

The Republican People's Party and the 2007 General Elections: Politics of Perpetual Decline?

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ABSTRACT *The founding party of modern Turkey continues to find it difficult to build electoral alliances and to appeal to an increasingly diversifying Turkish electorate. Although the party has maintained its electoral position in comparison to the 2002 general elections, the incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP) has considerably increased its own vote share. While short term factors such as leadership can be cited for the electoral weakness of the Republican People's Party (CHP), this essay speculatively concludes that it is perhaps unrealistic to expect the party to revise its ultra-secularist and ultra-nationalist outlook based upon a combination of a weak track record of consolidating ideological change and the existence of political capital that remains to be gained from maintaining a rigid stance towards issues of public debate.*

"If you still vote for a government, despite being hungry and dissatisfied with your life, then there must be an illogical explanation to all of this."¹

Onur Öymen's response to the general election results aptly typifies the Republican People's Party's (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) response to the success achieved by the incumbent Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP). The response of the CHP to the election results of July 22, 2007, in which the AKP gained a second term in office as a single-party government, was a mixture of shock with disbelief and resentment toward the Turkish electorate. The party, under the chairmanship of Deniz Baykal, came in second with 20.8 percent of the vote, trailing behind the AKP's 46.5 percent. At first sight these figures represent a slight increase in the vote share of the CHP from 2002 (19.4 percent) and a large increase for the AKP (34.4 percent in 2002). In terms of seat distribution, both the incumbents and the CHP have seen a reduction. This is primarily related to the ability of the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) to enter parliament as the third party to gain over the 10 percent mandatory threshold and of 26 independents to join the 550 seat assembly. The AKP maintains

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a strong majority in parliament with 341 seats (down from 365 in 2002) with the MHP fielding 71 members. CHP sympathizers, however, were disappointed with their result of 112 seats (down from 177 in 2002), particularly on account of the fact that 13 of the elected were members of the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP), which had formed an electoral alliance with the CHP. Following the election, these 13 members left the CHP to regroup as the DSP in parliament, leaving the CHP with only 99 members.

Throughout the campaign period, the CHP had taken an aggressive line and projected the message that keeping the AKP in government would spell doom for Turkey's democratic and secular regime and would further grant Tayyip Erdoğan all the opportunity he needed in order to transform Turkey into a virtual theocracy. In Baykal's view, the only safeguard against this potential tragedy was the CHP. Yet the basic figures above confirm that the message conveyed by the party elite failed to convince the voters, and the gap between the incumbents and the CHP has continued to widen. This essay seeks to account for the performance of the CHP in this election and to enquire as to whether this is a one-time glitch in the party's performance, or whether a historical pattern can be traced that may suggest the marginalization of Turkey's oldest political party. What follows is a look at the party's regional and national electoral performance, which suggests that the CHP has made either very small gains or losses across Turkey's different regions. More importantly, a selection of districts from Turkey's three largest urban settlements (Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir) indicate that the self-professed social democrats in Turkey are continuously failing to attract the votes of the poorest and most needy. This is followed by an analytical discussion, which argues that at the root of the CHP's inability to gain a larger percentage of votes lie structural factors related to the CHP being a state-founding party.

National, Regional, and Local Findings

Basic observations outline that, despite the fact that the CHP appears to have held onto the position it attained in the 2002 elections, this is not actually the case. In 2002, the CHP gained the highest number of votes in 10 out of Turkey's 81 provinces, whereas in 2007 this figure dropped to five, the provinces that are geographically confined to the Thracian provinces of Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, and Edirne, as well as the Aegean provinces of İzmir and Muğla. In contrast, the AKP was the first party in 70 provinces. Another interesting finding shows that while the AKP increased its vote in every single province compared to 2002, the CHP only managed this in 35 provinces. In 2002, CHP was unable to elect representatives from 18 provinces, a figure which rose to 36 in 2007. Finally, out of the seven electoral regions of Turkey, the CHP had been in the lead position in the Aegean and Mediterranean in 2002. In 2007, the AKP was the leading party in all regions. Moreover, the regional data below shows that with the exception of the Marmara region, the AKP increased its vote by more than 10 percent in every region, the greatest increases being in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. By contrast, the CHP

displayed a static posture whereby its greatest increase in any one of the seven regions was a modest 3.92 percent in the Aegean. As it stands, the incumbent party's vote difference with the CHP is considerable: three times more in the Black Sea region and six times more in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. The most obvious yet important observation that can be made about the regional vote shares is that the CHP finds it difficult to attract votes throughout Turkey as a whole, whereas the AKP seems to have increased its appeal across the electorate. Put differently, with the AKP's ability to attract over 50 percent of the votes in four out of the seven regions and close to this mark in the country's most developed Marmara region, it has succeeded in building a broad-based electoral appeal. Although the CHP brands the AKP as the representative of political Islam with a sinister hidden agenda, it would be more prudent to argue that the country's present leaders (government) are able to appeal to voters from distinct and diverse backgrounds, whereas the CHP continues its inability to attract new voters from varied backgrounds. This is particularly visible at the local provincial district levels.

Analysis of districts in Turkey's three largest centers (Istanbul, Ankara, and İzmir)² shows that in one of the most turbulent periods of Turkish political and economic history, parties of an Islamist ideological orientation have displayed increasing electoral success in comparison to representatives of the center-left. In other words, voters most sensitive to and/or effected by socioeconomic change, imbalances, and crises have not identified with the self-proclaimed center-left parties as the solution to their problems. With the exception of İzmir (which comes close), the examined district averages of the Islamist parties have been much higher than the parties' provincial vote percentages. In comparison, with the exception of İzmir in the 1995



Figure 1. Leading party by province, July 22, 2007 general elections. The white areas represent the victory of “independent” candidates. In actual fact, these areas show pro-Kurdish DTP MP candidates, who were all elected as independent members to parliament. Kurdish nationalist parties have consistently failed to enter parliament because they have not achieved the 10 percent minimum of national votes. In 2007, the DTP decided not to enter the election race but instead fielded its candidates independently. The 10 percent threshold does not apply to independents. Once in parliament, the “independent” candidates came together and formed the DTP parliamentary group, consisting of 20 MPs.

