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# Turkey's Republican People's Party: Politics of Opposition under a Dominant Party System

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**ABSTRACT** *This article seeks to account for the prolonged inability of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) to be considered as a credible alternative to the governing Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP). Accounting for this is relevant from two perspectives: the emergence of a dominant party system during the AKP decade, and the increased rhetoric and public discourse stressing the "lack of [credible] opposition parties" in the party spectrum. The article attributes the CHP's electoral malaise to a mixture structural and leadership problems specific to the party organization. This argument, however, is placed against the backdrop of the dominant distributive position that the incumbent occupies in Turkey's political arena. The AKP's domination of both national and local government, typified by a service-oriented governing style, serves to undermine not just the CHP's chances of success, but virtually all opposition parties.*

## Introduction

Turkey's June 12, 2011, general election was crucial for the main opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). In May 2010, the founding party of the modern republic experienced an unexpected leadership change. Deniz Baykal, party chairman since 1993, was forced to step down following a sex scandal implicating him and his chief of staff. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who was subsequently selected as the chairmanship, was faced with the difficult task of preparing the party for national elections. Distinct from the process of leadership change, the CHP has been the focus of attention, mainly stemming from its role as main opposition party since the ascendancy of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) in 2002. During its tenure in power, the AKP has been regarded by many to have selectively redistributed resources to masses, created a larger Turkish middle class, and basically having sustained a fast pace of economic

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growth which has benefited the broadest segments of society.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, close observers of Turkish politics have noted that the CHP is not a credible governing alternative to the AKP because it has failed to advocate an electoral agenda, which represents a diverse array of voter demands.<sup>2</sup> In response, the Kılıçdaroğlu administration has engaged in a pronounced effort to position the party of Atatürk by significantly revamping both the party's ideological platform and its structural and institutional composition, in order to convince voters that the party and its cadres are in the process of change.

While there is a rich tradition of research on party organizations in the general literature, very little systematic research has been conducted on party organizations within the Turkish context (for exceptions, see note<sup>3</sup>). This is especially the case for the oldest party of Turkish politics on which few in-depth case studies exist.<sup>4</sup> This article hopes to partially fill the gap by analyzing the recent changes that have occurred within the main opposition party of Turkey since Kılıçdaroğlu's rise to leadership. Taking stock of recent developments within the CHP, the aim of this article is to evaluate the standing of the CHP in light of its electoral performance on June 12, 2011. How can one evaluate the electoral performance of the party? How does it compare to its performance in the 2007 elections? Has the party succeeded in building a stronger and more diverse electoral alliances and what conclusions can be drawn for the coming years? In particular, has this leadership change increased the party's chances of breaking the AKP's political hegemony?

### **The Baykal Years: Electoral Stagnation**

After Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü, Deniz Baykal was the longest serving chairman of the CHP from 1993 to 2010 (except for a brief break between 1999 and 2000). Throughout the Baykal years, the party was criticized for not representing a diverse array of voter preferences. This was particularly visible after the 1999 general elections when the CHP failed to enter the Turkish parliament for the first time in its history, with Baykal resigning from his position as chairman under protest from voters.<sup>5</sup> Its inability to attain the minimum 10 percent national vote required for parliamentary representation was largely indicative of the party's argumentative, exclusionary, and obtuse political stance throughout the 1990s. Despite its self-affiliation as a leftist political party, the CHP's political discourse and policy agenda was not seen by scholars and analysts alike to fit the universal standards of social democracy.<sup>6</sup> There was thus a large void within the left side of the Turkish political spectrum, as the CHP was increasingly alienated from low-income voters, no longer able to counterbalance against neo-liberal economic policies, and mainly consigned itself to protecting the nation-state model (laicism and Turkish nationalism) against the rising Islamist and Kurdish political movements. What benefited from the party's electoral decline was the Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP), a splinter leftist party established by the ex-chairman of the CHP, Bülent Ecevit, who built a leader-centered organization free from the factional strife of his old party.<sup>7</sup> Based on the charisma and honest image of its leader, the DSP quickly rose in electoral strength

during the 1990s and took on the role of being the largest center-left party in Turkish politics.

Following the 1999 general elections, the DSP established a coalition government with the ultra-nationalist National Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) and the center-right Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*). Instead of stabilizing the political arena with its wide ideological base after the highly volatile 1990s,<sup>8</sup> the government's failure to solve the acute economic problems faced by the country further pushed Turkish politics into high volatility.<sup>9</sup> In particular, the twin economic crises of 1999 and 2001 severely hit the middle-class and lower-middle-class voters, who were already suffering from the economic instability of the precarious 1990s, and further eroded the patronage networks forged by political parties with their low-income constituencies.<sup>10</sup> When coupled with the austerity measures and the macro-economic reforms adopted by the DSP-led coalition government, the hard economic times eroded support for mainstream political parties in the Turkish parliament, with mass poverty leading to political instability. The coalition was also plagued by ideological rifts between partner parties, enhanced by the prime minister's old age and impending illness, which made it difficult to pursue consistent policies, let alone effectively manage recovery process.

In countries where the political establishment fails to address the economic concerns and grievances of mass voters, major financial and political crises raise electoral volatility that may, in some cases, result in party system collapse.<sup>11</sup> As voters desert their old parties for outsider candidates, anti-systemic movements gain strength at the political arena. In the Turkish context, the aforementioned economic crisis led to a partial party system change: mainstream political parties prominent in the 1990s faced an electoral wipe-out (with only the MHP making an electoral comeback in later years), whereas alternatives emerged in the form of old political movements rebranding themselves. The main beneficiaries of this political earthquake were the reformist wing of the Welfare/Virtue Party,<sup>12</sup> who regrouped under the leadership of the popular former mayor of Istanbul, Tayyip Erdoğan, with a more moderate political agenda, and the CHP which drew support from secular urban and Alevi voters, both of whom concerned with the resurgence of political Islam. This is in accordance with the thesis that high economic inequality tends to increase support for the role of religion in politics, weakening secular attitudes toward the political system.<sup>13</sup> Baykal himself, who resigned after the 1999 elections, was resuscitated from the political graveyard and once again elected as chairman of the party. The twin economic crises fueled opposition among certain segments of the society against both the political system and the IMF-directed economic liberalization of the previous two decades. Although revival of social protest during this era generated a favorable environment for a leftist alternative, as seen in large parts of Latin America,<sup>14</sup> due to aforementioned reasons, the CHP hardly benefited from this political climate. It was instead the AKP that co-opted and molded the mass opposition in ensuing years for its own project that juxtaposed Islamic populism with neo-liberal principles.<sup>15</sup>

