the left, i.e., state control of the economy, abolition of social and economic hierarchies and workers' rights. On the other hand, social democrats and third-way movements centralized, gained popular support, which brought electoral success and governed some very important countries in Europe. On the right side of the spectrum, Otto Kirchheimer's catchallization prediction was largely realized. Many right-wing nationalist and conservative parties were freed from their ideological baggages and centralized. The ideological vacuum at the extremes was filled with some anti-immigrant parties all over the Europe. Neo-liberal economic policies left millions defenceless, which allowed these parties to connect with the masses. Furthermore, together with the third wave of democracy, pressure on ethnic and religious identities eased, and many micro-nationalist, ethnic, religious and single-issue parties emerged. Last but not least, individualization, which emerged as a result of enhanced opportunities in communication and transportation technologies, weakened commitment to ideologies. Class voting and, to a lesser extent, religious voting declined (1988; 1996; Elff, 2007; Franklin, Mackie and Valen, 2009; Clark and Lipset, 1993; Amini, 2017; Przeworski and Sprague, 1986).

These developments are expected to decline the explanatory power of the traditional party family phenomenon in the West. Expectedly, this decline is even more dramatic in a non-Western country like Türkiye. A line of research on Turkish politics has long been arguing that the main ideological divide in the Turkish electorate does not follow the line between the economic left and right but one between secularist and pro-Islamist which overlaps with the historical divide between the centre and the periphery and another one between the dominant Turkish identity and other ethnic identities. Yet, the party level divides on policy issues in Türkiye remained largely unstudied (Mardin, 1973; Çarkoğlu and Hinnich, 2006; Kalaycıoğlu, 1994; Göle, 1997).

All the above-mentioned developments and country-specific conditions required bringing the following question to the research agenda: Do Turkish political parties pledge in line with their expected party family locations? My hypothesis is that, as a result of above-mentioned global trends as well as mismatch between the dominant issues of Türkiye and those of the West, the classification of Turkish parties with traditional party family borderlines drawn by the literature on Western politics is problematic and therefore, Turkish political parties' issue positions barely correspond to their party family locations. Türkiye is an important country to investigate this topic owing to its special features such as its Asian roots and Muslim population which from time to time distance it from the Western world, yet, on the other hand, a long tradition of liberal economy as well as industrialization, democratization and Westernization agendas, which make it open to Western economic and political influences.

This paper has been organized in the following way: The next section gives a brief overview of the literature on party families. It mainly presents theoretical discussions on the categorization of political parties into party families. The third section presents the data and the method used. The fourth section presents mean party positions on thirteen important issues in politics. The last section focuses on discussing the reasons underlying mismatch between Turkish political parties' ideological and issue positions and their family positions.

1. POLITICAL PARTY FAMILIES AND THEIR BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Several research projects attempted to investigate the party family phenomenon, including Rokkan (2009), Gallagher (1995), Gallagher, Laver and Mair (2011), Mair and Mudde (1998), McHale (1983), Seiler (1980) and Beyme (1985). Gallagher, Laver and Mair (2011) in their categorization of parties into party families proposed three criteria. The first one is the 'genetic origins' of parties. Particularly in the Western Europe, political parties followed a bottom-up foundation process. Trade unions, employer unions or farmer-peasant movements transformed into political parties to take a more active role in politics. Thus, by looking at their grassroots, one can easily decide which party family a political party belongs to. The second criterion is transnational links. Transnational cooperation established by political parties in Western Europe can be examined in two categories. The first one is the European Parliament party groups, i.e., liberal, Christian Democrat, green and socialist. Particularly after the 1980s, inter-group competition escalated and parties became more loyal to their party family groups in the EP (Mudde, 2002). Apart from the EP party groups, parties can also cooperate with other parties from outside the Europe. The Socialist International is one of the best-known examples of such international liaisons. Thus, either EP or non-EP links manifest parties' party family locations. According to Gallagher and his co-authors, the last criterion to group party families in Europe is party policies. One can also easily decide party family locations by looking party polies (Michels, 1911/2010; Duverger, 1954/63; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Von Beyme, 1985; Mudde, 2002). According to Rokkan (2009) there are as many as ten political party families in industrialized Western European countries: Socialist and social democrat, communist, Christian democratic, liberal, radical, conservative, farmer-peasant parties, right-wing extremist parties, regional-ethnic parties and environmental movements. Similarly, von Beyme (1985) proposed nine political party families in Europe: Liberal and radical, conservative, socialist and social democrat, Christian democratic, communist, agrarian, regional and ethnic, right-wing extremist parties and environmental movements. McHale (1983) distinguishes between the grassroots ideologies of the parties in Europe and suggests seven categories: Agriculture, commerce

and business circles, financial reformists, environmentalist, women's parties and other parties.