Table 1. Regional Performance: CHP–AKP Comparison with Vote Swings since the 2002 Elections (percent)

Region	CHP 2007	Swing 2002	AKP 2007	Swing 2002
Marmara	24.97	3.22	44.34	8.61
Aegean	26.61	3.92	37.08	13.02
Black Sea	17.44	1.58	52.75	11.58
Central Anatolia	18.94	−0.29	54.28	10.64
Mediterranean	23	0.51	39.18	10.66
Eastern Anatolia	9.25	−1.65	54.64	22.41
Southeast Anatolia	8.53	−2.95	53.14	26.57

elections, the social democrats' average vote in the selected districts is lower than what they achieved at the respective provincial level.

Although the AKP did not come into existence until 2000, in Istanbul it is apparent that the AKP managed to build significantly upon the previous success of parties descended from the tradition of political Islam. That is to say, the AKP gained significantly more votes than the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) between the 1999 and 2002 elections (an increase of 50 to 100 percent in the cases of Beykoz and Zeytinburnu). The increase in the AKP's votes between 2002 and 2007 has slowed in ascent; nevertheless the average swing of votes in the districts stands at 8 percent against the center-left's 1.4 percent. Five out of the seven districts, which have dense populations, show an excess of 50 percent of votes going to the AKP, with the most in Sultanbeyli (67 percent, a swing of 14.7 percent) and Esenler (60.8 percent, a swing of 7.2 percent). On a district-by-district basis (and after the AKP came to be formed) the pattern that was established between the 1999 and 2002

Table 2. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes for Islamist Parties in Istanbul

District	2007***	2002***	1999**	1995*	Swing 2002–2007
Zeytinburnu	46.9	41.1	22.0	23.0	5.8
Güngören	50.9	43.0	25.2	25.9	7.9
Esenler	60.8	53.6	32.7	36.6	7.2
Bağcılar	57.0	48.9	29.7	34.2	8.1
Sultanbeyli	67.0	52.3	41.9	56.2	14.7
Ümraniye	51.8	44.5	27.3	33.0	7.3
Beykoz	48.0	42.4	22.5	24.1	5.6
District Averages	<u>54.6</u>	<u>46.5</u>	<u>28.8</u>	<u>33.3</u>	<u>8.1</u>
Party's Vote Share for Istanbul	<u>45.1</u>	<u>37.2</u>	<u>21.9</u>	<u>23.9</u>	

*Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)

**Welfare Party and Virtue Party combined (Fazilet Partisi)

***Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)

Table 3. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes, CHP–DSP Combined in Istanbul

District	S3***	2007	S2**	2002	S1*	1999	1995
Zeytinburnu	1.3	19.2	–18.4	17.9	6.3	36.3	30.0
Güngören	1.2	22.1	–13.3	20.9	7.9	34.2	26.3
Esenler	0.0	13.4	–18.6	13.4	3.2	32.0	28.8
Bağcılar	–1.1	15.0	–19.7	16.1	4.5	35.8	31.3
Sultanbeyli	–0.4	7.5	–8.6	7.9	1.1	16.5	15.4
Ümraniye	1.3	23.9	–11.7	22.6	3.4	34.3	30.9
Beykoz	7.1	20.4	–19.5	13.3	5.7	32.8	27.1
District Averages	1.3	17.4	–15.7	16.0	4.6	31.7	27.1
Parties' vote share for Istanbul		26.9	–	25.2	–	39.2	29.9

*Swing 1995–1999

**Swing 1999–2002

***Swing 2002–2007

elections was once again repeated between 2002 and 2007, in that in each of the districts the AKP gained at least double, or even in some cases triple, the votes of the center-left. In the case of Esenler, the center-left gained four times fewer votes than the AKP, and in Sultanbeyli the AKP gained approximately nine times more votes than the CHP-DSP combined. Looking at Istanbul as a province, the CHP gained just over 50 percent of votes gained by the AKP (26.9 percent gained by the CHP versus 45.16 gained by the AKP). Istanbul is one of the provinces that represents clear voter dissatisfaction with the center-left parties as being the chosen representatives of the urban poor.

As in Istanbul, the increase of AKP votes in Ankara slowed between the 2002 and 2007 elections. Nevertheless, the average vote share gained by the AKP in 2007 stands at 55 percent against the center-left's 20.9 percent, indicating that the AKP is in command of the capital city's most crowded and poorer districts. The district averages gained by the AKP is also higher than the AKP's overall performance of 47.5 percent against the center-left's 27.9 percent. In a similar pattern to Istanbul, the AKP achieved between two to three times the vote shares of the CHP-DSP combined. In the cases of Kazan and Sincan, the difference stands at over seven and five times respectively. In terms of overall vote swings achieved by the parties, the AKP shows an average of 9.4 percent against the center-left's –0.6. In fact, it can be seen that between 2002 and 2007 the center-left only managed to have a positive swing in two out of the seven districts (in Mamak 0.8 percent and in Kalemek 2.5 percent).

In the analysis of Turkey's three biggest cities, İzmir seems to be the odd one out, in the sense that strong support for the center-left has been observable since the 1970s. However, as of the 1999 and 2002 elections, this pattern has started to alter somewhat. Until that time, it was the case that an Islamist party was unable to gain vote percentages in double figures in any of the province's districts. However, between 1999 and 2002, the center-left lost nearly half its electoral base, whereas

Table 4. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes for Islamist Parties in İzmir

District	2007***	2002***	1999**	1995*	Swing 2002–2007
Buca	36.5	21.7	5.9	10.9	14.8
Gaziemir	33.6	19.0	4.1	8.3	14.6
Çiğli	27.3	14.7	3.7	6.4	12.6
Aliağa	31.0	22.1	6.3	10.5	8.9
Torbali	33.1	16.2	5.7	9.2	16.9
Kiraz	30.8	13.5	2.3	4.1	17.3
Beydağ	19.4	10.6	2.8	3.7	8.8
District Averages	<u>30.2</u>	<u>16.8</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>13.4</u>
Party's Vote Share for İzmir	<u>30.5</u>	<u>17.2</u>	<u>4.9</u>	<u>8.4</u>	

*Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)

