



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

New Middle Eastern Studies

Publication details, including guidelines for submissions:

<http://www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes/>

Where the AKP Stands: A Manifesto-Based Approach to Party Competition in Turkey

Author(s): Salih Bayram

To cite this article: Bayram, Salih, "Where the AKP Stands: A Manifesto-Based Approach to Party Competition in Turkey", *New Middle Eastern Studies*, 5 (2015), <<http://www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes/archives/1372>>.

To link to this article: <http://www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes/archives/1372>

Online Publication Date: 26 March 2015

Disclaimer and Copyright

The NMES editors and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies make every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information contained in the e-journal. However, the editors and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness or suitability for any purpose of the content and disclaim all such representations and warranties whether express or implied to the maximum extent permitted by law. Any views expressed in this publication are the views of the authors and not the views of the Editors or the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies.

Copyright New Middle Eastern Studies, 2015. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, transmitted or disseminated, in any form, or by any means, without prior written permission from New Middle Eastern Studies, to whom all requests to reproduce copyright material should be directed, in writing.

Terms and conditions:

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Where the AKP Stands: A Manifesto-Based Approach to Party Competition in Turkey

SALIH BAYRAM*

Abstract *Using the Manifesto Project's dataset, this article considers two questions: Where does the AKP stand vis-à-vis other parties in Turkey? What were the dynamics of party competition in recent Turkish elections? With regards to the first question, the article finds that the AKP's manifestos are closer to those of center-right parties in Turkey, rather than to those of Islamist parties. It also finds that in the AKP's overall discourse, the most important and persistent element is a focus on technocratic issues, referring to promises such as more investment in education, cultural activities, and technology and infrastructure, which are relatively uncontroversial in Turkey. With regards to the second question, the main finding of the paper is that dramatic re-arrangements happened in the relative positions of the parties, mostly involving the CHP (the main opposition party) which experienced major shifts in its attitude towards nationalism and new left issues in each of the last two elections. The AKP and the MHP increasingly became more nationalist in successive elections in the 2000s, and all parties put increasingly more emphasis on technocratic issues, reflecting a fierce competition in that field.*

Introduction

Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been compared to many other parties and movements both from Turkey and from abroad, including the Christian democratic parties of Europe,¹ Islamist and secular movements and parties from the Arab world,² social democratic

* Salih Bayram is an Assistant Professor of International Relations at Yalova University.

¹ William Hale compares and contrasts AKP with MRP of France, CDU/CSU of Germany and Christian Democrats of Italy. See Hale, "Christian Democracy and the AKP: Parallels and Contrasts", *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 293-310.

² A. Kadir Yıldırım compares "Muslim democratic parties in Turkey, Egypt and Morocco", Gamze Çavdar compares AKP to other "political Islamist" parties in the Middle east, and Mounir Shafiq draws parallels between Turkey's AKP on the one hand and Egypt's Nasserism and the Palestinian Fatah on the other to make the case that leaders' origins in Islamist movements and their lifestyles cannot be sufficient grounds to describe the party as Islamist. See Yıldırım, "Muslim Democratic Parties in Turkey, Egypt, and Morocco: An Economic Explanation", *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 4 (2009): 65; Çavdar, "Islamist New Thinking in Turkey: A Model for Political Learning?" *Political Science Quarterly* 121, no. 3 (2006): 478; and Shafiq, "Turkey's Justice and Development Party through Arab Eyes", *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 1 (2009).

parties in Latin America,³ third way parties of Europe,⁴ Republicans of the US,⁵ and center-right and Islamist parties of Turkey.⁶

In these efforts, scholars looked at different aspects of the party such as the political/ideological background of the leadership,⁷ characteristics of the voter base,⁸ structure of the party organization,⁹ content (party program, election manifestos, speeches)

³ Marcie J. Patton compares problems faced by AKP government to those faced by left-wing political parties in Latin America, and more specifically draws parallels between AKP and Brazil's Worker's Party, arguing that "Both Brazil's Workers' Party (PT, Partido dos Trabalhadores) under Lula's leadership and the AKP under Erdogan's have been proponents of neoliberalism with a human face." See Patton, "The Economic Policies of Turkey's AKP Government: Rabbits from a Hat?" *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 3 (2006): 514.

⁴ Ziya Öniş argues that there are "certain parallels between the AKP and the third way style, European social democratic parties". Öniş, "Turkish Modernization and Challenges for the New Europe", *Perceptions* 9, no. Autumn (2004): 14.

⁵ According to Şaban Kardaş, "Analysis of the JDP might be served better by comparing it to the US Republican Party rather than to the European Christian Democrats" because "Instead of a European-style party characterized by a strong identity/ideology, representing narrowly defined class or single-issue interests, based on actively involved grassroots and provincial officers, and headed by a vertical party organization, the JDP may evolve toward an American-style loose party organization, based on the representation of a coalition of interests, mobilized at times of election". Kardaş, "Turkey under the Justice and Development Party: Between Transformation of 'Islamism' and Democratic Consolidation?" *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 2 (2008): 180.

⁶ For studies comparing the AKP to the National Outlook parties, see: Hasret Dikici Bilgin, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Turkey's Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah", *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 3 (2008); Şebnem Gümüşçü and Deniz Sert, "The March 2009 Local Elections and the Inconsistent Democratic Transformation of the AKP Party in Turkey", *Middle East Critique* 19, no. 1 (2010); Ayşe Güneş Ayata and Fatma Tütüncü. "Party Politics of the AKP (2002–2007) and the Predicaments of Women at the Intersection of the Westernist, Islamist and Feminist Discourses in Turkey", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 3 (2008); B. Ali Soner, "The Justice and Development Party's policies towards non-Muslim minorities in Turkey", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010); and Menderes Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation under the AKP's Rule", *The Muslim World* 96 (2006). For studies drawing parallels between the AKP and the center-right parties DP and ANAP, see: Bülent Aras and Aylin Görener, "National Role Conceptions and Foreign Policy Orientation: the Ideational Bases of the Justice and Development Party's Foreign Policy Activism in the Middle East", *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (2010); and Ali Ekber Doğan, "AKP'li Hegemonya Projesi ve Neoliberalizmin Yeniden Dirilişi [AKP's Hegemony Project and the Rebirth of Neo-Liberalism]", *Praksis* 23 (2010).

⁷ Erhan Doğan, among others, calls attention to "the Islamist background of the leadership cadre" of the AKP, Basheer M. Nafi refers to AKP leaders' "strong roots in the Islamic Refah Party", and Mounir Shafiq argues that the AKP cannot be described "as an Islamist party only because of its origins", drawing attention to the similar case of the Palestinian movement Fatah, which for a long time was "accused of being a branch of the 'Muslim Brotherhood'". See Doğan, "The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance", *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005): 433; Nafi, "The Arabs and Modern Turkey: A Century of Changing Perceptions", *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 1 (2009): 73; Shafiq, "Turkey's Justice and Development Party", 34.

⁸ İbrahim Dalmış and Ertan Aydın use survey data from various sources to examine the parties that AKP voters and members supported before the AKP was established, and how the voters defined their political positions. Using survey data, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu examines the determinants of vote for AKP, and compares AKP voters with the voters of other parties on the right. Hakan Yavuz cites survey data on whether AKP voters define themselves as Islamist, rightist, democrat, conservative, social democrat, nationalist, Kemalist, or nationalist-conservative. See Dalmış and Aydın, "The Social Bases of the Justice and Development Party", in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, edited by Ümit Cizre (New York: Routledge, 2008); Kalaycıoğlu, "Justice and Development Party at the Helm: Resurgence of Islam or Restitution of the Right-of-Center Predominant Party?" *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 1 (2010); and Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 108.