Having once again entered parliament following the 2002 general election, the CHP under Baykal assumed the role of main opposition party.<sup>16</sup> Arguably, Baykal did not use his second coming as an opportunity to rebuild the CHP into a mass organization that was able to match the AKP electoral machine. During this period, Baykal's CHP continued to wage the cultural war of the 1990s. This restricted the party's support to a minority group composed of secular urban voters and Alevis, whereas the AKP, no doubt taking advantage of its access to state resources, became a catchall party. Unable to compete with the ruling AKP electorally, the CHP practiced what may aptly be described as opposition by reliance on "veto players"<sup>17</sup> between 2002 and 2010. Lacking parliamentary seats to prevent the passage of legislation by the AKP, the CHP relied heavily on extra-parliamentary forces to conduct political opposition. This involved maintaining close ties with Turkey's military, referral of legislation (deemed by the CHP as unconstitutional) to the constitutional court for annulment<sup>18</sup> and supporting or petitioning President Sezer to engage in similar behavior. Whilst the party's reliance on veto players was characterized by some circles as undemocratic, such tactics were rational, in that they allowed the CHP to wield greater political power than its parliamentary strength would have allowed.

This said, the party was perceived to be an advocate of "opposition for the sake of opposition" and not producing credible policy alternatives to those of the AKP. Instead, the CHP was engaged in a process of playing upon voters' fears.<sup>19</sup> A dyadic, black and white approach to issues projection was adopted, in which voters were essentially asked to join either the good or the bad side. Proposals to have a public discussion and ultimate solution on the issue of the headscarf were demonized by the CHP. Proponents of headscarf reform were demonized as religious reactionaries, whilst those in favor of maintaining the ban were represented as the true guardians of secularism. During the 2004 negotiations of the Cyprus problem, sympathizers of the AKP-brokered Annan Peace plan were virtually branded as traitors, whilst CHP policies to maintain the status quo on the island were projected as expressions of genuine patriotism. By sharp contrast with its historical support for Westernization reforms, the CHP had adopted a Eurosceptic discourse and towed a defensive nationalist line during this period.<sup>20</sup> The portrayal of major areas of public policy in black and white terms by the CHP ultimately served to polarize political opinion on these controversial issues, contributing to a lack of democratic consolidation.<sup>21</sup> During 2007, when the state prosecutor filed a closure case against the AKP, accusing the party to be a focus of anti-secular behavior, the CHP gave its tacit backing.<sup>22</sup>

Due to its failure to respond to the environmental changes since the AKP came to power (for a summary, see note<sup>23</sup>), the CHP experienced electoral stagnation, membership apathy, and diminished access to resources. Such stances over public policy ensured that the CHP share of the popular vote hovered around the 20 percent mark. With a conservative agenda that could apply to a majority of Turkish and Kurdish voters and distributing resources to low-income voters, the AKP quickly rose as the choice for a wide array of constituencies—the only party with truly a national base of support.<sup>24</sup> Weak leaders tend to appoint weak advisers fearing that more

competent ones could challenge and replace them.<sup>25</sup> Concerned about internal challenges to his leadership, Baykal naturally surrounded himself with politically incompetent party officials who lacked a power base of their own and owed their positions to him. During these years, the party had very little leadership turnover; a small group of figures tied to Baykal maintained a tight grip on the party organization (such as the General Secretary Önder Sav) and tried to limit the rise of reformers within the CHP.<sup>26</sup> While perpetuating Baykal's control, this political arrangement also confined the CHP into permanent minority status.

Despite his repeated poor electoral performance, what ironically led to leadership turnover within the CHP was an exogenous shock rarely seen in Turkish politics—a sex tape implicating Deniz Baykal and his chief of staff, Nesrin Baytok.<sup>27</sup> Following Baykal's resignation, and with only three weeks left for the national convention, the CHP elites quickly lined up behind Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the 2009 mayoral candidate for Istanbul; he was elected to the chairmanship of the party on the first ballot with 1189 votes out of 1200.<sup>28</sup> This initial outpouring of support should not belie the difficult task faced by Kılıçdaroğlu, however. With only one year left, he was to lead a party long recognized by students of Turkish politics to be in a protracted state of atrophy into the 2011 elections. During the campaign, the new party administration indeed took unprecedented measures to instigate observable change within the party organization and political discourse, all in an effort to transform voter opinion and project the new CHP as a genuinely “representative” political party.

### Changes under the Kılıçdaroğlu Administration

Scholars have long recognized leadership turnover to be one of the main driving forces behind party adaptation.<sup>29</sup> The CHP was no exception to this premise; the 2011 general elections served as a referendum on the new leadership of the party and its revised program. It was widely accepted that the electoral outcome would demonstrate to the rank and file members, as well as students of Turkish politics, the extent of Kılıçdaroğlu's appeal with the Turkish electorate, thereby signaling whether or not the new CHP could ever become a credible alternative to the AKP. From the standpoint of internal party dynamics, a satisfactory electoral performance by the party would help strengthen Kılıçdaroğlu's hand against the intra-party opposition, and give him the autonomy required to continue with reforming the party, whereas a poor electoral showing would most likely allow Baykal (Önder Sav) loyalists to challenge the new leadership and hamper efforts to renew the cadres and the political agenda of the CHP. A comprehensive analysis of the 2011 parliamentary elections is beyond the scope of this article.<sup>30</sup> Instead, this article focuses on the results of the CHP and closely analyzes its electoral performance in selected districts within the three major cities, namely Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir to discuss how the party managed at the polls after its recent appeals to low-income voters. Given its recent populist turn, how did the new CHP fare with the Turkish urban voters during the 2011 national elections in comparison to 2007? Did Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership revitalize the party and allow it to expand its base by appealing to new groups?

Has there been any meaningful change in the electoral performance of the CHP under Kılıçdaroğlu compared to the Baykal era?