**Welfare Party and Virtue Party combined (Fazilet Partisi)

***Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)

Islamists nearly tripled their share of the vote in the province and the districts cited. In 2007, the AKP closed the gap with the center-left to within five percent at the provincial level and within two percent at the district level. This trend is clearly visible in the average swing figures, which show an increase of 13.4 percent for the AKP and 4.9 percent for the CHP-DSP at the district level in 2007, and a swing of 13.3 percent for the AKP and 4.9 percent for the CHP-DSP at the provincial level. With the exception of Çiğli and Aliağa, the CHP-DSP for the first time in the last four elections gained fewer votes than the Islamists. These results are particularly relevant because districts such as Kiraz and Beydağ have been identified as “areas of deprivation,” and Buca and Gaziemir are settlements that have industry, trade,

Table 5. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes, CHP–DSP Combined in İzmir

District	S3***	2007	S2**	2002	S1*	1999	1995
Buca	3.5	30.7	–19.6	27.2	7.6	46.8	39.2
Gaziemir	3.5	29.2	–17.1	25.7	6.6	42.8	36.2
Çiğli	3.9	41.3	–18.6	37.4	7.3	56.0	48.7
Aliağa	7.0	34.6	–18.8	27.6	8.8	46.4	37.6
Torbali	4.2	25.8	–24.5	21.6	10.1	46.1	36.0
Kiraz	3.7	24.2	–16.8	20.5	1.6	37.3	35.7
Beydağ	8.2	38.6	–27.4	30.4	11.5	57.8	46.3
District Averages	4.9	<u>32.1</u>	–20.4	<u>27.2</u>	7.6	<u>47.6</u>	<u>40.0</u>
Parties' Vote share for İzmir		<u>35.6</u>	–	<u>30.7</u>	–	<u>50.0</u>	<u>38.3</u>

*Swing 1995–1999

**Swing 1999–2002

***Swing 2002–2007

Table 6. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes for Islamist Parties in Ankara

District	<u>2007***</u>	<u>2002***</u>	<u>1999**</u>	<u>1995*</u>	<u>Swing 2002–2007</u>
Mamak	49.6	42.6	21.2	24.3	7.0
Kazan	66.4	53.8	18.5	29.8	12.6
Sincan	64.4	53.5	25.0	28.7	10.9
Yenimahalle	39.4	32.9	15.7	19.1	6.5
Keçiören	55.0	45.5	21.1	22.9	9.5
Altındağ	60.2	49.8	25.2	28.5	10.4
Kalecik	56.5	47.7	16.5	27.7	8.8
District Averages	<u>55.9</u>	<u>46.5</u>	<u>20.5</u>	<u>25.9</u>	<u>9.4</u>
Party's Vote Share for Ankara	<u>47.5</u>	<u>41.7</u>	<u>16.4</u>	<u>23.6</u>	

*Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)

**Welfare Party and Virtue Party combined (Fazilet Partisi)

***Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)

and manufacturing as their major occupational backgrounds with sizeable worker populations. Though İzmir is center-left territory, its tenure hold of this province looks increasingly uncertain.

Accounting for the Results

To argue that the CHP's comparatively weak performance compared to the AKP was based on short-term reasons is wrong. The CHP since 1995 has displayed an erratic yet weak electoral performance in comparison to other parties of the center. Despite the solid performance of its predecessor, the Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Partisi

Table 7. Vote Shares (percent) of Valid Votes, CHP–DSP Combined in Ankara

District	<u>S3***</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>S2**</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>S1*</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1995</u>
Mamak	0.8	30.5	−7.4	29.7	2.8	37.1	34.3
Kazan	−3.4	8.6	−5.9	12.0	0.7	17.9	17.2
Sincan	−1.8	12.4	−10.1	14.2	0.7	24.3	23.6
Yenimahalle	1.5	36.3	−6.7	34.8	8.3	41.5	33.2
Keçiören	−2.1	21.2	−9.6	23.3	3.8	32.9	29.1
Altındağ	−1.8	20.6	−10.2	22.4	3.7	32.6	28.9
Kalecik	2.5	16.8	−9.6	14.3	4.4	23.9	19.5
District Averages	−0.6	<u>20.9</u>	−8.5	<u>21.5</u>	3.5	<u>30.0</u>	<u>26.5</u>
Parties' Vote share for Ankara		<u>28.0</u>	−	<u>18.5</u>	−	<u>25.6</u>	<u>22.7</u>

*Swing 1995–1999

**Swing 1999–2002

***Swing 2002–2007

(Social Democratic People's Party, SHP), in the 1989 local and 1991 general elections, it ultimately failed to live up to voter expectations and saw a sharp drop in its votes in the 1994 local and 1995 general elections. The CHP's weak position in contemporary times can be superficially explained with reference to agency issues of leadership and the subsequent organization of the party. As leader of the party since 1995 (with a brief break in 1999–2000), Deniz Baykal's jingoistic and opportunistic leadership style, as well as his organization of the party institutions, has resulted in the CHP being an unrepresentative entity without the ability to build electoral alliances across diverse voter groups.

Having said this, except for one period of the CHP's multiparty history (during the 1970s) since 1950, the CHP has proved to be a weak vote-catcher in comparison to parties that originated from the periphery. Parties beginning with and descended from the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP, 1946–1960) it is argued, have established a tradition of being challengers to statist-modernist discourse as established by the CHP in the single-party period (1923–1946). Parties such as the DP, followed by its descendent Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP, 1961–1980), the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP, since 1983), and finally, the Islamist line of parties, have proved more able to offer voters "tangible" reasons and rewards. Tangibility can be broadly explained in terms of effective populism supported by use of patron-client relations. It is argued that, owing to the CHP's state-founding and building credentials, the party, unlike other social democratic parties on a comparative level, has been, except for a few brief periods during the 1960s and 1970s, unable to "revise" its ideological outlook and transform itself into a genuine representative party. Moreover, a speculative conclusion is left open for further debate, whereby this essay argues that perhaps the CHP is unable to "adapt." The party is perhaps failing to internalize ideological "change" and "revisionism" because such traits are not embedded within its "genetic composition."³ A party founded on a discourse of elite-led modernization continues to stress and thrive on what it believes to be in the people's and nation's interest rather than adapt itself to accommodate what voter niches believe to be in their interests.