⁹ Ayşe Güneş Ayata and Fatma Tütüncü examine women's auxiliaries in AKP's organization, and Pelin Ayan compares party structures of AKP and CHP in terms of the power relations between party headquarters and the local branches. See Ayata and Tütüncü, "Party Politics of the AKP"; and Ayan, "Authoritarian Party Structures

produced by the party,¹⁰ policies followed once in power,¹¹ the lifestyles of leaders and their families,¹² or a combination of these. The names and adjectives used to describe the party have varied greatly and can be placed in three broad categories:

1. Some authors choose adjectives that focus attention on the relationship of the party to Islamist politics in Turkey, each describing this relationship in a different way: an “Islamist” party,¹³ a “pro-Islamic”¹⁴ or “pro-Islamist”¹⁵ party, “a party with a moderate Islamist orientation”,¹⁶ an “Islam-sensitive” party,¹⁷ an “Islam-friendly party”,¹⁸ a party providing “political leadership” to “the Islamic movement” in Turkey,¹⁹ the representative of “Islamist new thinking” in Turkey as in Gorbachev’s new thinking,²⁰ and a “light fundamentalist”²¹ party with a “moderate Islam ideology”.²² Implicit in these descriptions is the idea that AKP is the latest incarnation of a long line of Islamist parties in Turkey, also known as National Outlook parties, which started in 1970 with the National Order Party (MNP) of Necmettin Erbakan.

in Turkey: A Comparison of the Republican People’s Party and the Justice and Development Party”, *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 2 (2010).

¹⁰ For example Gümüşçü and Sert refer to Erdoğan’s speeches and the party program, Ayata and Tütüncü examine the AKP monthly *Türkiye Bülteni* and press interviews by the party leaders, as well as interviews with and questionnaires filled out by the cadre of the party, and Bilgin examines party programs of the AKP and RP. See Gümüşçü and Sert, “March 2009 Local Elections”; Ayata and Tütüncü, “Party Politics of the AKP”; and Bilgin, “Foreign Policy Orientation”.

¹¹ For studies of the AKP’s policies towards religious and ethnic minorities, for example, see Talha Köse, “The AKP and the ‘Alevi Opening’: Understanding the Dynamis of the Rapprochement”, *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 2 (2010); M. Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Özcan, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Justice and Development Party”, *Middle East Policy* 13, no. 1 (2006); Soner, “Policies Towards non-Muslim Minorities”; and Kerem Karaoğlu, “Reimagining Minorities in Turkey: Before and After the AKP”, *Insight Turkey* 12, no. 2 (2010). For studies of AKP’s foreign policy, see Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, “Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era”, *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009); Ramazan Kılınç, “Turkey and the Alliance of Civilizations: Norm Adoption as a Survival Strategy”, *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 3 (2009); Doğan, “Historical and Discursive Roots”; Aras and Görener, “National Role Conceptions”; Bilgin, “Foreign Policy Orientation”; and Ali Rahigh-Aghsan, “Turkey’s EU Quest and Political Cleavages under AKP”, *Review of European Studies* 3, no. 1 (2011).

¹² Hasan Turunç notes that “most of the leaders of the party are conservative with respect to their lifestyle”, and Mounir Shafiq observes that “a large number of the party’s members and leaders cling to aspects of personal religiosity, including the wearing of the hijab by their wives or by female members”, although this is not sufficient grounds to label the party as Islamist. Turunç, “Islamicist or Democratic? The AKP’s Search for Identity in Turkish Politics”, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15, no. 1 (2007): 87; Shafiq, “Turkey’s Justice and Development Party”, 35.

¹³ Ali Ekber Doğan, “29 Mart 2009 Seçimleri ve AKP: Türkiye’nin Siyasal Coğrafyası Açısından Bir Değerlendirme [March 29, 2009 Elections and the AKP: An Evaluation from the Perspective of Turkey’s Political Geography]”, *Praksis* 21 (2009).

¹⁴ Yavuz and Özcan, “The Kurdish Question”.

¹⁵ Bilgin, “Foreign Policy Orientation”.

¹⁶ Öniş, “Turkish Modernization”.

¹⁷ Patton, “Economic Policies”, 515.

¹⁸ Ümit Cizre, “Introduction: The Justice and Development Party: Making Choices, Revisions and Reversals Interactively”, in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, edited by Ümit Cizre (New York: Routledge, 2008): 2.

¹⁹ M. Hakan Yavuz and Nihat Ali Özcan, “Crisis in Turkey: The Conflict of Political Languages”, *Middle East Policy* 14, no. 3 (2007).

²⁰ Çavdar, “Islamist New Thinking”, 480.

²¹ Selen Korad Birkiye, “Changes in the Cultural Policies of Turkey and the Akp’s Impact on Social Engineering and Theatre”, *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 15, no. 3 (2009): 267.

²² Ibid., 261.

Frequently closed down by the military or by the Constitutional Court for activities against secularism, a succession of such parties were founded (the National Salvation Party-MSP, the Welfare Party-RP, the Virtue Party-FP, and the Felicity Party-SP) with practically the same cadres and same ideology.

2. Other authors choose descriptions that call attention to the relationship of the party with the center-right/conservative tradition in Turkish politics: “a conservative-democratic party”,²³ a “Muslim democratic” party,²⁴ “another conservative party with strong Islamist references”,²⁵ “a moderate, center-right party”,²⁶ “a- or non-Islamic, conservative democratic party”,²⁷ a party that needs to be grounded “within the center-right political stream in Turkish politics”,²⁸ a “central right party”,²⁹ a “‘new-rightist’ synthesis of liberalism and conservatism”,³⁰ “a secular, conservative party, led by elements with an Islamic background”³¹ in the eyes of Arab observers, and “a Turkish secular party”.³² Implicit in these descriptions is the idea that the AKP is a member of another party family in Turkey, that of secular center-right parties, such as the Democratic Party (DP) of Adnan Menderes in 1950s, the Justice Party (AP) of Süleyman Demirel in 1960s and 70s, and the Motherland Party (ANAP) of Turgut Özal in 1980s. What made these parties different from Islamist parties was that, although they received the support of the more religious voters largely because the only other alternative was the left-wing parties disliked by religious groups, religion was a side issue in their overall platform. This platform tended to revolve around issues such as pro-market economic policies and pro-Western foreign policies.
3. Still others prefer novel descriptions from various theoretical perspectives, usually depicting the party in contrast to some other political movement/current: a “conservative globalist” party as opposed to the “defensive nationalist” CHP and MHP,³³ a defender of “passive secularism” as opposed to “assertive secularism”,³⁴ a “political Islamist” party as opposed to “militant” Islamists,³⁵ a product of “self-

²³ Gümüşçü and Sert, “March 2009 Local Elections”, 55.

²⁴ Yıldırım, “Muslim Democratic Parties”, 65.

²⁵ Kalaycıoğlu, “Justice and Development Party at the Helm”.

²⁶ Filiz Başkan, “The Rising Islamic Business Elite and Democratization in Turkey”, *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 4 (2010): 400.

²⁷ Michael M. Gunter, review of *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, by Hakan Yavuz, *Middle East Journal* 63, no. 3 (2009): 511.