Categorizing parties seems to be an easy task but, in fact, it is a tiresome one. Blurred ideologies and high rates of vote flow between parties make operationalization of this task very difficult. This is especially true for the parties on the right side of the ideological spectrum. Left parties mostly originate from sharp ideological differences and it is easier to grasp differences between their issue positions, but the right side of the political spectrum, in most countries of the world, is dominated by populist, mass parties and parties with central tendencies and weak ideologies, heavily emphasizing national unity and the integrity of the population at large (Seliger, 2019; Mair and Mudde, 1998). Mair and Mudde (1998) draw attention to this problem and argue that it is especially difficult to draw ideological boundaries between conservatives, right-wing populists, extremists and nationalists as well as between Christian democrats and conservatives. To tackle this problem, they propose using Rokkan's categorization, which is based on the origin and the ideology of the parties. It depends more on what the parties are and how they define themselves rather than on what they do. According to Rokkan, origin and ideology reflect more accurately the real differences between party families than day-to-day policies as the latter may cause the effects of the national agenda to mislead the analysis. Several other authors also aimed to analyse parties of the right. Falter and Shumann (2013) suggested that right-wing parties are based on 10 basic pillars. These are: Extreme nationalism, ethnocentric thinking, law and order-based thinking, strong leadership demand, cultural despair, anti-communism, anti-parliamentary, anti-pluralism, and anti-Americanism. Mudde (1996) proposed 58 features to distinguish far-right parties, which lurk in four main categories: Nationalism, radicalism, extremism, and populism. Immerzeel (2015), in his study focusing on the diversity of views between radical right populist parties and other parties on the issues of immigration, nationalism and populism, suggested that the radical right populist parties are closest to the neoconservatives and Christian democratic parties and the farthest to the socialist parties, the greens and the social democrats, respectively. These parties are often known to be single-issue parties that only focus on immigration issues, but this does not reflect reality. In addition to anti-

immigrant agendas, they also propose nationalist and populist policies and policies upholding the construction of law and order. Their successful centralization agenda affects other parties across the political spectrum. This is especially true for the right and the conservative parties owing to their similar policies on anti-immigration, the construction of law and order, and populism. Thus, the flow of votes is higher between radical right populist parties and right-wing/conservative parties than between radical right populist parties and left-wing ones. Yet, it would not be correct to claim that these parties have nothing in common with left-wing ones. Their anti-establishment stance is especially similar to that of the socialist and green parties. Furthermore, it has also been observed that radical right and radical left parties are similar in their anti-EU policies (Immerzeel, 2015; Van Spaje, 2010; Wagner and Meyer, 2017; Halikiopoulou, Nanou and Vasilopoulou, 2012; Rooduijnet et al., 2017).

2. DATA AND METHODS

Mair and Mudde (1998) suggested that parties can be analysed into distinctive party families using four criteria: a) origin and sociology b) international connections c) politics and ideology, and d) party names. 'Politics and ideology' is perhaps the most powerful criteria among these four. It incorporates both parties' day-to-day policies as well as their general political orientation. According to Mudde (2002), a party's ideology can be accurately analysed by investigating three types of documents; voter surveys, expert surveys and manifestos. In voter surveys, the voters are asked about their party's overall ideological position or issue positions on certain matters. Their answers reveal how a certain political party is viewed by its grassroots. However, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of this technique. We know from previous studies that voters' education level and political sophistication are important factors that may bias this analysis. As higher education and social status make individuals more able to deal with abstract information, educated and sophisticated voters are expected to identify their parties more correctly than do uneducated and unsophisticated ones (Campbell et al., 1980; Converse, 1964). It was also shown earlier that misidentification might occur owing to some party features such as party age. It is expected to be more difficult for voters to correctly identify new parties than old ones. On the other hand, using expert surveys is a more reliable