It would not be wrong to suggest that Kılıçdaroğlu's sudden rise was not accompanied by a policy team, such as the "left of center" movement associated with Bülent Ecevit's leadership quest in the early 1970s.<sup>31</sup> Rather than being part of a well-developed ideological agenda, changes within the CHP mostly materialized in a piecemeal fashion in response to criticisms against the previous leadership's nationalist discourse and policies, EU skepticism, cultural elitism, authoritarian political style, and inability to appeal to the urban poor. In an attempt to recover lost ground against the ruling AKP, the Kılıçdaroğlu administration has taken steps to address three key issues: the party's ideological crisis, leadership weakness, and organizational challenges. This section evaluates his record in promoting change in these areas from the May 2010 party congress until the 2011 general elections.

Faced with the prospect of electoral ghettoization,<sup>32</sup> the Kılıçdaroğlu administration began to position the party closer to the center on several salient issues and toned down its Kemalist rhetoric to appeal to a wider segment of the electorate. This includes a limited but noticeable shift away from the party's longstanding positions on the headscarf debate and the Kurdish problem, without alienating the core electoral base of the party. For instance, the new election manifesto approached the Kurdish question from the paradigm of democratization, with a promise to seek an end to the military conflict, to enhance cultural rights for Kurds, to allow language classes in Kurdish, to open the state archives related to the Dersim massacre, to turn the Diyarbakir prison into a museum, and to change the names of military barracks considered offensive or inappropriate by people in the region. It also included a pledge to form a commission for investigating the 'murders by unknown perpetrators' committed in the Southeast Anatolia during the 1990s.

As the new leader with a clean record, Kılıçdaroğlu took the center stage during this transformation process. His persona was "practically a summary of what the new CHP stood for"<sup>33</sup> in this period. Furthermore, Kılıçdaroğlu brought dynamism to the CHP's organizational structure, as can be seen from the recent shuffle among the upper echelons of the party. At the 33rd party convention during which Kılıçdaroğlu was first elected as chairman, many long-time Baykal supporters lost their positions within the Party Council to a coalition of Sav loyalists and reformists handpicked by Kılıçdaroğlu. This uneasy balance between the two groups finally broke when Kılıçdaroğlu decided to convoke an early national convention in December 2010, with the outcome being that Sav loyalists were effectively weeded out from high-level positions. In their place, he invited several well-known academics, journalists, artists, intellectuals, and union leaders as part of an effort to put the party in closer contact with progressive groups within Turkish society and streamline its outdated image.<sup>34</sup> In a balancing act, however, the new administration recruited candidates from business circles to bolster the CHP's image as a center party.

The much sought position of General Secretary, and with that the control of party organization, was handed to Gürsel Tekin, the former Istanbul provincial chairman and a well-known reformist within Baykal's CHP. After years of neglect and partisan



appointments from Ankara, the provincial chapters were not, however, up to the task of mobilizing masses. Despite assurances given by Tekin, the CHP local branches clearly fell behind Kılıçdaroğlu's energetic campaign. There were also rumors that some of these former party officials had worked against the CHP during the 2011 campaign.<sup>35</sup> Juxtaposed to the well-oiled machine of the governing party, the CHP local officials did a much poorer job in recruiting volunteers and putting them in contact with voters, conducting get-out-the-vote campaigns, and having a presence at voting booths during the election. The party leadership tried to overcome these organizational difficulties by running a national campaign primarily based on the positive personal image of Kılıçdaroğlu, which was supplemented by the efforts of some media-friendly MP candidates and an excess reliance on web technology to appeal to voters directly.

### The 2011 Election Results

In a speech delivered on election night, Kılıçdaroğlu informed reporters that "there is now a stronger CHP" as the party had added 3.5 million new voters since the 2007 elections, and received its highest level of support since the September 12, 1980, coup d'état. In an upbeat tone, he declared that the new CHP would resume its fight for democratic ideals and liberty and beginning the next day, he would go back to working with provincial and district level party organizations to generate new supporters, as if elections would be held soon.<sup>36</sup> Despite these encouraging words, however, many party enthusiasts were upset with the result, as the CHP had set a psychological barrier of 30 percent for success prior to polling day. They had to once again see their party amongst the ranks of the opposition, whilst the AKP went on to win an unprecedented third consecutive term with an increased vote share.

Considering the party's repeatedly poor electoral results under Baykal, the key question here is what can be considered a satisfactory performance. As in the 2002 and 2007 parliamentary elections, the CHP came in second behind the ruling AKP to retain the title of main opposition party, gaining 25.9 percent and 135 (out of 550) seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (against the AKP's 49.9 percent and 327/550 seats). As shown in Table 1, this constitutes a limited overall

**Table 1.** Overall Results of Political Parties and Independents Entering the Turkish National Assembly

Party	Valid votes (mil.)	Percent	Seats	Swing from 2007 (percent)
AKP	21.4	49.9	327	3.3
CHP	11.1	25.9	135	5
MHP	5.5	12.9	53	-1.2
Independents	2.8	6.65	35	1.4

increase in the level of support for the party compared to the two previous general elections. In comparison to 2007, the CHP has increased its electoral performance in all of Turkey's seven regions with an average national swing of four and a half percent. Its strongholds have not altered since 2007, and the party maintains greatest amount of strength in the Marmara (30.98 percent), Aegean (35.77 percent), and Mediterranean (29.02 percent) regions.<sup>37</sup> Even within these areas, the CHP vote is concentrated on a select number of provinces in which secular urban life had taken strong root, such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Eskisehir, Antalya, Adana, Mersin, and Edirne. Against this, the Eastern (9.81 percent) and South Eastern (8.71 percent) regions remain the party's weakest areas with less than 10 percent of the total regional votes in each region. The CHP is not alone in this downturn, as the AKP has also experienced a decline in its share of the vote in the same regions.<sup>38</sup> An important observation can also be made whereby a slowdown in the electoral performance of the AKP is also traceable: In 2007, the average percentage of votes from other political parties to the AKP stood at 14.78 percent. This figure at the 2011 elections has declined to 2.78 percent. This suggests maturation in the pace of vote gain of the AKP matched by a moderate increase in vote swing toward the CHP.