²⁸ Kardaş, “Turkey under the Justice”, 178.

²⁹ Betül Duman, “Conservative Modernization of Central Right: The Place of JDP and Erdogan Leadership”, *European Journal of Social Sciences* 24, no. 2 (2011): 191.

³⁰ Doğan, “AKP’li Hegemonya Projesi”, 94.

³¹ Nafi, “Arabs and Modern Turkey”, 76.

³² Shafiq, “Turkey’s Justice and Development Party”, 36.

³³ Ziya Öniş, “Conservative Globalism at the Crossroads: The Justice and Development Party and the Thorny Path to Democratic Consolidation in Turkey”, *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 1 (2009).

³⁴ Ahmet Kuru, “Changing Perspectives on Islam and Secularism in Turkey: the AK Party and the Gülen Movement”, in *Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement*, edited by İhsan Yılmaz (London: Leeds Metropolitan University Press, 2007): 140; William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 23.

³⁵ Çavdar, “Islamist New Thinking”, 478.

critical Islamism” of 1990s as opposed to “collective Islamism” of 1970s,³⁶ and a “non-Islamist” party as opposed to the “post-Islamism of Virtue Party”.³⁷ Such descriptions imply that the AKP is best understood not as the latest incarnation of an Islamist party or as a member of the center-right party family, but as a novel phenomenon with no historical precedent.

The different descriptions alone are sufficient evidence that the AKP is “a strange, hybrid political formation”³⁸ defying easy classification. This article will make yet another effort at classifying the AKP, comparing it with all the political parties in Turkey that have competed and won seats in the parliamentary elections since the 1950s, making use of election manifestos and the coding done by the Manifesto Project (previously Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project MRG/CMP). After explaining the data and the methods used, my focus will be on comparing and contrasting the AKP with center-right and Islamist parties, but I will also try to locate the party in a wider ideological space. Then, party competition in recent elections will be examined, with a focus on relative positions of the parties on major issue dimensions identified in previous sections, and how these positions have changed from election to election. The concluding section argues that the findings are also relevant to a debate in the voting behavior literature, between sociological and rational choice approaches, and suggests that future studies making combined use of textual analysis, survey data and an analysis of policies would be able to answer additional questions.

Data and Methods

The controversy over defining and classifying the AKP partly results from the fact that different researchers use different methodologies, looking at different aspects of the party, and it may well be the case that there are inconsistencies between these different aspects. This article, looking at the manifestos of the party in successive elections and comparing them with manifestos of other parties, is not in a position to resolve this controversy. The conclusions made are solely based on an analysis of discourse, without consideration of the party’s actual policies, voter base, or organizational structure. It does, however, provide a systematic analysis of one crucial part of the discourse of the party, the election manifestos, which has a number of advantages compared to other methods for studying the discourse of the party.

Many studies examining the discourse of the party make use of leaders’ speeches on various occasions or the party program. These two strategies suffer from different defects. Analyzing party leaders’ speeches usually takes the form of convenient quotations to support the author’s views concerning the position of the party, with a necessary arbitrariness that accompanies this practice. Party leaders make a lot of speeches, talk about many issues, take

³⁶ Kenan Çayır, “The Emergence of Turkey’s Contemporary ‘Muslim Democrats’”, in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, edited by Ümit Cizre (New York: Routledge, 2008).

³⁷ İhsan Yılmaz, “Influence of Pluralism and Electoral Participation on the Transformation of Turkish Islamism”, *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 10, no. 2 (2008): 56.

³⁸ Öniş, “Turkish Modernization”, 14.

different positions in line with current events and developments, and it does not take much effort to find sound bites declaring any number of positions. Unless one makes an effort to examine all or a systematic selection of a party leader's speeches, quotes from such speeches will serve only demonstrative purposes.

The other strategy, examining the party program, solves this problem by focusing on a document that is the official, and arguably the single most important, text laying out the position of the party, but it suffers from another deficiency: party programs are usually written at the formation of the party and are rarely subject to revision, whereas the position of a party concerning various issues changes over time, or new positions are created as new issues not foreseen in the program arise.

Studying party election manifestos provides a fine compromise between these two strategies: they are official texts with a respectable claim to lay out the position and promises of the party (solving the problem of arbitrariness associated with unsystematic analysis of party leaders' speeches), and they are subject to periodic revision, being written anew each election cycle (unlike party programs). For this reason, the study of election manifestos is invaluable for assessing a party's positions on issues it considers important enough to be covered in the manifesto, and subsequent changes in these positions.

The Manifesto Project is an ambitious effort for detailed coding of the election manifestos of major political parties in more than 50 countries. It places each and every quasi-sentence in election manifestos in one of 56 content categories,³⁹ ranging from international relations to economy to issues of freedom and democracy. Thus, it becomes possible to compare parties not only over selected policy issues such as international relations or economic policies, but over the totality of the promises they make on the eve of elections. For the purposes of this paper, the dataset also allows a systematic comparison of the AKP not only with Islamist and center-right parties but with all Turkish parties that competed in elections since 1950s and won seats in the parliament.⁴⁰

The dataset shows the amount of space particular policy issues took up in each manifesto. For example, economic issues made up 32,5% of all the quasi-sentences in the AKP's manifesto in the 2011 elections,⁴¹ whereas quasi-sentences on international relations made up 7,6% of the manifesto.⁴² In comparison, the CHP devoted 23,4% and 8,3% of its

³⁹ See Appendix for these categories. For more information on the Manifesto Project and the coding scheme, see the project website at <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>.

⁴⁰ The project asks researchers in individual countries to code manifestos of "relevant parties", which are defined as "those parties that win seats in their respective election" (see Annika Werner, Onawa Lacewell, and Andrea Volkens. *Manifesto Coding Instructions*. 4th Edition.) The dataset, available from the project website, contains data on the manifestos of all relevant parties that competed and won seats in the multi-party elections since 1950 in Turkey, a total of 54 manifestos. The dataset, however, contains only one manifesto for the Democratic Party in the 1950, 1954 and 1957 elections, and similarly only one manifesto for the Nationalist Action Party for the 1961, 1965, 1969, 1973 and 1977 elections. In other words, two manifestos of the DP from 1950s, one manifesto of the MP from 1960s, and four manifestos of the MHP from 1960s and 1970s are missing. Although their inclusion would definitely influence the calculations made, this is a small number in a dataset containing 54 manifestos, and the substantial validity of the conclusions reached remains intact, with the caveat that they apply to a slightly smaller number of manifestos.

⁴¹ This is the sum of the individual percentages of the 16 economy related categories (codes 401 to 416, see note 13 for more information), making up the domain of economy.

⁴² This is the sum of the individual percentages of the 10 categories on international relations (codes 101 to 110, see note 13) making up the domain of external relations.

manifesto to these issues, respectively, in 2011. This issue-emphasis perspective allows us to assess not only the specific positions that the parties took regarding issues, but also the *relative emphases* they placed on each issue category. For example, both the AKP and the CHP had positive things to say about European integration (code 108 - European Integration: Positive) prior to the 2011 elections, but the relative emphases they placed on this issue differed: EU-positive quasi-sentences made up 0,4% of the AKP manifesto, compared to 1,3% of the CHP manifesto, which is a richer form of information regarding parties' discourses, supplementing our knowledge on the *positions* of the parties vis-à-vis individual issues with information on the *relative emphasis* each issue received.