technique, as the surveyees are expert political scientists who are a lot more knowledgeable about political parties than the voters. Nevertheless, this method also involves certain problems. The disadvantages of this method are its reliance on the availability of expert political scientists and their objectivity. Most expert political scientists are too busy to take these surveys, which makes the turnout rates remain very low. On the other hand, they sometimes have professional links with political parties they are asked to analyse, which may bias their analysis. All in all, it should not be forgotten that both voter surveys and expert surveys are less than perfect techniques to identify parties' ideological positions. Yet, the third technique, using manifesto documents, appears to be, although still not perfect, a more appropriate tool in this regard. A manifesto is a document published by a political party before a general election to announce policies it stands for and is willing to implement in case it comes to power. Manifestos are well-studied documents involving detailed policy pledges in a wide range of fields. They provide a comprehensive as well as detailed understanding of parties' ideological and policy positions on a great number of issues. One advantage of using manifesto documents is that they overcome the problem of objectivity. Moreover, the quantification of mentions to each concept provides a practical way of comparing parties from the same country or different countries. The only problem with this methodology is a potential mismatch between political pledges in the manifesto document and actual policies carried out by those parties, which then take part in the government. Nevertheless, the current literature suggests that political parties tend to fulfil their pledges to a large extent when they come to power (Budge and Hofferbert, 1990; Klingemann et al., 1994). We unfortunately do not have any opportunity to test this for opposition parties.

This research used the Manifesto Project data to examine the question whether Turkish political parties pledge in line with expected issue positions of their party families. The Manifesto Project (MP) data is the only available dataset for the aims of this research. It quantified manifesto documents of political parties in the past 18 elections held in Türkiye between 1950 and 2018. Covering a good span of about 70 years, the dataset provides us an important tool to study Turkish parties' policy positions on a series of important divides of politics. It should be noted that many parties have

participated in more than one election since their establishment and therefore published more than one manifesto documents. Therefore, scores show mean of all published manifestos. The MP data involves party positions on a wide range of issues. The issues of left/right ideological position, controlled economy, free market economy, anti-imperialism, political authority, military, law and order, civic mindedness, national way of life, internationalism, environmental protection, multiculturalism and peace were used for the analyses of this research. The items were chosen on the basis of their face validity and fit in the traditional left/right, authoritarian/liberal and old/new politics divides as discussed in the extant literature.

3. POLITICAL PARTY FAMILIES IN TÜRKİYE

The MP divided all the parties in Türkiye into 4 party families; a) socialist and other left, b) social democrat, c) conservative, and d) nationalist. Table 1 shows the distribution of a total number of 24 prominent political parties took part in the recent 18 general elections. The Manifesto Project's categorization was shown with black marks. A few modifications were made that were shown with red marks. The National Salvation Party, the Welfare Party, the Virtue Party and the Felicity Party were originally placed in the nationalist category. Of course, nationalism is an important ideology for parties in this tradition. However, in a classification system where a conservative category exists, it would be a certain mistake to place these parties within the nationalist category. Necmettin Erbakan, the founder of these parties, is a well-known conservative/Islamist politician, and many other Islamists dominated the party positions. The parties of this tradition faced lawsuits and accused for being a mob for anti-secular forces. Similarly, the İYİ Party and the Great Union Party were listed as conservative parties in the Manifesto data. These two parties are based on conservative bases, their administrators come from conservative traditions, and both parties often propose some conservative policies. However, it would be much more accurate to consider these two parties within the nationalist category. Finally, a separate ethnic-regional party category was opened for the parties: The Democratic Society Party, the Peace and Democracy Party and the Peoples' Democratic Party, which generally received votes from the Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Türkiye. It would be more correct to evaluate all three parties in ethnic-regional category. These changes were also reported to the

institution collecting the data. Now, after modifying the party family categorization, this research will examine to what extent the parties pledge according to their party family locations.

Table 1: Parties and Party Families

| Parties/Party families | Socialist and other left | Social democrat | Conservative | Nationalist | Ethnic-Regional |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Democratic Left Party (DSP) | | √ | | | |
| Democrat Party (DP) (1946) | | | √ | | |
| Democratic Society Party (DTP) | | √ | | | √ |
| Democratic Türkiye Party (DTP) | | | √ | | |
| Felicity Party (SAADET) | | | √ | √ | |
| Good Party (İYİ Parti) | | | √ | √ | |
| Great Unity Party (BBP) | | | √ | √ | |
| Justice Party (AP) | | | √ | | |
| Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) | | | √ | | |
| Motherland Party (ANAP) | | | √ | | |
| Nation Party (MİLLET) (1948) | | | √ | | |
| Nationalist Action Party (MHP) | | | | √ | |
| National Salvation Party (MSP) | | | √ | √ | |
| Nationalist Democratic Party (MDP) | | | | √ | |
| Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) | | √ | | | √ |
| Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) | √ | | | | √ |
| Populist Party (HP) | | √ | | | |
| Republican Nation Party (CMP) | | | | √ | |
| Republican Villagers Nation Party (CKMP) | | | | √ | |
| Republican People's Party (CHP) | | √ | | | |
| Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) | | √ | | | |
| True Path Party (DYP) | | | √ | | |
| Virtue Party (FP) | | | √ | √ | |
| Welfare Party (RP) | | | √ | √ | |