Leadership

One of the strongest and most popular sources for the CHP's inability to increase its share of the vote and become a leading party as it had been during the 1970s focuses on the question of leadership. In the eyes of many journalists and intelligentsia, as well as public opinion, it is put forward that Deniz Baykal is to blame. One clear indicator of this is that under his leadership, the CHP suffered its heaviest electoral defeat in the 1999 elections, scoring an all-time low of 8.7 percent of the vote, and failed to enter the parliament for the first time in the party's history. Independent of electoral results, as the deputy chairman of the SHP in the early 1990s, Baykal remains in collective memory as a politician who has very little to offer except to lead intra-party factions and to constantly challenge the party leadership to gain the chairman's seat.

During the Baykal years, the CHP has had no clear message of what the party stands for. Since the 1995 elections, three different and inconsistent ideological positions have clouded the party's self-declared social democratic ideology. The "New Left" concept coauthored by Baykal and the former foreign minister, İsmail Cem, argued for the need to distance the CHP from its authoritarian Kemalist roots and to transform it into a party genuinely interested in participatory politics, strengthening local governance, and placing the individual at the center of politics, all of which were intended to signal the CHP's commitment to attaining a liberal democratic society.⁴ The heart of this new-found liberal opening included ridding the country of all militaristic vestiges of the 1980 coup legislation and related constitutional provisions. Specific targets aimed at changing the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the abolition of thought crimes under the penal code, reducing the military's influence in the political arena (by redefining the role of the National Security Council), and accepting the existence of a Kurdish problem beyond terrorism.⁵

The New Left approach was subsequently dropped and replaced by a more obscure and ambiguous ideological platform following the party's electoral defeat in the 1999 elections. Having taken a brief break from the chairmanship of the CHP, Deniz Baykal returned to promote an "Anatolian Left" agenda.⁶ This differed from New Left by employing ethno-religious rhetoric to construct a native Turkish leftist outlook. The Anatolian Left was largely an attempt to offer an alternative message to that of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP). Speaking on television, Baykal argued that the people voted for the RP because they desired "an honorable life" in which "respect for their worldview, lifestyle and values" would be respected.⁷ As a reflection of this, Baykal stated that in his time away from being a leader, he had "found the opportunity to return to our [ancestral] roots, based on the realization that at the root of social democracy lies freedom of thought, belief and worship."⁸

The Anatolian Left approach since the 2002 elections and the rise of the AKP has been sidelined and replaced by an unnamed yet visible authoritarianism, typified by ultra-secularism and ultra-nationalism. Baykal's greatest tactic and possibly his greatest failing has been to pursue a policy of polarizing all issues and matters of public debate. Depending on the issue, as far as the CHP is concerned there are two sides: you are either secular or a religious fundamentalist; a republican or a separatist; a Kemalist or a "second Republican;" a patriot or a traitor. To exemplify these binary categorizations utilized by the CHP, in the first five years of AKP rule, issues of the headscarf in public life, higher education reform, devolution of central power to local governments, and the presidential elections were all labeled as attempts to undermine the integrity of secularism. The AKP's support for Gül becoming Turkey's eleventh president was overshadowed by strong CHP propaganda to the effect that Gül's presidency would be the final link that would allow the AKP to transform Turkey into a theocracy.⁹ Similarly, in the cases of Turkey's EU accession process and AKP proposals to resolve the Cyprus imbroglio, the CHP has virtually accused the incumbents of committing treason. Numerous "conformity packages" that were passed by the AKP in order to bring Turkish legislation in line

with EU standards were categorically opposed by the CHP.¹⁰ On December 17, 2004, and October 3, 2005, which effectively signaled the beginning of Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU, Baykal called upon the government to walk away from the negotiating table based on the idea that negotiations would not result in full membership but the impositions of the EU.¹¹ In the case of Cyprus, the party's shadow foreign minister, Onur Öymen, stated that the adoption of the Annan Plan was effectively "selling" the island and losing it as the Ottomans lost Crete.¹²

The important conclusion to draw from all these criticisms is that the CHP has nothing concrete to offer in policies. The type of categorical opposition practiced by the party presents no alternative perspectives to what the government is proposing. It has become obvious that the CHP criticizes for the sake of criticizing. A constructive and discursive approach towards issues is instead replaced only by demagoguery, which tries to draw voter attention to the dangers that surround the state.¹³ Haluk Koç, the former head of the party's parliamentary group, has declared that Turkey was still in a "transition period" where it was trying to reconcile an Islamic identity with the requirements of building a society based on the rule of law. However, in trying to achieve this, the process has been continuously hampered by those who do not want this ideal to be realized (read the AKP). Therefore, the CHP is only reacting with its "innate reflexes" of wanting to protect democracy.¹⁴

The standard that the CHP is failing to attain as a political party when compared to the AKP is with reference to the concept of "change." Since the founding of the AKP in 2000, Tayyip Erdoğan and other pro-Islamist politicians have constantly emphasized the extent to which they have changed. Unlike the CHP, the AKP's rhetoric has been backed by government output. The extent of its success is a matter of debate, but in general terms, under the AKP a non-populist and prudent macro-economic program has been adopted and followed, ensuring a stable and predictable environment favoring foreign investment and growth. Attempts have been made to reform and streamline the provision of ailing public services such as healthcare and transportation as well as taking a genuine interest in furthering privatization measures. Important steps have also been taken to implement political reform as demonstrated by the commissioning of a new constitution, the rewriting of the penal code, and the granting of incremental cultural rights to Turkey's ethnic and religious minorities.¹⁵ This is not to argue that AKP policies have found unanimous approval, and doubts continue to exist on how democratic and liberal Erdoğan's approach to furthering minority rights (Alevis, Kurds, non-Muslims) will be, and whether the AKP will be able to really engage the EU accession process as well as continue to run a prudent economic program.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in the 2002 and 2007 elections, constant criticism by the CHP over the democratic sincerity of the AKP did not convince significant portions of the electorate. The pursuit of a conciliatory foreign policy as exemplified by relations with the EU, Cyprus, and the Middle East, backed up by a result-oriented domestic platform, has shifted the question of democratic credibility from the AKP and Erdoğan over to the CHP and Baykal. Where the CHP seems to have done well in 2007 is in districts and sub-districts that display demographic characteristics of high socioeconomic status (SES)¹⁷ such as Balmumcu,

Etiler, Ulus, Levent, Çankaya, Suadiye, and Çankaya, where it scored between 50 and 65 percent of the vote. Appealing to higher SES groups may not necessarily be a misled policy, since on a comparative level social democratic parties across Europe have been trying to catch the vote of middle class voters as “catch-all parties” since the mid-1950s. That said, however, the party only appears to be appealing to a very narrow portion of the electorate as opposed to the broader voter niches. The question that has to be asked at this point is simple: Is it realistic to expect the CHP to adopt a different approach?