Center-Right or Islamist? The Perennial Debate

Many scholars cannot resist the temptation to join the debate on whether the AKP is an Islamist or a center-right party, and this debate is a heated one. Kardaş, for example, has argued that some authors explain the AKP with reference to Islamism because this is their area of specialization (quipping “to someone with a hammer, everything looks like a nail”).⁴³ On the other hand, Birkiye describes the party as a “light fundamentalist” party, with its “first attack [...] directed at the institutions of Republican ideology”.⁴⁴

The debate will doubtless continue, but the Manifesto Project dataset on Turkish parties' election manifestos allows us to see where AKP stands, manifesto-wise, compared with the center-right parties and Islamist parties in Turkey. To see whether the AKP manifestos are closer to the manifestos of center-right parties – namely the DP (Democratic Party), the AP (Justice Party), the ANAP (Motherland Party) and the DYP (True Path Party) – or to the Islamist parties of the MSP (National Salvation Party) and the RP (Welfare Party), we can use inverse factor analysis. Inverse factor analysis is a method that allows grouping observations (in our case individual manifestos) on the basis of their similarities or dissimilarities with one another over a number of variables (in our case the 56 content categories).⁴⁵ In other words, manifestos which are closer to one another in terms of the relative emphases they place on policy issues will be grouped together. This act of classification will not be made on the basis of a single policy issue, such as religion or relations with the EU, but on the basis of all policy issues covered in these manifestos.

Table 1 reports the results of an inverse factor analysis conducted with a pool of manifestos including the AKP, center-right parties (DP, AP, ANAP, and DYP) and Islamist parties (MSP, RP, and FP).⁴⁶ The picture that emerges from this table is that the AKP, in all elections so far, was clearly grouped together with center-right parties and separately from Islamist parties. The first group, which brings together four AP manifestos from the 1960s and 1970s, four ANAP manifestos from the 1980s and 1990s, all three AKP manifestos from the 2000s, and the FP manifesto from 1999, clearly represents the center-right tradition in

⁴³ Kardaş, “Turkey under the Justice”, 178.

⁴⁴ Birkiye, “Changes in the Cultural Policies”, 272.

⁴⁵ In regular factor analysis, on the other hand, the objective is to bring similar variables together.

⁴⁶ Although the scree plot of eigenvalues indicated three factors, only two factors were extracted to see how AKP manifestos would be grouped.

Turkish politics. The second group, which is dominated by five Islamist manifestos (two MSP manifestos from the 1970s and three RP manifestos from the 1980s and 1990s), also includes the one DP manifesto from the 1950s, the AP's 1977 manifesto, DYP manifestos from 1987 and 1991, and the ANAP's 1995 manifesto. All AKP manifestos are in the first group, and all MSP and RP manifestos are in the second group.

That the first group represents the center-right tradition and the second group the Islamist tradition is also clear from the issue areas emphasized by each. The top five policy issues that are prioritized by the first group are "Governmental and administrative efficiency", "Technology and infrastructure", "Economic goals", "Agriculture and farmers", and "Welfare state expansion". The second group, on the other hand, prioritizes "Political authority", "Economic goals", "Traditional morality: positive", "National way of life: positive", and "Democracy". The high placement of "Traditional morality: positive" and "National way of life: positive" categories in the second group, and their conspicuous absence from the first list justifies calling the latter the center-right and the former the Islamist grouping.

Three other observations are also due regarding this classification. First, the FP manifesto from 1999 is clearly placed within the center-right category, which means that the move towards the center, at least manifesto-wise, started with the FP not the AKP. Second, the AP clearly started out as a center-right party, but gave increasingly more emphasis to nationalist/Islamist issues under Demirel, especially in the 1970s when it faced competition for the first time from Erbakan's MSP, finally culminating in 1977 in a manifesto with a higher Islamist than center-right score. (Note the increase in AP's Islamist score from a mere 0,090 in 1961 to a whopping 0,898 in 1977.) This tendency continued with the DYP in 1987 and 1991 elections, and it was only under Çiller in 1995 and 1999 elections that the DYP returned to a manifesto with a stronger center-right emphasis. A similar movement towards Islamist issues and then back to center-right is also observed in ANAP manifestos. After a steady increase in its Islamist score from 0,086 in 1983 elections to 0,623 in 1995 elections, in which the RP won the most seats, the ANAP returned in 1999 to a stronger center-right emphasis. Third, the one DP manifesto we have from the 1950s is clearly in the Islamist group, but without access to all DP manifestos from 1950s, this fact alone is not sufficient to speculate about the relative weight of Islamist and center-right issues in the DP's overall discourse.

The overall picture that emerges from this effort is that the AKP manifestos are closer to the manifestos of center-right parties than to those of Islamist parties, but parties traditionally labeled center-right also published, from time to time, manifestos that were more Islamist in their issue emphasis than center-right.

Table 1: AKP manifestos in comparison to manifestos of Islamist and center-right parties

Manifesto	Factor 1 (Center-Right)	Factor 2 (Islamist)
DP_1950	0,147	0,924
AP_1961	0,774	0,090
AP_1965	0,770	0,228
AP_1969	0,819	0,366
AP_1973	0,752	0,514
AP_1977	0,081	0,898
ANAP_1983	0,774	0,086
ANAP_1987	0,894	0,338
ANAP_1991	0,768	0,501
ANAP_1995	0,515	0,623
ANAP_1999	0,719	0,151
DYP_1987	0,428	0,855
DYP_1991	0,415	0,689
DYP_1995	0,775	0,235
DYP_1999	0,785	0,171
MSP_1973	0,415	0,656
MSP_1977	0,179	0,868
RP_1987	0,039	0,934
RP_1991	0,088	0,678
RP_1995	0,220	0,728
FP_1999	0,832	0,187
AKP_2002	0,679	0,160
AKP_2007	0,881	0,080
AKP_2011	0,790	0,012

	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor 1	0,4358	0,4358
Factor 2	0,3311	0,7669

Note: Bold type identifies factor loadings above 0,50, representing membership in the Islamist or center-right groups.

A Wider Perspective: Where AKP Stands

The previous section tried to answer the question whether the AKP is closer to center-right or Islamist parties. Where the AKP stands in terms of policy emphases (as opposed to in terms of distance from center-right and Islamist parties) is another matter that requires a different approach. In this section, I first conduct a regular factor analysis to identify the main discourses used by Turkish parties in their election manifestos,⁴⁷ and then look at which of these discourses are more prominent in AKP's manifestos.