Despite Kılıçdaroğlu's efforts during the campaign to put the party on a competitive position against the ruling AKP in every region, most of its support continues to come from the more urbanized parts of the country. The party made gains in 14 of the 16 most populous provinces, except for Şanlıurfa and Van, though even the increased CHP vote remained below its national average in the conservative industrial cities of Bursa (24.98 percent) and Kocaeli (24.63 percent). But it should be noted that the CHP is far from being a hegemonic force in these cities; in the two most populous provinces, Istanbul and Ankara, it was once again surpassed by the AKP. On the whole, its votes increased in all but 15 provinces (66 provinces in total) out of which 11 are located in predominantly Kurdish areas of the country. On the other hand, the party has done relatively well in 38 provinces (increase between three to 10 percent) and achieved tremendous success in nine other provinces, whereas in 20 provinces, mostly located in the Central Anatolian and inner parts of the Black Sea regions, the surge has remained limited. As shown in Table 1, provinces in which the CHP's electoral support was above the 15 percent threshold can be clustered into five groups: (1) the Thrace region; (2) urban metropolis such as Istanbul and Ankara; (3) provinces along the Aegean and the Mediterranean coast; (4) the two Alevi axes along Erzincan, Tunceli, Malatya, and Tokat, Çorum, and Amasya; and (5) small pockets of social democratic zones along the Black Sea coastline.<sup>39</sup>

Several observations can be added here. First, the CHP has significantly boosted its support among provinces in the Thrace and the Aegean regions with large farmer and retired communities: 15.85 percent increase in Edirne, 13.8 percent in Çanakkale, 13.75 percent in Aydın, 12.56 percent in Kırklareli, 11.36 percent in Muğla, 10.14 percent in Tekirdağ, 9.5 percent in Balıkesir, and 9.47 percent in Manisa. Its impressive gains become more apparent in light of the fact six out of nine provinces in which the party saw its vote share increase by more than 10 percent are situated in these two regions. Local economies of these two areas heavily depend on subsidized cash crops,

which have historically been exported to the Western markets. The reduction of subsidies and rising production costs severely affected these communities, while severing their patronage ties to center-right parties (for changes in Turkish agriculture, see note<sup>40</sup>). Hard hit by the 2001 economic crisis and the neo-liberal transformation it engendered in the agricultural sector, these two groups turned away from their old parties for alternative options, including the MHP and the Youth Party (*Genç Parti*) in the 2002 and 2007 general elections.<sup>41</sup> Those policies targeting farmers and retirees, which were devised as part of its new economic agenda, seem to have drawn some of these votes to Kılıçdaroğlu's CHP. Moreover, the party has benefited from high turnout in predominantly Alevi districts across central Anatolia. Although the CHP has historically been the choice of majority Alevi voters, leaders of the Alevi community were growingly critical of its insufficient support for their political agenda in recent years, and of the fact that their representatives no longer had much influence within the party.<sup>42</sup> An Alevi himself, Kılıçdaroğlu's election as chairman, coupled with the nomination of several prominent Alevi candidates, seems to have neutralized some of these criticisms for the time being and persuaded the Alevi voters to come out in large numbers during the election.

The most far-reaching impact of the 2011 election has arguably been the complete disappearance from the political arena of the center-right tradition, a trend that was in making since the early 1990s, which ruled Turkey for almost five decades until 2002. Rising political polarization, the high 10 percent electoral threshold, and the depletion of old patronage networks following the 1999 and 2001 economic crises seem to have put an end to the domination of center-right political parties alternating in power, thereby stabilizing the highly fragmented Turkish party system.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, the volatility index witnessed a sharp fall from 53.5 in 2002 to 17.8 in 2007 and 10.2 in 2011, its lowest point since the 1961 election.<sup>44</sup> Most center-right voters have instead been co-opted into the AKP-led political coalition, with some cadres of center-right parties at the local level taking refuge in its political organization. Instead, the governing AKP has achieved what many observers of Turkish politics have referred to as unprecedented, leading some to discuss whether we are witnessing the rise of a predominant party system.<sup>45</sup> Since the beginning of multiparty politics (1946), no political party has won three consecutive general elections and also increased its vote share each time. Aside from gaining electoral majority each time, the AKP won almost two-thirds of the seats in the Grand National Assembly throughout the decade: 66 percent in 2002, 62 percent in 2007, and 59.3 percent in 2011.<sup>46</sup>

In comparison to the center-right parties, whose electoral support was precarious, the AKP has been rewarded by voters for several relative successes: the promulgation and maintenance of predictable and stable macroeconomic conditions, resource redistribution, low inflation, significant economic growth (both GDP and per capita incomes), and improvement of state services such as improved infrastructure, health, and welfare services.<sup>47</sup> During a brief downturn of economic growth during the beginning of the global recession and unlike forecasters predicted,<sup>48</sup> the party

not only recovered votes it lost at the 2009 local elections but also gained new ones to capture approximately half of the electorate.

The election results clearly indicate that for parties other than the AKP, Turkish politics largely revolves around religion (secularism vs. Islam), ethnicity (Turkish vs. Kurdish nationalism), and regional spatial dimension forged during the early 1990s,<sup>49</sup> and will do so for at least some time. The ruling AKP continues to receive support from majority of the Turkish nationalist and Muslim voters, preventing competition from the ranks of the ultranationalist MHP and other Islamist parties to erode its electoral base, and draws enough support from Kurdish voters based on patronage<sup>50</sup> to remain as the only party in Turkish politics with a national scope, both in its message and organization. Only the independent MP candidates endorsed by the Kurdish nationalist Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP), Peace and Democracy Party had done well enough to succeed in challenging the AKP on its home turf and weaken its electoral appeal in the Kurdish-dominated Southeastern provinces, when other parties either exhausted their electoral support such as the Islamist Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP) and the center-right Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*) or managed to only hold their ground like the ultra-nationalist MHP or the CHP. Kılıçdaroğlu's efforts to adapt a more populist discourse which highlights the concerns of socioeconomic groups left out of the AKP's neo-liberal model and thereby revitalize the left vs. right fault line in Turkish politics seems not to have generated the result intended amongst the top leadership. While the CHP achieved a modest increase in vote share, its goal to directly appeal to the masses was left unfilled. As will be shown in the next section, the new voters it gained in the 2011 elections were largely not from the urban poor and that the CHP's appeal remains weak in the vote-rich slums of large cities.