The Structural Argument

The Turkish political party spectrum, as typified by Figure 2, shows that rather than a simple left versus right continuum upon which parties and voters define themselves, there are numerous cleavages that parties have to take into account when appealing to voters.¹⁸ It is very difficult to classify parties as either leftist and/or rightist and expect voters to make sense of this classification. Instead, in the post-Cold War period, parties have defined themselves to varying degrees of secularism versus Islamism, economic/political liberalism versus statism, and Turkish versus other nationalisms (mainly Kurdish nationalism). From this, it is argued that for a party to be electorally successful, it has to take into consideration more than one electoral dimension. Electorally successful parties during the 1990s have represented a variety of ideological openings. From this, it is possible to observe that representatives of

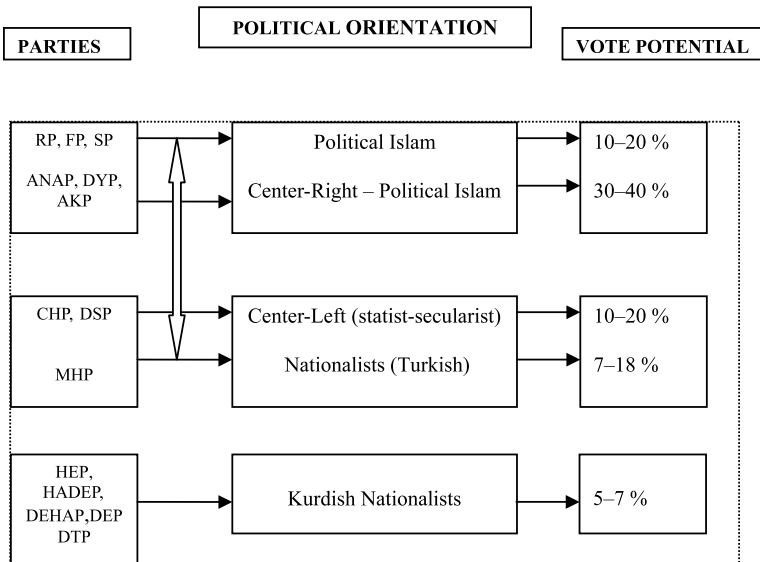


Figure 2. A typology of the Turkish political spectrum. The model does not list all the parties in Turkey. The “vote potential” of parties was calculated utilizing electoral data during the 1990s and shows an approximation of the highest and lowest the parties can be expected to gain.

political Islam and nationalism were the winners during the 1990s. At present, the AKP seems to have made the best of a number of worlds: It has continued to project itself as a moderate Islamist party¹⁹ while following a liberal pro-business economic policy as well as engaging in welfarist policies at the local level and at times employing nationalist rhetoric when the need arises, as in the case of escalating PKK violence between 2005 and 2007. In contrast, the CHP continues to project itself along a very narrow spectrum of statism-secularism in combination with a nationalist tinge.

The natural question would therefore seem to be why the CHP does not take parties such as the AKP and ANAP as examples and reach out to more diverse voter groups. The basic assumption of a rational political party is that political parties are rational actors interested in maximizing votes, a trait that has not been fully realized by the CHP. A key issue such as veiling is perceived to be an anachronism, not as part of a wider social movement, and deserves to be eradicated. When a CHP member of parliament was asked what the CHP was doing to win the hearts of veiled women who preferred to vote for the AKP, Oya Araslı responded:

the CHP is against the use of the veil in the public sphere. Veiled women wear the veil because of the expectations of their fathers, siblings or their husbands. Because they don't have economic independence, they cannot oppose such an imposition. We want women to be educated and financially independent.²⁰

On the issue of democratization, the clearest indicator that shows the CHP's inability adopt a new perspective can be seen in successive party programs. From 1931 to 1994, every party program maintained the six arrows (nationalism, secularism, republicanism, revolutionism, statism, populism). The question has been asked how it is that the CHP's ideological outlook has not evolved to include "democracy" as either a new arrow or to replace an obsolete one such as "statism."²¹ Unwillingness to include democracy within the arrows is apparent in the party's stance towards one of Turkey's most protracted and unresolved problems: the Kurdish problem. Over the course of the last five years and the recent escalation of PKK violence since 2005, Deniz Baykal has made his position very clear by stating that the Kurdish problem is not one of democracy but of terrorism. By insisting on the principle of secularism and nationalism, students of Turkish politics are aware that the CHP is insisting on sticking to its guns and trying to define a uniform definition of what the "good life" and "good citizen" should be. Is this the same then as saying that the CHP is behaving irrationally?

The short answer to this is no. Throughout the various periods of the CHP's multiparty history, genuine attempts have been made to revise the ideological outlook of the party. Most importantly, it was the CHP that led Turkey into competitive multiparty politics in 1946 by allowing the formation of opposition political parties. Between 1964 and 1973, both Bülent Ecevit and İsmet İnönü risked their political careers to transform the party into a leftist organization. During the early 1990s, the Erdal İnönü wing of the party battled very hard to get the party to adopt a genuine social democratic program and also tried to resolve the Kurdish problem

beyond the perspective of terrorism. Finally, over the course of the 2002–2005 parliamentary period, under the auspices of Kemal Derviş, a sincere attempt to make the CHP a program party as opposed to a personality- and leader-dominated party was proposed. The common thread in all of these periods of attempted transformation was either that severe internal bickering or fighting curtailed the reform efforts in favor of the party hardliners, and/or very few of the stated aims of the ideological transformation found their way into government outputs. Erdal İnönü in the early 1990s failed to get the SHP to adopt a democratic perspective with regards to the Kurdish issue. Similarly, Derviş suffered the fate of being sidelined by the Baykal wing of the party and finally resigned as a member of parliament to take up the position as the head of the United Nations Development Program. As for attempts to instill a leftist identity on the party since the early 1960s, very little in terms of policy outputs has transpired since its inception. Two questions thus have to be posed: Can attempts at revisionism (during the 1970s and early 1990s) be perceived as actualized and internalized instances of revisionism, and what actual evidence has the CHP presented to suggest that it was ever a social democratic party?²²