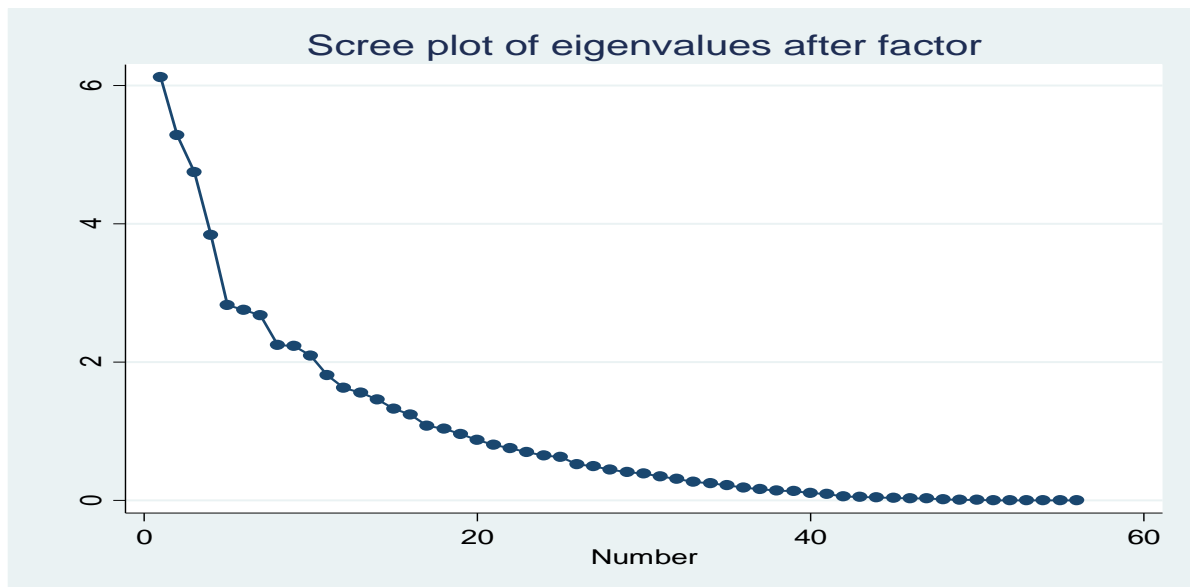
⁴⁷ For an earlier study using manifesto data to identify the axes of conflict in Turkish politics, see Ali Çarkoğlu, "The Turkish Party System in Transition: Party Performance and Agenda Change", *Political Studies* 46 (1998).

Factor analysis is used to group associated variables together, trying to identify the underlying “factor” or factors that cause these variables to move in tandem. Applied to the manifesto data, factor analysis should identify which policy issues tend to be bundled together in individual manifestos, with each factor constituting a separate discourse. Thus, a factor analysis was conducted with a pool containing the manifestos of all Turkish parties that competed and won seats in the multi-party elections since 1950.⁴⁸ Figure 1 shows the scree plot of eigenvalues for this factor analysis, which suggests five factors to be extracted. Table 2 reports the results of the factor analysis conducted.

Looking at the content categories that are most important for each factor, and the manifestos that received the highest scores for that factor, the five factors extracted were named ‘new left’, ‘technocratic’, ‘old left’, ‘nationalist’, and ‘free market’. Together these factors account for 40% of the variation in manifestos’ discourses.

The ‘new left’ discourse places a strong emphasis on issues such as anti-growth economy, social justice, Marxist analysis, anti-militarism, peace, decentralization and multiculturalism. These are the content categories with the highest factor loadings for this factor, in descending order. This discourse is employed most prominently in the BDP’s 2011 manifesto, but also in the SHP 1987, CHP 2011, SHP 1991, and AKP 2011 manifestos.

Figure 1: Screeplot for the factor analysis



⁴⁸ Two DP manifestos from the 1950s, one MP manifesto from 1960s, and four MHP manifestos from 1960s and 1970s are missing from the dataset. Also see note 14.

Table 2: Five prominent discourses in Turkish politics

New Left		Technocratic		Old Left		Nationalist		Free Market	
Manifesto	Score	Manifesto	Score	Manifesto	Score	Manifesto	Score	Manifesto	Score
BDP 2011	6,4	AKP 2011	2,25	CHP 1965	2,4	RP 1991	3,06	MP 1965	4,71
SHP 1987	1,32	MHP 2011	2,09	CHP 1973	2,23	MHP 1977	2,09	ANAP 1995	2,37
CHP 2011	1,11	CHP 2007	1,75	CHP 1969	1,8	MSP 1977	2,08	ANAP 1999	1,33
SHP 1991	0,73	CHP 2011	1,57	AP 1961	1,63	MHP 2011	1,98	AP 1965	1,02
AKP 2011	0,62	AKP 2007	1,35	SHP 1987	1,56	CHP 2007	1,59	MHP 2011	0,97
Variable	Factor1	Variable	Factor2	Variable	Factor3	Variable	Factor4	Variable	Factor5
Anti_Growth	0,9132	Prot_Pos	0,6336	Agriculture	0,7623	Nation_Pos	0,6378	Wel_St_Limt	0,7146
Soc_Just	0,8807	Tech_Infr	0,632	Contr_Econ	0,6111	ForSpe_Neg	0,6259	Labor_Neg	0,6888
Marxist	0,8783	Welf_St_Exp	0,5968	Econ_Plan	0,5769	Miltry_Pos	0,5917	Free_Entrep	0,5844
Miltry_Neg	0,8607	Env_Prot	0,56	Trad_Neg	0,5499	Int_Neg	0,5855	Soc_Harmny	0,3512
Peace	0,5527	Edu_Exp	0,5493	Nationlztm	0,4902	Anti_Imp	0,5307	Edu_Lim	0,3322
Decentral	0,5066	Culture	0,5402	Const_Pos	0,4662	Trad_Pos	0,5073	Keynesian	0,3101
MultiC_Pos	0,4893	Int_Pos	0,528	Labor_Pos	0,4606	Law_Order	0,5001	Miltry_Pos	0,3022
Democracy	0,408	Incentives	0,4444	Mid_Class	0,4311	Euro_Neg	0,4506	Welf_St_Exp	0,2456
Free_HR	0,3708	Law_Order	0,3991	Miltry_Pos	0,3633	Prot_Pos	0,3972	Econ_Orth	0,208
Labor_Pos	0,3008	Market_Reg	0,3796	Nation_Neg	0,3621	Pol_Corptn	0,2916	Const_Pos	0,2046

	Proportion	Cumulative
Factor1	0.0943	0.0943
Factor2	0.0900	0.1843
Factor3	0.0870	0.2712
Factor4	0.0796	0.3509
Factor5	0.0561	0.4070

Note: Of the 56 content categories, only the first ten with the highest factor loadings are reported for each factor. Bold type represents the most important components of the discourse for naming purposes, identified by the author. Please refer to the Appendix for the full names of the Manifesto Project categories.

The ‘technocratic’ discourse focuses on issues of broad consensus that are likely to arouse few if any controversies in the Turkish context, such as protectionist economic policies (reflected in promises like ‘increasing exports’), investment in technology and infrastructure, welfare state expansion, environmental protection, education expansion, and cultural activities. Other names for this discourse could be ‘non-ideological’, ‘valence’ or ‘populist’. This discourse was a favorite of parties competing in the most recent elections, most prominently employed in the AKP’s 2011 manifesto, but also in the MHP 2011, CHP 2007, CHP 2011, and AKP 2007 manifestos.

The ‘old left’ discourse combines advocacy for labor groups and farmers with an anti-religious attitude and support for a strong role for the state in the economy, including state control of the economy, central planning, and nationalization of industry. This discourse is employed most prominently in the CHP’s 1965 manifesto, but also in the CHP 1973, CHP 1969, AP 1961, and SHP 1987 manifestos.

The 'nationalist' discourse combines advocacy of nationalist causes with support for a strong army, a unilateralist attitude in international relations (reflected in content categories such as Foreign Special Relationships: Negative, Internationalism: Negative, Anti-Imperialism, and European Integration: Negative), and a focus on law and order in internal affairs. This discourse is employed most prominently in the RP's 1991 manifesto, but also in the MHP 1977, MSP 1977, MHP 2011 and CHP 2007 manifestos.

The 'free market' discourse is distinguished from others with its negative attitude towards labor groups, advocacy of a smaller welfare state, and emphasis on free enterprise. This discourse is employed most prominently by the MP's manifesto from the 1960s, but also by the ANAP 1995, ANAP 1999, AP 1965, and MHP 2011 manifestos.