### Electoral Analysis

Focusing on the country's three most densely populated cities, the CHP gained mixed results. In Istanbul, the party increased its share of the popular vote from 26 percent in 2007 to 31 percent in 2011, but placed first in only seven out of 40 electoral districts (Çatalca, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, Adalar, Sarıyer, Şişli, and Bakırköy). In Ankara, the CHP won only two districts out of 25 (Çankaya and Yenimahalle), the rest being swept up by the AKP. Izmir continues to remain the odd province out of the big three, in which the CHP won Izmir. This said, the AKP also managed to increase its share of the vote in the province, a consistent trend since the 2002 elections, mainly by fielding politically attractive candidates such as Ertuğrul Günay (Minister of Culture) and Binali Yıldırım (Minister for Transportation). Looking at the larger picture, there were only ten provinces out of 81 where the AKP was not the overall winner, largely reflective of the incumbent's national electoral score of 49.9 percent.

The bulk of this article's assessment of electoral success focuses on analyzing the electoral results of a number of key districts in Turkey's three largest cities. The districts in the selected cities have been chosen 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 indicate newly urbanized migrants living in *gecekondu* areas (as in the case of Istanbul districts such as Sultanbeyli, Güngören, and Bağcılar); and a predominant occupational background of small-/large-scale industry, manufacturing, and/or trade (as in the case of Izmir's districts of Gaziemir, Buca, and Çiğli). The most obvious and consistent finding that carries over from Ciddi's 2008 analysis is the reiteration of the idea that the CHP finds it difficult to build broad electoral alliances and attract a significant number of voter types described above. Another way of stating this is by arguing that an analysis of three largest centers (Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir) 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.

In the case of Istanbul, the AKP continued to build upon its existing successes, clearly displayed by the party's average being close to its near 50 percent national average. In the tracked districts (Table 2), the AKP has made gains in all seven districts, with Sultanbeyli having the lowest rate of increase in comparison to 2007 (2 percent). It is clear from the table that the AKP clearly leads in lower income/working class electoral districts, which is mirrored by the CHP's comparatively lower performance, standing at 31 percent average for Istanbul. This electoral trend has its roots in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the Islamist movement made inroads into the slums of major cities. The AKP has largely inherited the organizational networks laid during this period, effectively using them for electoral gain.<sup>51</sup>

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

Istanbul districts	2011 <sup>a</sup>	2007 <sup>a</sup>	2002 <sup>a</sup>	1999 <sup>b</sup>	Swing 2007–11
Zeytinburnu	52	47	41	22	5
Gungoren	56	51	43	25	5
Esenler	65	61	54	33	4
Bagcilar	60	57	49	30	3
Sultanbeyli	69	67	52	42	2
Umraniye	58	52	45	27	6
Beykoz	53	48	42	23	5
District averages	59	55	47	29	4
Party's vote share for Istanbul	49	45	37	22	

<sup>a</sup>Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*).

<sup>b</sup>Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*).

In the case of the seven electoral districts, the AKP more than doubles the vote shares of the CHP in every instance and in the cases of Esenler and Sultanbeyli, more than quadruples the CHP (Table 3).

Similar developments can also be cited in the case of Ankara. Like Istanbul, the AKP's average for Ankara approximates its national average at the 50 percent margin, although its performance in the tracked districts far surpasses this figure. This said, the vote gains made by the AKP since 2007 has slowed in comparison to 2007 (Table 4). Gaining an average of 2 percent in the cited districts, four out of the seven have shown little to no gain (noticeable gains only in Kalecik and Altındağ). The CHP in comparison has succeeded in raising its party average in Ankara from 28 percent in 2007 to 32 percent in 2011 (see Table 5). However, this is offset by maintaining lower district averages in lower socioeconomic status districts (with the exception of Yenimahalle). The electoral picture remains somewhat similar to 2007 national elections whereby the CHP continues to remain a distant second choice representative for voters who would ordinarily be happy to identify themselves with social democratic parties. As in 2007, the CHP has made notable gains in 2011, but it remains far from being perceived as a serious challenger to the AKP as a single party government. From the CHP's perspective, it can be argued that despite leadership change, followed by a subsequent overhaul of the party's governing elite, by-laws, party program, election manifesto, and its renewed claim to be the people's party, all these changes have yet to convince the majority of voters. From the AKP's vantage point, it can be argued that the 2011 elections are very much representative of the party's consolidation of its voter base. The governing party has made mostly modest gains in all of the electoral districts tracked as well as nationally, roughly equivalent to one out of two valid votes cast.

As in the case of 2007, Izmir remains the odd city out in the examination of Turkey's three largest cities. Izmir remains the stronghold of the CHP with a

Table 3. Vote Shares (Percent) of Valid Votes for CHP–DSP in Istanbul

Istanbul districts	S3 <sup>a</sup>	2011	S2 <sup>b</sup>	2007	S1 <sup>c</sup>	2002	1999
Zeytinburnu	4	23	1	19	–18	18	36
Gungoren	3	25	1	22	–13	21	34
Esenler	2	15	0	13	–19	13	32
Bagcilar	3	18	–1	15	–20	16	36
Sultanbeyli	1	9	0	8	–9	8	17
Umraniye	1	25	1	24	–11	23	34
Beykoz	8	28	7	20	–20	13	33
District averages	3	20	1	17	–16	16	32
Party's vote share for Istanbul		31		27		25	39

<sup>a</sup>Swing 2007–11: only CHP vote shares indicated.

<sup>b</sup>Swing 2002–07.

<sup>c</sup>Swing 1999–2002.

**Table 4.** Vote Shares (Percent) of Valid Votes for Islamist Parties in Ankara

Ankara districts	2011 <sup>a</sup>	2007 <sup>a</sup>	2002 <sup>a</sup>	1999 <sup>b</sup>	Swing 2007–11
Mamak	50	50	43	21	0
Kazan	66	66	54	19	0
Sincan	64	64	54	25	0
Yenimahalle	40	39	33	16	1
Kecioren	55	55	46	21	0
Altindag	63	60	50	25	3
Kalecik	64	57	48	17	7
District averages	57	56	47	21	2
Party's vote share for Ankara	50	48	42	16	

<sup>a</sup>Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*).