On the other hand, a non-revisionist leftist movement is perhaps to be expected in Turkey. İdris Küçükömer, in positioning political parties on a left-right political spectrum, places what students of Turkish politics refer to as the center-left on the “right” end of the spectrum. He notes the fact the CHP is historically descended from a bureaucratic-statist lineage that can be traced all the way back to the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress. In other words, what is commonly referred to as the center-left in Turkey is actually the conservative right. This lineage, argues Küçükömer, has always been opposed to revisionist-revolutionary initiatives, even going back as far as the Janissary revolt of 1807.²³ Its conservatism is based on notions of state-building and preservation, whereas the “left” in Küçükömer’s conceptualization can be traced back to Prince Sabahattin’s Entente Liberal. This lineage, including the DP, displays characteristics of constantly challenging the status quo.

Although it is very hard to trace the existence of a left versus right continuum on the political scene of the 2000s, Küçükömer’s argument nonetheless provides an insight as to why the CHP maintains a non-revisionist stance.²⁴ In present times, revisionism, as far as the CHP is concerned, can be interpreted as heresy and challenging the holy writ of Kemalism. Adopting a more liberal position towards questions of minority rights and identity is looked upon by many core supporters of the CHP as an attempt to challenge Kemalist scripture. In fact, a critical approach to these truths is looked upon as an attempt to undermine the territorial integrity and unity of the Turkish nation. The maintenance of a unitary state, a unitary national identity, and allegiance to the national flag are firmly embedded within the party’s ideological fabric and are unquestionable “sacred truths.” A number of nongovernmental organizations, most notably the Association for Atatürkist Thought (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği) and the Association for Supporting Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği), expect the CHP to remain the strongest defender of unitary principles.²⁵

Opposition to challenging Kemalist scripture is not just an institutional fetish maintained by the CHP and a handful of NGOs. For one thing, Turkey’s Alevi

minority has been consistent supporters of the CHP's secularist outlook as a safeguard against political Islam.²⁶ More importantly though, ultra-secularism and ultra-nationalism do have electoral currency. Parties such as the MHP, which gained approximately 15 percent of the vote in 2007 and 18 percent in the 1999 general elections, and the Youth Party, which gained over 7 percent in the 2002 elections, both presented ultra-nationalist and xenophobic programs. From the viewpoint of vote maximization, since neither of these parties were represented in parliament after 2002, the CHP tried to win these votes for itself. The most recent research conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak suggests that "a multi-cultural and pluralist democratic understanding is not well-rooted" in Turkey.²⁷ Although matters such as lifting the headscarf ban in public schools and government offices are perceived to be an issue of human rights by Sunni constituents, issues such as non-Muslim, non-Turkish, non-Sunni rights are not viewed in the same manner.²⁸ Symbols, practices, and rituals that celebrate ultra-nationalism and ultra-secularism have been on the increase since the end of the Cold War. Frequent visits to Atatürk's mausoleum (Anıt Kabir) by NGO groups and associations have turned this monument into a virtual shrine of Turkish secularism and nationalism.²⁹

This suggests that CHP is only presenting a leftist outlook in name rather than in practice, and in its heart the party is really a secularist and nationalist organization. Does this mean that social democratic ideology is not really in demand in Turkey, as in the case of United States? The absence of socialist ideology in the United States is a contested issue. One school of thought suggests that the lack of socialism in the world's largest capitalist economy is linked to the success of American capitalism, which has made American workers far better off in comparison to European workers. Other views have suggested that America did not go through a process of challenging feudalism, and from its foundation the American way of life was directed towards territorial expansion, making workers complacent towards class solidarity. The United States boasted the formation of the first working men's parties, but such institutions failed to develop into mass parties due to the fact that worker attitudes tended to be locally oriented, and control of the workplace was more important than a class consciousness.³⁰ The case of Turkey does not present a similar picture. Leftist currents, especially Bolshevism, were influential in Turkey in pre-Republican and early Republican times. Similarly, the 1960s and 1970s were a time when leftist politics became mainstream, with party formations representing a variety of leftist positions.

However, perhaps it is the case that, from a point of origin, the roots of socialist ideology in Turkey are not as strong as in Europe. One question that this essay seeks to open for further study is to what extent there is demand and room for leftist ideology in Turkey. It can be argued that the welfare and social needs of Turkey have been met by relying on religious and communal or informal and solidarity-based institutions of charity rather than on Marxist notions of organized resistance to capital, which are perceivably alien to Turkey. Although this is an area that requires further study, one can say that Turkish political parties lack the "correct landscape" in which social democratic politics could have flourished. The late Ottoman period

(especially the Hamedian era) did not witness noticeable degrees of class and industrial strife, which are the building blocks of socialism. This is because the Ottoman Empire and the modern Turkish Republic were comparatively late to industrialize and agrarian by comparison.³¹ The notion of state welfarism and the welfare state was created against this background of socioeconomic strife. By contrast, the concept of welfare provision in pre-Republican Turkey was carried out by limited state initiatives, before the existence of discernable social classes and class conflict. The reign of Abdülhamid is a case in point that engaged in state welfare provision in areas such as caring for the elderly, the poor, and the sick. Hamid's regime carried out these acts for two important reasons: firstly, to give increasing legitimacy to his regime, and secondly, in the case of poor relief, to take measures to prevent rural migrants from migrating to Istanbul.³² That said, it can be argued that such initiatives did not prepare the way for the development of socialist and/or welfarist politics.

Instead, Mardin's work is indicative of the crucial role that religious brotherhoods and orders played in the provision of individual and community welfare needs.³³ In light of this, center-left parties in Turkey never experienced the type of socio-economic and class conflict that European socialist parties did. The CHP was a party with the goal of modernization in mind. The question then has to be asked whether it is pertinent to expect a state founding party, with political and economic modernization as its goal, to represent a social democratic ideology. The answer would seem to be no, as neither the conditions of the pre-Republican order nor the vision of the party's elites had such an ambition.