After identifying the most prominent discourses in Turkish politics as such,⁴⁹ we can now move on to the question of where the AKP stands. Figure 2 charts the scores that the AKP received for each of the five factors in the 2002, 2007 and 2011 elections. These scores will allow us to analyze the components that make up the AKP's overall discourse. In addition, because we have election-level data, we will be able to follow any changes and continuities in the AKP's discourse over three elections. The minus scores in this figure are best interpreted as the avoidance of a discourse, and positive scores as positive emphasis on the issue in question.

Looking at Figure 2, it is clear that the most persistent and important element in the AKP's overall discourse has been the technocratic discourse, which was present in all three elections with positive scores. Moreover, the emphasis the AKP placed on technocratic/non-ideological issues increased with each election, from 0,1 in 2002 to 1,3 in 2007 and 2,3 in 2011. Thus, we can conclude that an increasingly salient technocratic focus has been the most important component of the AKP's overall discourse. However, the party's discourse has not been confined to technocratic issues only. Another discourse that increasingly became more important in the AKP's manifestos was that of nationalism. From minus scores in 2002 and 2007, the discourse of nationalism increased to 0,5 in 2011, receiving positive emphasis. Together with nationalism, the AKP manifesto in 2011 simultaneously branched out to the new left discourse as well, thus entering territories held by all three of its rivals (the BDP and the CHP had strong new-left emphases in 2011, and the MHP had a strong nationalist emphasis). After avoiding these discourses in two subsequent elections, in 2002 and 2007, the AKP embraced them in 2011, although not at the same level with the technocratic discourse. This tricky balancing act seems to have paid off too, with the party receiving 49,8% of all votes cast in these elections.

⁴⁹ It should be noted that factors representing these five discourses explain only 40% of the variation in Turkish parties' manifestos. In other words, there are many minor discourses that are not captured by this framework.

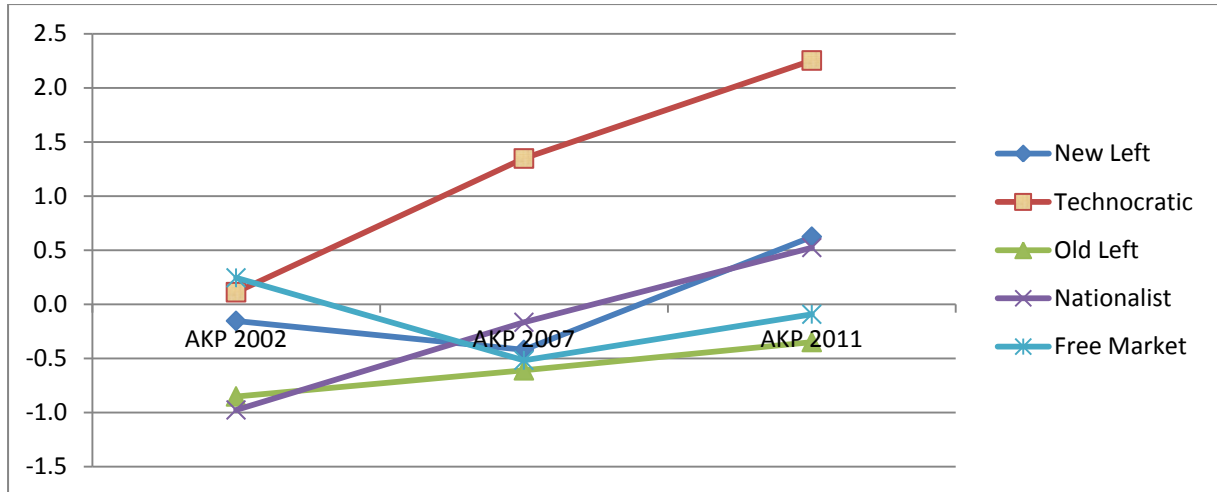


Figure 2: Scores received by AKP Manifestos in the last three elections

This manifesto-based quantitative analysis also captures the change in the policies of the main opposition party, the CHP. The party underwent a leadership change in 2010, with Deniz Baykal leaving the post of chairmanship to Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Many analysts predicted a change in the position of the party from a more nationalist/secularist to a more social democratic stance. This is exactly the picture that emerges when we look at the party's scores in 2007 and 2011 in Figure 3. The discourse of nationalism reached its peak in the CHP's 2007 manifesto, receiving equal emphasis with the technocratic discourse, whereas it fell to zero in 2011. Simultaneously, the new left discourse, avoided both in 2002 and 2007, jumped to 1.1, becoming the second most prominent component of the CHP's overall discourse in the 2011 elections. We can thus safely argue that the change in the leadership of the party is reflected in the change of the issues emphasized in its manifesto, with Kılıçdaroğlu moving the party away from nationalism and to some degree from free market ideas, to a new left discourse emphasizing social justice, an anti-military stance, decentralization and multiculturalism.

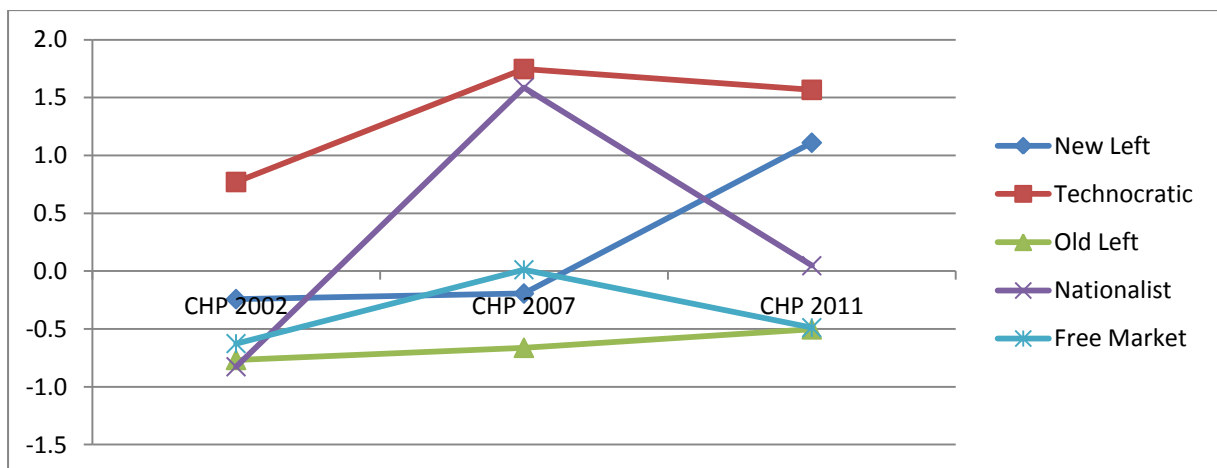


Figure 3: Scores received by CHP Manifestos in the last three elections

Party Competition in the 2000s

Narrowing our focus on specific discourses instead of on parties, we can also make an analysis of party competition in successive elections.⁵⁰ The five discourses identified in the previous section are useful for comparisons involving all manifestos, recent and older, but to make comparisons involving the more recent elections only, we need to focus on three discourses: nationalist, technocratic and new left. These are the three discourses that have been heavily emphasized in the elections of the 2000s, whereas the other two are clearly ‘owned’ by manifestos used in earlier elections (see Table 2). There is also another justification for focusing on these three discourses: they are the ones that experienced the highest amount of election to election variation,⁵¹ which means that the parties, when they decided to make changes in their positions, shifted their relative emphases on these three discourses.