<sup>b</sup>Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*).

provincial average of 43.5 percent, nearly twice its national average.<sup>52</sup> The CHP succeeded in increasing its vote share in the province by a margin of 8 percent since 2007, and by an average of 5 percent in the cited districts (see Table 6). In contrast, the AKP's average in the province remains significantly less than national average, despite an increase of 6 percent since 2007. However, one should be careful when reaching conclusions in the province: The AKP has made considerable inroads into what can be described as the bastion of secularism. Out of the seven districts in Table 7, the AKP has outperformed the CHP in four districts (Gaziemir, Aliağa, Torbali, and Kiraz). Whilst the province continues to be a stronghold for the CHP, it must also be stated that since 2002, the AKP has consistently managed to increase

**Table 5.** Vote Shares of Valid Votes for CHP–DSP in Ankara

Ankara districts	S3 <sup>a</sup>	2011	S2 <sup>b</sup>	2007	S1 <sup>c</sup>	2002	1999
Mamak	3	34	1	31	–7	30	37
Kazan	2	11	–3	9	–6	12	18
Sincan	3	15	–2	12	–10	14	24
Yenimahalle	5	41	1	36	–7	35	42
Kecioren	3	24	–2	21	–10	23	33
Altindag	1	22	–1	21	–11	22	33
Kalecik	–1	16	3	17	–10	14	24
District averages	2	23	0	21	–9	21	30
Party's vote share for Ankara		32		28		19	26

<sup>a</sup>Swing 2007–11: only CHP vote shares indicated.

<sup>b</sup>Swing 2002–07.

<sup>c</sup>Swing 1999–2002.

Table 6. Vote Shares of Valid Votes for CHP–DSP in Izmir

Izmir districts	S3 <sup>a</sup>	2011	S2 <sup>b</sup>	2007	S1 <sup>c</sup>	2002	1999
Buca	7	38	4	31	−20	27	47
Gaziemir	−15	14	3	29	−17	26	43
Cigli	10	51	4	41	−19	37	56
Aliaga	4	39	7	35	−18	28	46
Torbali	11	37	4	26	−24	22	46
Kiraz	10	34	3	24	−16	21	37
Beydag	10	49	9	39	−28	30	58
District averages	5	37	5	32	−20	27	48
Party's vote share for Izmir		43.5		35.6		30.7	50

<sup>a</sup>Swing 2007–11: only CHP vote shares indicated.

<sup>b</sup>Swing 2002–07.

<sup>c</sup>Swing 1999–2002.

Table 7. Vote Shares (Percent) of Valid Votes for Islamist Parties in Izmir

Izmir districts	2011 <sup>a</sup>	2007 <sup>a</sup>	2002 <sup>a</sup>	1999 <sup>b</sup>	Swing 2007–11
Buca	38	37	22	6	1
Gaziemir	39	34	19	4	5
Cigli	31	27	15	4	4
Aliaga	38	31	22	6	7
Torbali	39	33	16	6	6
Kiraz	45	31	14	2	14
Beydag	31	19	11	3	12
District averages	37	30	17	4	7
Party's vote share for Izmir	36.5	30.2	16.8	4.4	

<sup>a</sup>Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*).

<sup>b</sup>Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*).

its vote share in the province as a whole and in districts typified by lower socioeco-  
nomic status voters.

Discussion

At the time of writing, it is still too early to evaluate the extent to which Kılıçdaro-  
ğlu's policies have proved successful. Between the 2007 and 2011 general elections,  
little has changed in the concentration of the CHP votes. Kılıçdaroğlu's rise to the top  
and the shift to a populist line in the ensuing months did not greatly expand the  
party's votes, dashing hopes that an alignment a la the 1973 election<sup>53</sup> would



materialize at the polls. The party continues to be plagued by electoral “ghettoization” and appeal to narrow, demographically specific niches of voters, albeit with some expansion into secular middle class voters. This is partly outside of the CHP and the new administration’s control: the Erdogan-led AKP is one of the most formidable political forces to have developed in Turkey’s electoral history. Rather than representing a singular phenomenon, it must be pointed out that each and every political party, both in and out of parliament, finds it exceedingly difficult to improve its electoral performance in relation to the governing party. In 2002, the CHP was the only party other than the AKP to enter parliament. In 2007 and 2011, the pro-nationalist MHP was the only other party to scrape by the 10 percent minimum threshold required to enter parliament.<sup>54</sup> Becoming an electorally credible party in place of the AKP is not a task, which bedevils the CHP alone, but every other political party. While the ruling party secured the votes of nearly one in two citizens, a voting bloc which over the last decade increasingly becomes accustomed to perceiving the rule of government as instrument for provision public services and resource redistribution,<sup>55</sup> other parties tended to attract voters mostly for ideological reasons: Kemalist seculars and Alevis for the CHP, Turkish ultra-nationalists for the MHP, Kurdish nationalists for the BDP, and radical Islamists for the SP.<sup>56</sup>

This said, the CHP is interested in maximizing its vote share and has signaled a break with past policies under Kılıçdaroğlu. It is clear that he is not interested in opposition for the sake of opposition, which was what essentially typified the party during Deniz Baykal’s chairmanship. Kılıçdaroğlu is instead pushing for change at two levels: in terms of the party’s political platform and ideological orientation, the new administration is keen to present a genuinely “inclusive” and “representative” image. This implies taking on difficult issues such as minority rights (read Kurdish question) and a sincere discussion on laicism/secularism (read headscarf issue), backed up by clear policy openings. While we do not expect the CHP to immediately achieve significant electoral gains amongst pious Muslim and Kurdish voters, continuation of these policies could help the party in making inroads into the electoral coalition of the government over the long term. This may, however, be more difficult to achieve in practice. For the most part, parties are conservative organizations that are characterized more by continuity than radical change.<sup>57</sup> Witnessing major shifts in their ideological line is a rare occasion; what is more likely is incremental change that gradually occurs over time, with some initial resistance and strategic adaptation.

Kılıçdaroğlu’s CHP is indeed a case in point. Despite leadership change, factions within the party who have strict interpretations of issue related to ethnicity and religiosity continue to constrain the ability of the leadership to instigate change. During late January 2013, a CHP member of parliament Birgül Ayman Güler from Izmir stated “we (the CHP) cannot consider the Kurdish ethnic group and the Turkish nation on an equal level.” This statement resulted in the resignation of another CHP parliamentarian and demonstrated that Kılıçdaroğlu has a very difficult task of balancing the views of different factions existing amongst party ranks whilst at the same time pushing ahead with change. Second, in terms of party structure and

elites, the CHP has instigated unprecedented changes: In approximately one-third of all provincial electoral districts, the CHP initiated the use of primary elections, a process which is generally the unquestioned prerogative of the party leader. This has allowed the party to field preferred candidates of the rank and file members (also exclude unpopular deputies from the Baykal period) and present the solid image of a “representative” organization to the wider electorate. Furthermore, the party’s membership requirements have been significantly improved to easily allow interested persons from joining and having a voice with the running of the party (prior to this, joining the party was a difficult task). This is an attempt to change public perception regarding the CHP from being an elitist party to one that listens and represents voter demands. Being out of power for almost three decades, however, the CHP has difficulty in persuading voters that it constitutes a viable alternative to the ruling AKP. In order to make its case credible, it needs to win more municipalities in the upcoming local elections.