Data: Manifesto Project (1950-2018)

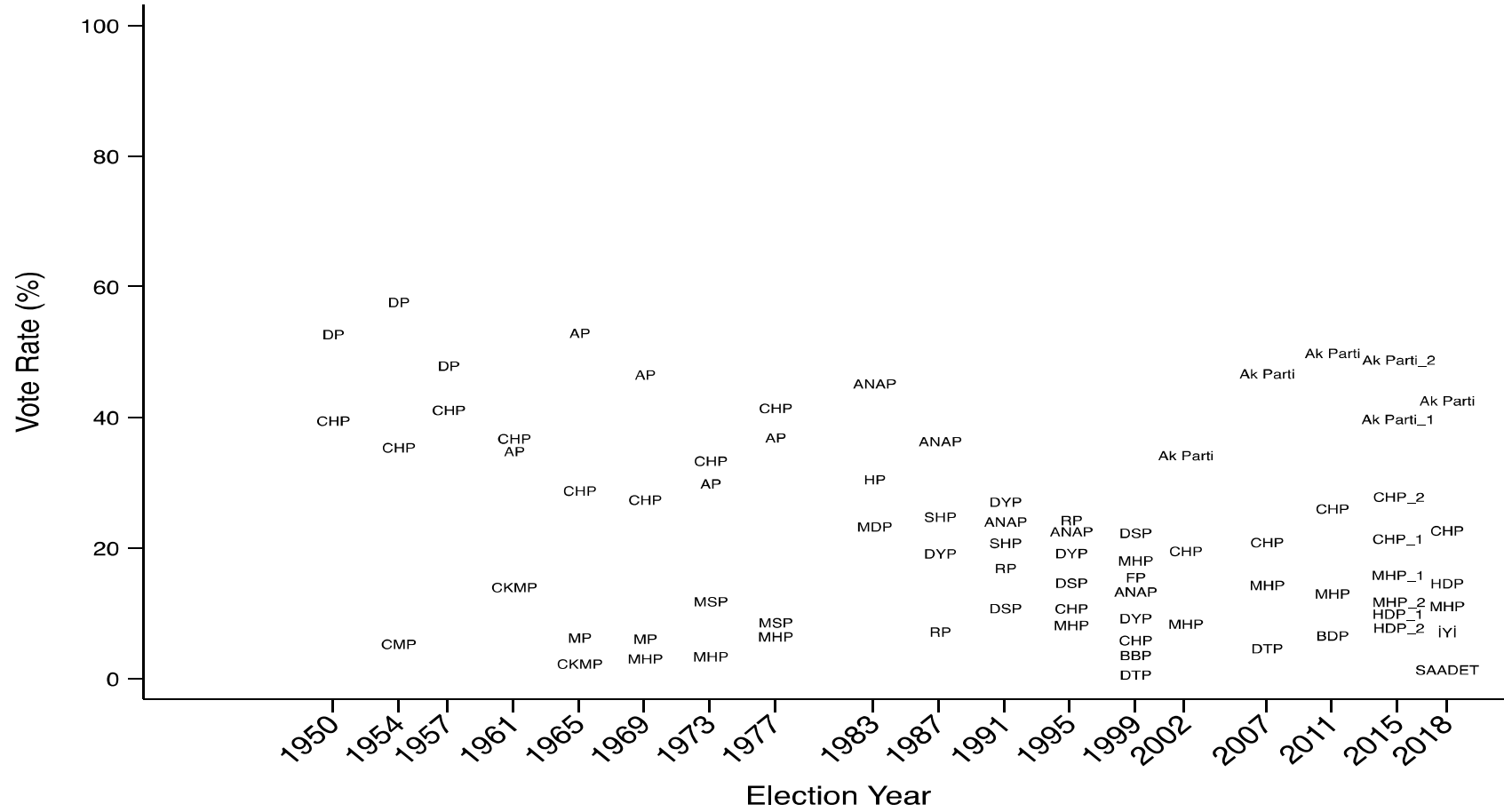


Figure 1. Votes of Political Parties by Election Years

Table 2: Variables of the Analyses

| Variable Code | Variable Name | Explanation |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--|
| rile | Right-left ideological index | Right-left position of party. |
| per412 | Controlled economy | Support for direct government control of economy. |
| per401 | Free market economy (+) | Favorable mentions of the free market and free market capitalism as an economic model. |
| per103 | Anti-imperialism | Negative references to imperial behavior and/or one state exerting strong influence. |
| per305 | Political authority | References to manifesto party's competence to govern and/or other party's lack of such competence. |
| per104 | Military (+) | The importance of external security and defense. |
| per605 | Law and order (+) | Favorable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime. |
| per606 | Civic mindedness (+) | Appeals for national solidarity and the need for society to see itself as united. |
| per601 | National way of life (+) | Favorable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history and general appeals. |
| per107 | Internationalism (+) | Need for international cooperation, including cooperation with specific countries other than those coded in 101. |
| per501 | Environmental Protection (+) | General policies in favor of protecting the environment, fighting climate change and other "green" policies. |
| per607 | Multiculturalism(+) | Favorable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality within domestic societies. |
| per106 | Peace | Any declaration of belief in peace and peaceful means of solving crises – absent reference to the military. |

Data: Manifesto Project (1950-2018)

Table 3: Mean party positions in various issues since their foundation (economic left/right)