Figure 4 shows that in 2002 all parties⁵² avoided the nationalist discourse. For the MHP, this was unexpected and probably due to being part of a coalition with the Democratic Left Party and the ANAP between 1999 and 2002, during which the party had to accept many EU-related reforms. Their recent record in the coalition as a (reluctant) pro-EU party might have made it politically difficult to return to a nationalist stance. Regardless of whether this was the reason, the avoidance of the nationalist discourse in the 2002 elections seems to have cost the party dearly: they failed to pass the 10 percent threshold, and the party remained out of the parliament between 2002 and 2007. Avoidance of the nationalist discourse was certainly not the only reason for this failure, but probably was high on the list.

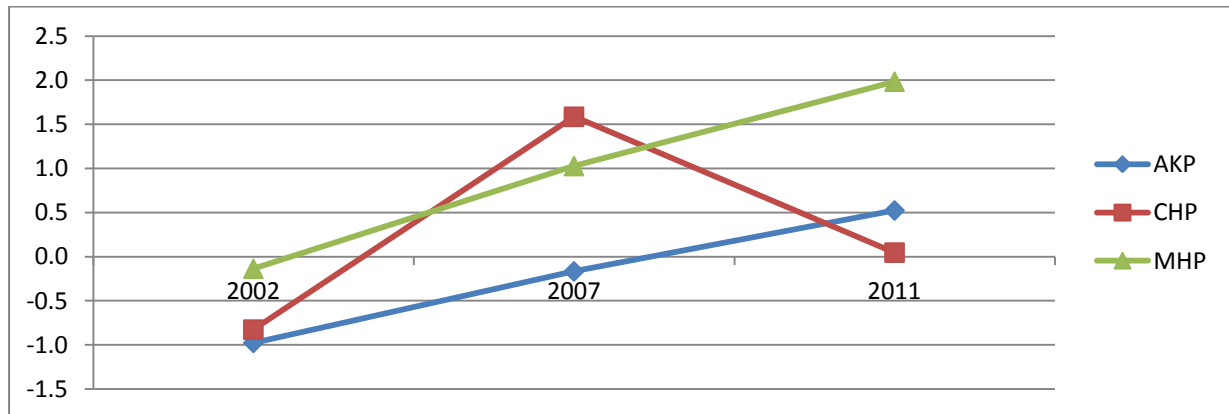


Figure 4: The parties’ positions on nationalism

The 2007 elections saw a positive emphasis on the nationalist discourse by two parties, the MHP and the CHP, whereas the AKP kept avoiding this discourse. This time, the MHP’s

⁵⁰ For a spatial study of party competition in Turkey using survey data, see Çarkoğlu and Hinich, “A spatial analysis of Turkish party preferences in 2006”.

⁵¹ The average absolute variations for the discourses in 2000s were as follows: 0,7 (Nationalist), 0,6 (Technocratic), 0,4 (New Left), 0,3 (Free Market) and 0,1 (Old Left).

⁵² Only the AKP, CHP and MHP are included in this and following analyses. Even though it is represented in the parliament since 2007, the BDP is not included for the simple reason that the manifesto database does not contain information on the BDP manifestos. The BDP did not have official election manifestos because the candidates of the party ran as independents in 2007 and 2011 to avoid the 10 percent electoral threshold, which does not apply to independent candidates.

move made sense, but the CHP's move was more interesting. Under Deniz Baykal's leadership, the CHP veered towards a strongly nationalist, anti-EU position between the years 2002 and 2007, which was probably motivated by the AKP's enthusiastic embrace of EU reforms to diminish the influence of the military on politics. This was striking nonetheless, given the fact that the CHP voters in 2002 were more pro-EU than any other major party's voters.⁵³

In the 2011 elections, all of the parties re-positioned themselves, with the MHP putting more emphasis on its nationalist discourse, the AKP giving positive emphasis to the nationalist discourse for the first time in its history (though at lower levels than the MHP), and the CHP abandoning the nationalist discourse completely after the leadership change mentioned above. This time, the AKP's move was the most interesting, and many observers tried to make sense of it, some arguing that it was a short-term and opportunistic pre-election shift intended to get more votes from the MHP's voter base.⁵⁴ MHP spokesmen even accused the AKP of "fake nationalism" and "unprincipled vote-hunting".⁵⁵

The discourse that saw the second highest level of variation from election to election was the technocratic one. All the parties had positive scores for this discourse in all the elections considered, and the general direction of movement was towards heavier emphasis on the discourse (five out of six movements were upwards). The only downwards change was observed in the CHP's 2011 manifesto, but it was a modest one. Overall, then, it would be safe to argue that all the parties identified the technocratic discourse, which brings together issues such as investment in education, technology and infrastructure, cultural activities, environmental protection, welfare state expansion and increasing exports – all of which are relatively uncontroversial in the Turkish context – as a lucrative discourse that is best not left to the rivals, and tried to outbid one another.

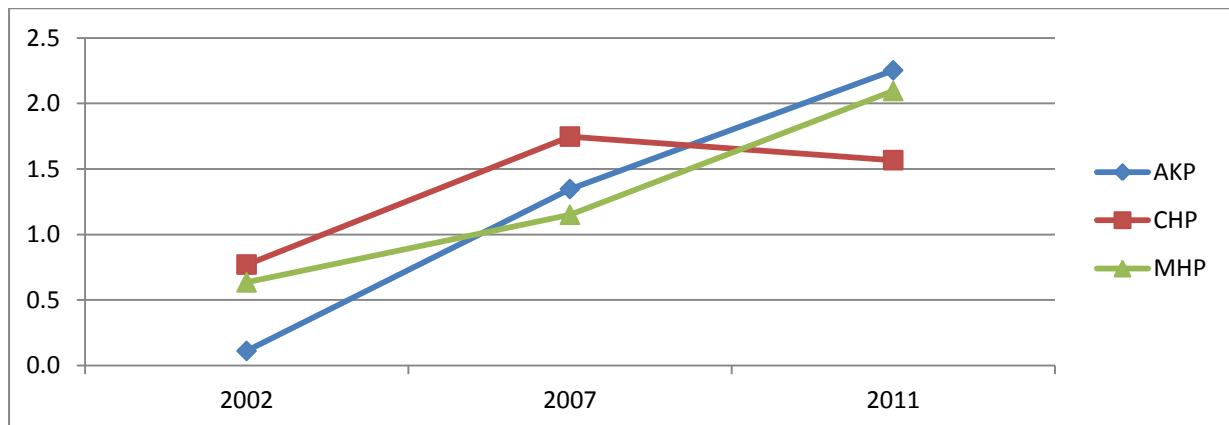


Figure 5: The parties' positions on the technocratic discourse

A similar observation can be made regarding the new left discourse, as reported in Figure 6, with two important provisos: first, the upwards movement started later (in 2011 not

⁵³ On this point, see Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2007).

⁵⁴ Onur Yükcü, "AKP, sağ ve 'milliyetçilik tıkacı' [AKP, the right and the 'block of nationalism']", *Radikal*, September 9, 2012.

⁵⁵ MHP deputy chairman Melih Yalçın as quoted in a story in the daily *Milliyet*. ANKA, "MHP'den AK Parti'ye 'Çakma Milliyetçi' Suçlaması [MHP Accuses AKP of 'Fake Nationalism']", *Milliyet*, February 11, 2011.

in 2007) and second, despite the common shift, there were still significant differences between the parties in terms of the amount of emphasis put on the discourse. Thus, in accordance with our expectations,⁵⁶ the CHP was the party with the heaviest new left emphasis in 2011, the AKP was next, and the MHP was the last, with a barely positive emphasis.