It is perhaps because of this background that the CHP has been a weak representative agent. Its stance towards present cultural cleavages is distant and removed, even hardline. Having established a firm oppositionist stance to an accommodating attitude to many issues, the CHP under Deniz Baykal comes across to the public as a rigid authoritarian party. AKP proposals to discuss the headscarf issue, higher education reform, and even proposals to strengthen local government powers, although originally backed by the CHP, have been met with stiff resistance by the party leadership, which accuses the government of undermining the legitimacy of the secular state. An accommodating and "rights-based" approach to sensitive issues has been replaced by concerns for "national unity" and "national security," so much so that in the lead-up to the expected general elections in 2007, the CHP called upon the citizen body to safeguard secularism in Turkey.³⁴ The CHP's "national" position clearly contrasts with the AKP's results-oriented approach. That is to say, in the eyes of the present leadership the modernization project initiated some 80 years ago has yet to be completed and is continuously under threat.

Moreover, the center-left has very little to display in terms of concrete achievements or policy alternatives. Its record in national government during the 1970s and 1990s, in terms of tangible policy realization, has been dismal. In comparison, the AKP's electoral platform prior to the 2002 elections was based on a set of concrete targets to be achieved. Referred to as the Emergency Action Plan (*Acil Eylem Planı*), the substance of this initiative pointed to prudent yet intelligible gains from the view of the ordinary citizen. Promises were made to maintain macroeconomic

stability in tandem with social considerations, such as reducing the cost of electricity, the construction of new dual carriageways, and the provision of education and health services to poor families, as well as concrete steps to be taken to reduce the earnings gap between the top and bottom parts of society.³⁵ In contrast, though both the DSP and the CHP took into consideration social concerns in their recent election manifestos, more abstract notions, such as meeting the Maastricht criteria by 2007 and the reduction of government debt, were emphasized.³⁶ Instead of offering tangible policy alternatives to the AKP, the CHP relies on highlighting “threats” to Turkey’s regime, which come from Islamist and ethnic circles and can otherwise be classified as new social movements.³⁷ Suffice it to say that in comparison to the AKP, the CHP is bedeviled by both a credibility and a tangibility problem in the eyes of the people it claims to represent.

Critics remain unconvinced that the Islamists, especially those attached to the AKP, are genuine in their reformed intentions. The CHP makes frequent references to the ulterior motives of members of the governing party. Addressing the parliament on the symbolic day of April 23, 2006,³⁸ the speaker, Bülent Arınç, stressed the need for Turkey to reinterpret the principle of secularism in line with Turkey’s own cultural and traditional determinants and away from the rigid interpretation of France.³⁹ Immediately responding to this, the CHP’s parliamentary group leader, Ali Topuz, suggested that the speaker “would be happy if Turkey resembled Iran. Just as Iran has Ahmadinejad, Turkey has Bülentnejad!”⁴⁰ Similar and continued debates speculating as to the democratic intentions of the Islamists have been rife among the CHP’s ranks on a multitude of issues, from electing the president in 2007 to the motivations behind the assassination of a judge at the Council of State.⁴¹ Accepting the fact that the sincerity of the AKP’s democratic revisionism has yet to be confirmed, it is still the case that both in terms of ideological stance and policy implementation, the AKP appears to have broken ties with the past. In the final analysis, center-left protagonists have been unable to emulate a revisionist stance both in comparison to mainstream social democratic parties as well as to peripheral party actors descended from the DP. Instead, the party platforms are predicated on playing upon the fears of secularism and ethnic strife, fears that have been continuously broadcast since the founding of the CHP.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Onur Öymen, Shadow Foreign Minister and Deputy Chairman of the CHP, quoted in “Kendi Vatandaşlarına Cahil, Yalancı ve Satılmış Dediler” *Radikal*, July 25, 2007. See <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=227955>.
2. The districts selected for each of the three cities have been chosen based on the following criteria because they are representative of one, a few, or all of the following characteristics: large inner

- urban-populated districts (as in the case of Ankara's Yenimahalle and Keçiören districts, which according to the 2000 census had over 500,000 inhabitants respectively); demographic characteristics that indicated newly urbanized migrants living in *gecekondu* areas (as in the case of İstanbul districts such as Sultanbeyli, Güngören, and Bağcılar; *gecekondu* refers to what may be translated as shantytown areas; however this is somewhat inaccurate as *gecekondu* inhabitants are typified by relatively high levels of social mobility.); and districts that have a predominant occupational background of small/large scale industry, manufacturing, and/or trade (as in the case of İzmir's districts of Gazimemir, Buca, and Çiğli). Databases cited: *Milletvekili Genel Seçimi 2007, 2002, 1999, 1995* (Ankara, T.C Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü). This data was generously provided by Ali Çarkoğlu.
3. The author fully accepts that this is a bold claim that cannot be justified in a short article. For a full augmentation of this line of reasoning see Sinan Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming 2008).
 4. Deniz Baykal and İsmail Cem, *Yeni Sol* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1992), p.220.
 5. CHP Parti Programı, *Yeni Hedefler Yeni Türkiye*. See http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmain&page=list_party_info&pid=146
 6. Following the disastrous defeat Baykal resigned as leader, to be replaced by Altan Öymen for a period of approximately 15 months.
 7. Deniz Baykal speaking on Channel 7, cited in Fehmi Çalmuk, *Aydınların Gözüyle CHP ve Anadolu Solu* (Ankara: Kim Yayınları, 2002), p.61.
 8. Deniz Baykal, interview with Güneri Civaoglu, *Milliyet*, September 26, 2000.
 9. The presidential selection process was overshadowed by massive secular rallies in Turkey's largest cities, dubbed "Republican Meetings." The common link that united the participants was their opposition to Gül's candidacy. The CHP participated in and supported these rallies. See the national press, April 14 and April 29, 2007.
 10. See Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazıcı, *Democratisation Reforms in Turkey 1993–2004* (İstanbul: TESEV, 2004), pp.15–27. Among the reforms, notable changes included further civilianization and recomposition of the National Security Council and increased associational and individual rights and freedoms, as well as the right to publish and broadcast in mother tongues (read Kurdish). The CHP was instrumental in passing many of the reform packages but questioned the substance and purpose of these initiatives. Regarding legislation that granted minimum cultural rights to the Kurdish minority, the CHP voted against the proposals.
 11. A report submitted by the CHP Deputy General Secretary Algan Hacaloğlu, *İşte AKP'nin ve Gül'ün Kırmızı Çizgileri, İşte Gerçekler*, December 19, 2004.
 12. Onur Öymen, "Kıbrıs Girit gibi Elden Gidiyor," *Cumhuriyet*, March 26, 2004.
 13. For a detailed discussion surrounding the nature of the CHP's opposition, see Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism*.
 14. Haluk Koç, interview with *Nokta* magazine, February 13, 2004, p.15.
 15. The new constitution was commissioned during the second term of the AKP's incumbency, while Kurdish rights included restricted broadcasting and educational rights. The new penal code was severely criticized at the time of its drafting as it tried to make adultery a punishable offence.
 16. The EU Commission's November 2007 Progress Report on Turkish accession was critical of the fact that Turkey had not made any significant political reforms in the last 12 months.
 17. This refers to high levels of income, high levels of education, and stable employment.
 18. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey, Changes and Continuities in the 1990s," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.27, No.3 (1994), pp.402–24; and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The Shaping of Party Preferences in Turkey: Coping with the Post-Cold War Era," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol.2, No.2 (1999), pp. 47–76.
 19. Nowhere in the party's program can one find references to an Islamist agenda, but the party makes continuous references, in its daily business, to the promotion of and respect for religious-cultural festivals, and makes the headscarf issue one of "individual rights."
 20. "Türban Özgürlük Sorunu Değil," *Radikal*, March 28, 2006.
 21. Asaf Savaş Akat, *Sosyal Demokrasi'nin Gündemi* (İstanbul: Armoni Yayınları, 1991), pp.22–3.