| Parties | Number of Manifesto | Left/right Ideological Index | Controlled Economy | Free Market Economy (+) | Anti-Imperialism |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Democratic Left Party (DSP) | 3 | 7.98 | 0.11 | 0.07 | 0.11 |
| Democrat Party (DP) (1946) | 3 | 44.60 | 0.00 | 4.80 | 0.00 |
| Democratic Society Party (DTP) | 1 | -35.38 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Democratic Türkiye Party (DTP) | 1 | -1.46 | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.00 |
| Felicity Party (SAADET) | 1 | -18.10 | 0.32 | 0.08 | 1.81 |
| Good Party (İYİ) | 1 | 14.93 | 0.70 | 0.70 | 0.05 |
| Great Unity Party (BBP) | 1 | 26.49 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.96 |
| Justice Party (AP) | 5 | 2.14 | 0.66 | 0.98 | 0.00 |
| Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) | 6 | -3.59 | 0.15 | 3.68 | 0.08 |
| Motherland Party (ANAP) | 5 | 5.05 | 0.20 | 1.43 | 0.00 |
| Nation Party (MİLLET) (1948) | 2 | 3.17 | 0.00 | 3.85 | 0.23 |
| Nationalist Action Party (MHP) | 13 | 5.17 | 1.22 | 1.50 | 0.64 |
| National Salvation Party (MSP) | 2 | 28.90 | 1.05 | 0.00 | 0.20 |
| Nationalist Democratic Party (MDP) | 1 | -7.80 | 2.40 | 1.20 | 0.00 |
| Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) | 1 | -33.84 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.38 |
| Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) | 3 | -30.56 | 0.31 | 0.00 | 0.34 |
| Populist Party (HP) | 1 | -13.60 | 4.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Republican Nation Party (CMP) | 1 | -28.38 | 0.00 | 4.05 | 1.35 |
| Republican People's Party (CHP) | 16 | -10.58 | 0.78 | 0.96 | 0.10 |
| Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) | 2 | -8.78 | 1.05 | 0.23 | 0.43 |
| True Path Party (DYP) | 4 | 6.00 | 0.38 | 2.14 | 0.04 |
| Virtue Party (FP) | 1 | 7.38 | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.24 |
| Welfare Party (RP) | 3 | 30.41 | 0.00 | 0.35 | 0.23 |

Data: Manifesto Project (1950-2018)