Although ideological and structural challenges are noteworthy, it must also be pointed out that they do have their downsides: One problem with presenting an increased representative and listening image is reduction in leadership effectiveness: the more parliamentary candidates and convention delegates are freely chosen by the provincial and district constituencies/members of the party, the less incentive they may have to tow the party line as determined by the leader. In that sense, Kılıçdaroğlu can take lessons from the example of SHP, the main Turkish social democratic party in the 1980s and early 1990s, which electorally imploded amidst ideological battles between its leftist, Kurdish, Kemalist, and Alevi factions.<sup>58</sup> For successful adaptation—changes in policy agenda and organizational structure—party elites first choose an appropriate strategy and then seek support from the rank and file members and then the general electorate.<sup>59</sup> Although changes in the political environment (elimination of veto players and AKP’s electoral hegemony) give an incentive to the new leadership to transform the CHP, it is not clear if Kılıçdaroğlu has enough political capital within the party to accomplish these changes. Party leaders on the verge of pushing for drastic changes require the ability to make decisions without the approval of lower-level officials and activists. Making the party more representative before this project is consummated then carries the risk of derailing the reform process.

In that sense, the CHP faces an acute problem over its strategic options, not unlike what many post-war socialist and leftist parties previously encountered. For remaining electorally competitive against the ruling AKP, the party needs to moderate its ideological agenda and appeal to a diverse set of constituencies. Such a pragmatic course, even if that were to attract new votes, remains unacceptable for the core Kemalist base. Perhaps more importantly, even if such changes are internalized and take root, what is the likelihood that they will help improve the party’s electoral fortunes? At present, this is an unanswerable question; however, it is important to note that for the CHP to be considered a credible government alternative to the AKP, it must be in a position to put its policy suggestions to pasture. Majority of Turkish voters tend to place themselves to the right and are pious Muslims, culturally speaking. Barring a

demographic change or external shocks that reshape the electorate, there are not many available floating voters who can be picked by the CHP. During the previous decade, the ruling AKP has managed to consolidate its electoral hegemony within the political right.<sup>60</sup>

Having said this, a recent wave of popular protests that took place during the summer of 2013 unexpectedly shook the confidence and possibly the credibility of the AKP. In what has been widely interpreted as a latent and emerging anti-AKP protest, the “Gezi Park” protests signaled to the incumbent that democratic governance does not begin and end at the ballot box. One common theme uniting the protestors is the belief that the AKP is increasingly curtailing democratic freedoms and individual choice based on its increasingly conservative legislative agenda and governance style.<sup>61</sup> Another is that opposition parties have been purposefully de-emphasized as voter rallying points against the AKP. Instead, themes of individual citizen participation have been projected as a constraining element of executive and legislative prerogative. This is largely uncharted territory in the realm of Turkey's political history; a landscape that has largely been dominated by patterns of strong leadership and minimum citizen participation. From the CHP's perspective, emerging political debates surrounding Gezi seem to suggest that despite increasing discontent toward the incumbent by various electoral groups, this does not necessarily translate into increased support for the CHP.

Reliable data on the electoral fortunes of opposition parties since Gezi, especially the CHP, are currently unavailable. What is clear is that the party cannot automatically bank on the growing discontent seen in the ranks of the opposition and that it needs to come up with a credibly reformist message, fresh candidates, and a transparent and participatory organization structure for tapping into the momentum of the protesting crowds. In such a case, the CHP could rise as an institutionalized channel for dissent and opposition against the increasingly authoritarian governing style and policies of the AKP government. This development would not only benefit the CHP electorally but also contribute to democratic consolidation in Turkey. In conclusion, while Kılıçdaroğlu's election as chairman has energized the party base and led to reforms that attracted new voters, the CHP is still far from incorporating the urban poor in major cities and low-income voters who constitute the majority of the Turkish electorate. Furthermore, it has not made great strides in coalescing the democratic critics of the ruling AKP with a clear reformist political agenda to establish a united electoral front. This paper is, however, only a snapshot of the CHP's electoral strength and organizational capacity under Kılıçdaroğlu; with only one election behind us, there is insufficient evidence (and time) to suggest whether the founding party of the republic has made new inroads. The 2014 local and 2015 general elections are likely to provide analysts with a clearer set of results from which to draw conclusions.

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## Notes

1. Gumuscu, "Class, Status, and Party."
2. Ciddi, "The Republican People's Party and the 2007 General Elections."
3. Rubin and Heper, *Political Parties in Turkey*; Uysal and Topak, *Particiler*.
4. Bilâ, *CHP, 1919–2009*; Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*.
5. Çarkoğlu, "The Geography of the April 1999 Turkish Elections."
6. Ayata and Ayata, "The Center-Left Parties in Turkey"; Cosar and Ozman, "Representation Problems of Social Democracy in Turkey."
7. Kınıkioğlu, "The Democratic Left Party."
8. Çarkoğlu, "Macro-Economic Determinants of Electoral Support for Incumbents in Turkey, 1950–1995"; Özbudun, *Party Politics & Social Cleavages in Turkey*.
9. Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*; Secor, "Ideologies in Crisis."
10. Cizre-Sakallioğlu and Yeldan, "Politics, Society and Financial Liberalization"; Öniş, "Domestic Politics Versus Global Dynamics"; Cizre and Yeldan, "The Turkish Encounter with Neo-Liberalism."
11. Roberts, "Social Correlates of Party System Demise and Populist Resurgence in Venezuela"; Seawright, *Party-System Collapse*.
12. Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light"; Gumuscu, "Class, Status, and Party."
13. Karakoç and Başkan, "Religion in Politics How Does Inequality Affect Public Secularization?"
14. Roberts, "The Mobilization of Opposition to Economic Liberalization."
15. Tugal, *Passive revolution*; Yücesan-Özdemir and Coşar, *Silent Violence*.
16. Çarkoğlu, "The Rise of the New Generation Pro-Islamists in Turkey."
17. Tsebelis, *Veto Players*.
18. Belge, "Friends of the Court"; Tezcür, "Judicial Activism in Perilous Times"; Özbudun, *Party Politics & Social Cleavages in Turkey*.
19. Ciddi, *Kemalism in Turkish Politics*.
20. Öniş, "Conservative Globalists Versus Defensive Nationalists"; Gülmez, "The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party"; Celep, "The Republican People's Party and Turkey's EU Membership."
21. Somer, "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey."
22. Ciddi, "Turkey's September 12 the 2010 Referendum."
23. Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey*; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey The Case of the AKP*.
24. Kalaycıoğlu, "Justice and Development Party at the Helm"; Öniş, "The Triumph of Conservative Globalism"; Gumuscu, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey."
25. Egorov and Sonin, "Dictators and Their Viziers."
26. Turan, "Old Soldiers Never Die"; Ayan, "Authoritarian Party Structures in Turkey."
27. Küçükşahin, *Kemal'in gelişi*.
28. A career bureaucrat by profession, Kılıçdaroğlu was first elected as an MP in the 2002 elections and re-elected in 2007. Given the pervasiveness of factional strife, no candidate since Bulent Ecevit's election in the 1972 party convention has received such high level of support. Above all, this should be attributed to Kılıçdaroğlu's high popularity and name recognition following his 2009 mayoral campaign in Istanbul. Despite losing, his tireless campaigning earned him much respect in the public opinion and drew new votes to the party. If the CHP were to make an electoral comeback, the delegates reasoned, Kılıçdaroğlu was their best shot.
29. Harmel and Janda, "An Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change"; Burgess and Levitsky, "Explaining Populist Party Adaptation."