22. This is a highly debatable point, one that is elaborated upon in Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism*.
23. İdris Küçükömer, *Düzenin Yabancılaşması: Batılama* (Istanbul: Bağlam, 2002), pp.72–4.
24. For a discussion on left versus right voter profiles in Turkey during the 1990s, see Yılmaz Esmer, "At the Ballot Box: Determinants of Voting Behaviour," in Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer (eds), *Political Parties and Elections in Turkey* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp.97–9.
25. Although no formal link exists between the NGOs mentioned and the CHP, they nonetheless present similar platforms and political messages. This can be observed in the run-up to the 2007 presidential elections. Both organizations and the CHP have insisted on the election of a president who can be primarily identified by his or her secularist credentials.
26. See Tahire Erman and E. Göker, "Alevi Politics in Contemporary Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.36, No.4 (2000); Harold Schuler, *Türkiye'de Sosyal Demokrasi: Particilik, Hemşehrilik, Alevilik*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002), pp.159–71; and Harold Schuler, "Secularism and Ethnicity: Alevis and Social Democrats in Search of Alliance," in Stefanos Yerasimos, Günter Seufert, and Karin Vorhoff (eds), *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism: Studies on Political Culture in Contemporary Turkey* (Istanbul : Ergon, 2000).
27. Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Değişen Türkiye'de Din, Toplum ve Siyaset* (Istanbul: TESEV, 2006), p.12.
28. Following the assassination of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, nationalist parties such as the MHP poured scorn upon people who displayed banners saying "we are all Armenian; we are all Hrant." Some MHP offices displayed banners stating "we are all Turks," <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/01/24/son/sonsiy18.asp>.
29. Visits to the mausoleum are carried out by many groups to "complain" to Atatürk that the unitary and secularist future of the Republic is in danger. For example, following the assassination of a high court judge in March 2006, a large group of judges, prosecutors, and Ministry of Justice workers went to Anıt Kabir to complain to Atatürk that religious fundamentalists were endangering the lives of the legal establishment and Turkey's secular future.
30. See Eric Foner, "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop Journal*, Vol.17 (1984), pp.57–80; and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Why No Socialism in the United States?" in Seweryn Bialer and Sophia Sluzer (eds), *Sources of Contemporary Radicalism* (New York: 1997), pp.31–49.
31. Sabri Sayarı, "Notes on the Beginnings of Mass Political Participation in Turkey," in Engin D. Akarlı and Gabriel Ben-Dor (eds), *Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Publications, 1975).
32. Relief was provided to the poor on a conditional basis. If the migrant was not a resident of Istanbul, measures would be taken to send them back to where they came from and even try to find employment for them there. Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet, 1876–1914* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002).
33. Şerif Madin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).
34. Baykal has noted that the secular state and secularism under the AKP government are under threat and need to be safeguarded. Instead of state institutions taking the initiative to save secularism (read military), Baykal argues the "people" should do it by voting out the AKP. Deniz Baykal, interview with Murat Yetkin, *Radikal*, May 27, 2006. Also see Baykal's parliamentary and party group speeches, http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmainandpage=list_speech. The link to this text within the CHP's website has been removed.
35. "Acil Eylem Planı," November 16, 2002, www.belgenet.com.
36. "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi 2002 Seçim Bildirgesi," www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmainandpage=list_party_infoandpid=148.
37. Baykal has once again taken the track of calling upon all voter groups, whether they see themselves as right, conservative, or left to safeguard Kemal Atatürk's Republic.
38. The Turkish Grand National Assembly was opened on this day in 1920.

39. See the Turkish parliament website, http://www.tbmm.info/modules.php?name=newsandlang=tranduid=bulentarincandstart=0andlist=10andfile=index_detayandidMNews=12491andPHPSESSID=f95a05512319766237edcefcc43ae600. The link to this text within the Turkish Parliament's website has been removed.
40. "CHP: Bizde de Bülentnejad Var," *Hürriyet*, April 24, 2006.
41. The CHP insists that the AKP is determined to use its parliamentary majority to elect an Islamically oriented president. Deniz Baykal, "İktidar, Laik Gözükerek Takiye Yapıyor. Türkiye'de, Yeni Bir Ahmedinejad'a İhtiyaç Yoktur," April 25, 2006, addressing the CHP Parliamentary Group, http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmainandpage=show_speechandspeech_id=268. Similarly, the assassination of a judge at the Council of State (May 2006), Mustafa Yücel Özbilgin, was argued to have been motivated by an Islamist agenda. Deniz Baykal is convinced that the AKP should carry the blame for this. Deniz Baykal, "Laik, Demokratik Cumhuriyeti Birlikte Savunalım," May 30, 2006, April 2006, addressing the CHP Parliamentary Group, http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmainandpage=show_speechandspeech_id=273.

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