Table 4: Mean party positions in various issues since their foundation (authoritarian/libertarian)

| Parties | Political Authority | Military (+) | Law and Order (+) | Civic Mindedness (+) | National Way of Life (+) |
|--|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Democratic Left Party (DSP) | 7.74 | 0.23 | 0.67 | 1.00 | 1.97 |
| Democrat Party (DP) (1946) | 40.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.00 | 1.20 |
| Democratic Society Party (DTP) | 6.15 | 0.00 | 1.54 | 9.23 | 0.00 |
| Democratic Türkiye Party (DTP) | 3.27 | 0.00 | 0.49 | 0.49 | 0.00 |
| Felicity Party (SAADET) | 1.65 | 0.00 | 1.57 | 3.85 | 1.57 |
| Good Party (İYİ) | 0.05 | 1.45 | 2.41 | 1.02 | 1.66 |
| Great Unity Party (BBP) | 23.70 | 0.00 | 2.21 | 2.78 | 3.36 |
| Justice Party (AP) | 8.96 | 1.26 | 2.34 | 2.96 | 2.60 |
| Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) | 1.27 | 1.40 | 3.92 | 1.92 | 2.10 |
| Motherland Party (ANAP) | 7.07 | 1.09 | 0.85 | 1.35 | 0.76 |
| Nation Party (MİLLET) (1948) | 5.67 | 3.17 | 0.23 | 3.40 | 4.54 |
| Nationalist Action Party (MHP) | 4.69 | 1.58 | 2.89 | 1.39 | 9.10 |
| National Salvation Party (MSP) | 14.30 | 2.85 | 1.10 | 2.10 | 10.15 |
| Nationalist Democratic Party (MDP) | 0.00 | 0.60 | 0.60 | 0.00 | 1.80 |
| Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 6.01 | 2.26 | 0.00 |
| Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) | 0.59 | 0.10 | 1.48 | 2.10 | 0.00 |
| Populist Party (HP) | 1.00 | 1.50 | 1.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Republican Nation Party (CMP) | 0.00 | 1.35 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8.11 |
| Republican People's Party (CHP) | 4.46 | 0.77 | 1.23 | 1.60 | 0.86 |
| Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) | 12.20 | 1.03 | 0.78 | 2.25 | 1.35 |
| True Path Party (DYP) | 9.87 | 0.70 | 1.03 | 1.73 | 0.49 |
| Virtue Party (FP) | 2.75 | 1.32 | 0.38 | 1.32 | 0.47 |
| Welfare Party (RP) | 20.74 | 0.66 | 0.71 | 1.16 | 1.98 |

Data: Manifesto Project (1950-2018)

Table 5: Mean party positions in various issues since their foundation (old/new politics)

| Parties | Internationalism (+) | Environmental Protection | Multiculturalism (+) | Peace |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Democratic Left Party (DSP) | 0.26 | 1.48 | 0.22 | 0.11 |
| Democrat Party (DP) (1946) | 0.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.60 |
| Democratic Society Party (DTP) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 5.64 | 15.38 |
| Democratic Türkiye Party (DTP) | 1.71 | 0.73 | 3.17 | 0.00 |
| Felicity Party (SAADET) | 2.44 | 1.81 | 1.73 | 0.79 |
| Good Party (İYİ) | 1.23 | 1.55 | 0.21 | 0.43 |
| Great Unity Party (BBP) | 0.19 | 3.17 | 0.00 | 0.67 |
| Justice Party (AP) | 1.10 | 0.18 | 0.00 | 0.88 |
| Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) | 3.09 | 2.26 | 0.41 | 0.86 |
| Motherland Party (ANAP) | 0.08 | 1.57 | 0.00 | 0.15 |
| Nation Party (MİLLET) (1948) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Nationalist Action Party (MHP) | 1.26 | 0.97 | 0.07 | 0.87 |
| National Salvation Party (MSP) | 0.35 | 0.20 | 0.00 | 0.05 |
| Nationalist Democratic Party (MDP) | 0.60 | 3.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) | 0.00 | 3.01 | 1.50 | 6.39 |
| Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) | 0.49 | 4.11 | 4.71 | 1.36 |
| Populist Party (HP) | 0.00 | 0.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Republican Nation Party (CMP) | 2.70 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4.05 |
| Republican People's Party (CHP) | 1.61 | 1.47 | 0.40 | 1.06 |
| Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) | 0.98 | 0.90 | 0.23 | 1.48 |
| True Path Party (DYP) | 1.08 | 1.17 | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Virtue Party (FP) | 1.61 | 2.37 | 0.14 | 0.76 |
| Welfare Party (RP) | 0.39 | 0.25 | 0.00 | 0.25 |

Data: Manifesto Project (1950-2018)

Figure 1 shows vote shares of the major political parties in the past 18 elections held in modern Turkish political history.¹ It can be seen from the figure that no single party was able to exceed the 60% vote threshold. Especially in the 1990s, the political system was even more fragmented, and political power was divided between a greater number of parties. In the first years of the Republic, the competition between the CHP and the DP and in the last 20 years the Ak Parti's dominance can also be observed from the figure.