30. For a general study of the 2011 general elections and its political significance, please see Esen and Ciddi, "Turkey's June 2011 Elections"; Aydın-Düzgit, "No Crisis, No Change"; Çarkoğlu, "Turkey's 2011 General Elections."
31. Kili, *1960–1975 döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde gelişmeler*; Güneş-Ayata, *CHP*.
32. Burgess and Levitsky, "Explaining Populist Party Adaptation," 886.
33. Uysal, "Continuity and Rupture."
34. Among these new recruits, Safak Pavey, Gülseren Onaç, Sezgin Tanrıku, and Sencer Ayata were appointed as deputy chairman. Onaç, who is a businesswoman and former chairman of the Women Entrepreneurs Association, was put in charge of party outreach and communications, while Tanrıku, a human-rights lawyer and former president of the Diyarbakir Lawyers' Association, was given the democratization portfolio. Sencer Ayata, a well-known leftist sociologist, became in charge of the party's research office.
35. Aydın-Düzgit, "No Crisis, No Change."
36. For Kılıçdaroğlu's election night speech, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhQkGqZs0bo>.
37. Esen and Ciddi, "Turkey's June 2011 Elections."
38. Yegen, "The 2011 Elections and the Kurdish Question."
39. Esen and Ciddi, "Turkey's June 2011 Elections."
40. Güven, "Reforming Sticky Institutions."
41. Özbudun, "The Reproduction of Clientelism in Regressing Rural Turkey or "Why I Became an 'Erect Ear' 1?"
42. Erman and Göker, "Alevi politics in contemporary Turkey."
43. Kalaycıoğlu, "Justice and Development Party at the Helm"; Gumuscu, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey."
44. Özbudun, *Party Politics & Social Cleavages in Turkey*.
45. Müftüler-Baç and Keyman, "The Era of Dominant-Party Politics"; Özbudun, *Party Politics & Social Cleavages in Turkey*.
46. Ibid.
47. Öniş, "The Triumph of Conservative Globalism."
48. Çarkoğlu, "The March 2009 Local Elections in Turkey"; Eligur, "Turkey's March 2009 Local Elections."
49. Çarkoğlu and Hinich, "A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences"; Çarkoğlu, "The Nature of Left–Right Ideological Self-placement in the Turkish Context"; Jefferson West II, "Regional Cleavages in Turkish Politics."
50. Yörük, "Welfare Provision as Political Containment."
51. Tuğal, *Passive revolution*.
52. The electoral oddity of İzmir is not confined to this electoral cycle but is part of an on-going historical trend in the post-1980 period. For more on this point, see Tosun and Tosun, "Voter Preferences in İzmir from the November 3, 2002 to the July 22, 2007 Elections"; Yıldırım and Haspolat, *Değişen İzmir'i anlamak*.
53. Özbudun and Tachau, "Social Change and Electoral Behavior in Turkey."
54. This point discounts the fact that independent Kurdish MP's who ran as independent candidates then coalesced and formed a party in parliament.
55. Kalaycıoğlu, "Politics of Conservatism in Turkey"; Öniş, "The Triumph of Conservative Globalism."
56. Çarkoğlu, "Ideology or Economic Pragmatism?"; Kalaycıoğlu, "Attitudinal Orientation to Party Organizations in Turkey in the 2000s"; Özbudun, *Party Politics & Social Cleavages in Turkey*.
57. Hunter, *The Transformation of the Workers' Party in Brazil, 1989–2009*.
58. Watts, "Allies and Enemies"; Kömürcü, *Türkiye'de sosyal demokrasi arayışı*.
59. Burgess and Levitsky, "Explaining Populist Party Adaptation."
60. Gumuscu, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey."
61. Ciddi, "Turkey's Dark Clouds for Election Year 2014"; Hintz, "The Might of the Pen(guin) in Turkey's Protests."

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**Sinan Ciddi** is an expert on Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy. He obtained his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 2007 in the field of Political Science. Ciddi continues to author scholarly articles, opinion pieces and book chapters on contemporary Turkish politics and foreign policy, as well as participate in media appearances (see [http://turkishstudies.org/about/sinan\\_ciddi/index.shtml](http://turkishstudies.org/about/sinan_ciddi/index.shtml)). In addition to his teaching and research responsibilities at Georgetown, Ciddi also serves as the Executive Director of the Institute of Turkish Studies. Ciddi was born in Turkey and educated in the United Kingdom. He was previously an instructor at Sabanci University between 2004 and 2008 and completed his Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the same institution between 2007 and 2008. Distinct from his articles and opinion editorials, Ciddi's book titled *Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party: Secularism and Nationalism* (Routledge, January 2009) focuses on the electoral weakness of the Republican People's Party. Between 2008 and 2011, he established the Turkish Studies program at the University of Florida's Center for European Studies.

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