Table 2 presents the code, name and explanations of the variables that were used in the analyses. A total of thirteen variables were exploited. All the variables were used in their original answer categories. Greater scores show related party's greater embrace of the related issue. The '+' sign shown in parentheses in the headlines indicates positive mentions.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 show parties' mean positions on a series of important issues of politics, which tap into economic left/right, authoritarian/libertarian, and old/new politics divides over the years since their establishment. In **Table 3** the items related to the economic left/right axis were presented. The items were selected on the basis of their face validity. The third column of the table presents the left/right ideological positions of the parties. Only for this variable, the '0' is the midpoint while lower negative numbers show a greater tendency to the left and higher positive numbers to the right. When the scores are examined, some interesting results stand out. Namely, the Felicity Party was scored at -18.10, while its predecessor parties the Welfare and the Virtue parties, were scored at 30.41 and 7.38, respectively. The differences between the scores of these three parties were surprising. The Justice and Development Party, which defines itself as a conservative democratic party, was scored at -3.59, and the Democratic Left Party, a well-known Social Democratic party founded by Bülent Ecevit was scored at +7.98. In the fourth column, the quantification of the parties' mentions hinting a controlled economic model, i.e., price controls and minimum wage enforcement, were presented. The higher scores in the index show greater emphasis on the controlled economy. Many regional-ethnic parties, centre-right, far-right, and conservative parties

¹ The election results in 1946 were not included owing to alleged election corruption and the election results in 2023 were not included owing to the unavailability of the data. Although some political parties were not included in the data set due to merges, these are usually minor ones. Two general elections results in 2015 were illustrated for each party as 'Party_1/2'.

received 0 points in the index, while the Populist Party received the highest score with 4.40. In the fifth column, scores showing positive mentions of a free market economy, i.e., a laissez-faire economic model, free enterprise, and property rights were presented. Here, again, interesting results were achieved. The CHP received higher votes than the İYİ, the National Salvation, the Welfare and the Felicity parties. In the sixth column of the table, anti-imperialism, which is one of the important issues of the economic left/right distinction, was quantified. In the index, the CHP again, which was the headquarters of the independence war against imperialist forces scored lower than the HDP. Many left and right parties received 0 points, while the Felicity Party received the highest score with 1.81.

Party positions on items tapping the authoritarian/libertarian dimension were presented in Table 4. The items are political authority, military regime, law and order, civic consciousness and national lifestyle. It is seen in the second column of the table that the emphasis on political authority is the highest in the DP, which is followed by the Welfare Party. It is interesting that both parties faced lawsuits alleging that they opposed the 'values of the Republic'. The high score of 12.20, which belongs to the left-wing SHP, which is known to be a libertarian party, is also surprising here. Similarly, it is noteworthy that the DSP puts a higher emphasis on political authority than many right-wing parties, including the İYİ Parti, the Felicity Party and the Virtue Party. In the third column, the parties' positive emphasis on the military was expressed. The Nation Party, which was founded by Fevzi Çakmak, a successful marshal, is the political party with the highest positive emphasis on the military. Surprisingly, the second place was occupied by the MSP. The relatively strong positive emphasis on the military of the MSP, which was later going to experience the February 28 process under the name of the Welfare Party, is interesting. Except for these two examples, generally, the political parties' positive emphasis on the military is at low levels. In the fourth column, the positive emphases on law and order by the parties were presented. It is seen that the BDP has the highest score. It is noteworthy here to mention that the BDP scored remarkably higher than the DTP and the HDP. It is seen that leading parties of the right such as the AK Party, the MHP, the AP, the İyi Parti and the BBP achieved comparable scores. When the scores representing emphasis on civic mindedness in the fifth column are examined,

it is observed that the DTP and the Saadet Party received the highest scores. Finally, when the parties' emphases on the national way of life are observed, it is seen that the MSP and the MHP received the highest scores and the CMP, the Millet and the BBP follow these two parties.

In the Table 5, four items associated with the new/old politics divide; internationalism, environmental protection, multiculturalism and peace were presented. As one can see from the table the Ak Party ranks the first in stressing internationalism. An interesting finding is that, while the Saadet and the FP received high scores, another party of the same tradition the RP did not. Surprisingly, many left-wing parties failed to obtain lower scores. The CHP, which frequently stresses establishing peaceful international cooperation, received only 1.61. The third column shows positive mentions of environmentalism. There seems to be a greater variation in this issue across the parties. While the DTP received zero in this issue, its successor parties, the BDP and the HDP, received relatively higher scores. Many parties of the right, i.e. the BDP, the MDP and the Ak Party, the FP and the Saadet received higher scores than the CHP, the pioneer left party. The next item is multiculturalism. It involves the quantification of mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality. As can be seen from the table, the DTP, the BDP and the HDP rank high in this item and there is no much variation across the other parties. The last item is peace. Many parties gave place to peace in their manifestos and the DTP, the BDP and the CMP received some high scores.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This research aimed to examine the policy positions of some prominent political parties in the history of modern Turkish politics and decide whether they pledge in their manifesto documents in line with their party families. My hypothesis was that Turkish political parties barely consider their party family ideologies while designing their policy positions. Empirical findings have largely supported this hypothesis. In some political issues, there is no significant difference between parties on the left and right of the ideological spectrum. Even that, sometimes parties outperform in pledging policies that are traditionally known to be associated with the opposite ideological camp. This is an important finding that needs to be considered while trying to understand party behaviours in Türkiye. For instance, the Felicity Party's

targeting of large masses living in the shantytowns formed on the edge of the big city centres, which have financial difficulties, may have contributed to this picture. Yet, this finding is telling of its success in local elections in a metropolis full of economically frustrated people. Similarly, the Ak Party's policies aiming at embracing the broad masses may have caused its ideological position to be expressed as a party to the left of the centre. This finding also explains how the Ak Party differentiated itself from its predecessor parties and embraced large masses. On the other hand, the Democratic Left Party's (DSP) nationalist mentions may have dragged its position to the right. It is now easier to understand why the DSP has supported the People's Alliance candidate in the 2023 elections and participated in the elections from the Ak Party lists. Many other examples can be given in this regard. By looking at these findings one can confidently argue that the Western party family phenomenon is not an appropriate tool to categorize Turkish political parties. Another important finding was that some successor political parties fail to follow the policies of their predecessors. Especially the BDP and the HDP failed to follow their successor DTP's policies although there is not much time interval between the dates of their foundation. Their fear of closure cases and failing to receive economic assistance from the state may have caused these sharp modifications. Conservative successive parties, the MSP, the RP, the FP and the Saadet seemed to be more consistent in this regard.

It is well beyond the scope of this research delving into the reasons of the finding that Turkish political parties do not pledge according to the expected traditional Western party family categorization. Yet, a few hypotheses could be raised to show avenues for future research attempts that would like to investigate the matter from an etiological perspective. Perhaps the strongest one would be that Türkiye is not yet a fully industrialized country. We know from previous research that in advanced industrialized economies; the prime divide in politics is between those who hold ownership of the means of production and those who sell their labour in exchange for a wage. Being on either side of the divide has important implications for a wide range of areas of life as well as for voting behaviour. Thus, in these countries, the concepts of left and right represent the sides of the political conflict more effectively. On the other hand, in countries where the industrialization falls

behind, politics may follow some different fault lines. Religious, denominational, ethnic and local ties may prevail over ideological ones in terms of their power to determine the prime political conflict. Also, we know from the previous research that voters with low education and political sophistication are less likely to understand the concepts of left and right. Knowing this, parties may have taken their own grassroots' votes for granted and aimed for the votes of the opposite camp with populist pledges. Some other country-specific reasons may also have altered the left/right divide from being the prime divide of Turkish politics. In Cold War conditions, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis aimed to combine nationalist and Islamic parties to combat with communist forces. This political tradition succeeded in fusing these two ideologies to a certain extent, and there is now a high flow of votes between the parties of the two party families. Another potential reason could be that the top-down organization of the state and economic systems in the Ottoman Empire as well as in modern Türkiye may have not allowed the flourishing of strong social and economic organizations that could now have turned into political parties with strong ideological stances. Some trends in global politics may also have affected this result. As the importance of ideologies diminished recently, class voting is on a general decline and Turkish politics may have received its share from this trend. As previous research has shown that the 1980 coup have suppressed the social classes; so class voting in Türkiye, which already used to be low, may have declined to an even lower level (İnan 2016, İnan and Grasso 2017). Another potential reason that comes to mind is the centralization of modern politics and the catchallization of centre parties as predicted by Kirchheimer (1966). Surely, these entire explanations are mere hypotheses and require empirical tests with appropriate data and methods in order to achieve satisfying answers.

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