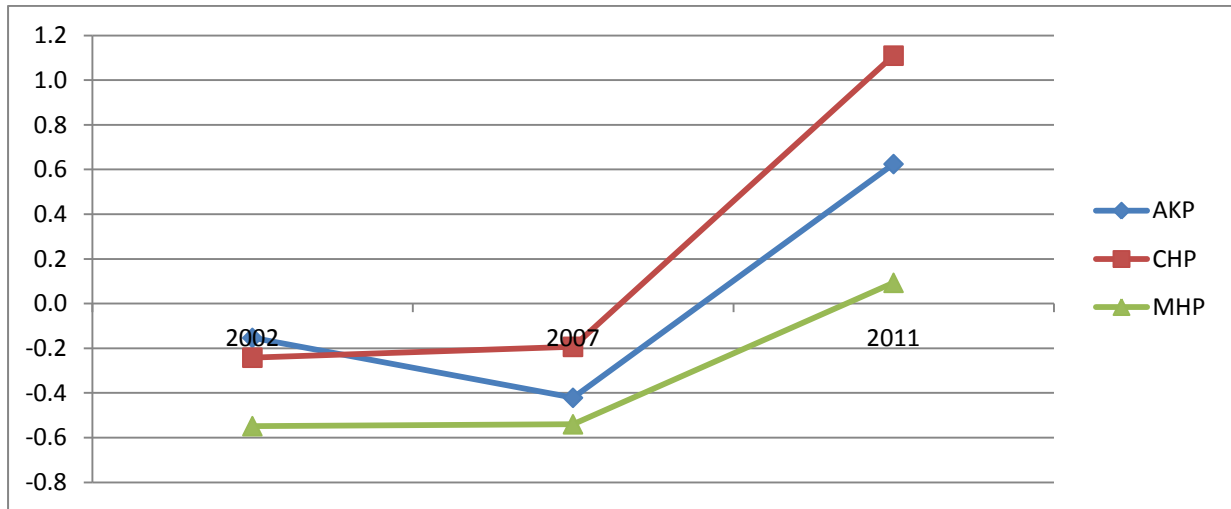


Figure 6: The parties' positions on the new left discourse

Overall, we can make the following observations about party competition in successive elections:

- In 2002, the three parties were not very different from one another in terms of their nationalist, technocratic and new left discourses, all of them avoiding the nationalist and the new left discourses and emphasizing the technocratic one.
- In 2007, relative positions in new left and technocratic positions did not change much, although there was an upwards shift in the latter. There was a radical re-arrangement, however, regarding the nationalist discourse, with the CHP leapfrogging MHP to occupy the uppermost position, and the AKP being differentiated from the other two parties by its avoidance of the issue.
- 2011 saw another re-arrangement, this time the CHP abandoning the nationalist discourse and significantly increasing its new left discourse. These simultaneous moves differentiated the party from both the MHP and the AKP in both dimensions: the AKP and the MHP were left with positive emphases on nationalism, and they occupied lower positions on the new left discourse compared to the CHP. On the technocratic discourse, the parties' positions were again not differentiable, though the overall upwards movement continued.

⁵⁶ Many studies examining the placement of the Turkish parties on the left-right spectrum find the CHP to be to the left of the AKP, and the AKP to be to the left of the MHP. For one example, see Figure 6.2 in Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today*.

Conclusion

This paper used the Manifesto Project's data to study party competition in recent Turkish elections, with a focus on governing the AKP's position vis-à-vis current and historical party manifestos. Using inverse factor analysis on manifesto data coded into 56 content categories, the first section concluded that the AKP's manifestos were closer to those of center-right parties in Turkey, than to those of Islamist parties. The second section of the article first extracted the most salient issue bundles in Turkish parties' manifestos since 1950s, finding new left, technocratic, old left, nationalist, and free market discourses to be the most important. In the AKP's manifestos, the technocratic discourse was found to be the most important relative to other issues, receiving increasingly heavier emphasis in successive elections. In 2011, the party simultaneously branched out to nationalist and new left discourses too, meeting rivals on their own grounds. The last section compared parties' relative positions on the nationalist, technocratic, and new left discourses. In 2002, the parties' positions were virtually undistinguishable from each other on all three dimensions, whereas in 2007 and 2011 significant differences were observed between parties. In 2007 the AKP chose to differentiate itself from the other two parties by avoiding the nationalist discourse, a strategy followed by the CHP in 2011. Another strategy the CHP followed in 2011 was to place heavier emphasis on new left discourse compared to the other parties. According to many observers, one of the AKP's strategies in 2011 was to compete with the MHP for the nationalist vote, an observation borne out by the manifesto data. Parties' relative positions on the technocratic discourse remained the same in all three elections. Overall, the MHP emerges as the most stable of the three parties in terms of the relative emphases placed on different issues, whereas the AKP and the CHP prove to be more flexible.

A natural complement to the findings of this manifesto-based article would be survey-based studies of voting behavior. Whether the moves of the parties in the ideological space are reciprocated by corresponding moves among their electorates would be an interesting research question. More specific questions could include, for example, whether the CHP manifesto's embrace of the nationalist discourse in 2007 reflected a similar shift in the CHP voters' preferences, or a determined leadership acting independently of the party's rank and file. Was the AKP's simultaneous embrace of the new left and nationalist discourses in 2011 meant to appeal to two separate constituencies, one more nationalist the other more left-wing, or did it reflect a genuine effort to synthesize these two discourses? Are the MHP's voters happy with the party's consistency in its issue emphases, or do they expect more flexibility to increase chances of electoral success? Combined use of manifesto-based analyses and individual level survey data, which are increasingly more available in the Turkish context, would make it possible to answer these, and other, questions.

Manifesto-based analyses could also be combined with an analysis of policies to answer other important questions. For example, some of the policies followed by the AKP in its third term have been described by observers as Islamist. Sales of alcoholic drinks were more tightly regulated, elective courses on the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's life were added to high-school curricula, and Erdoğan started to make more open references to Islam in his public speeches, all of which revived an old debate regarding AKP's ideological position in Turkish politics: Was it an Islamist party posing as a moderate, center-right party only to

get votes and to avoid closure, as some of its critics argued when the party was first established? Or was the break with the Islamist National Outlook movement of Erbakan a sincere one? At the level of policies, the debate will doubtless continue on whether these policies are really ‘Islamist’ ones, reflecting a long-hidden plan to gradually Islamize Turkish society, only recently put into action now that the circumstances are allowing for it. Or are these policies ‘normal’ ones, naturally expected of any conservative party and within the confines of democratic politics, especially given the strong mandate the party received in election after election. At the level of official party discourse, however, we are not yet in a position to answer this question. As of this writing, the parties have not yet published their election manifestos for the upcoming 2015 parliamentary elections, and it is certainly plausible, given the AKP’s flexibility in its discourse documented in this article, that the party will put more emphasis on religious issues this time, which would provide textual evidence for the ‘return to Islamist roots’ argument.

The findings are also relevant to the long-running debate between sociological approaches⁵⁷ and rational-choice approaches⁵⁸ in the voting behavior literature. The former tends to emphasize long-term factors such as group membership when examining individual voters’ party preferences, and is successful in explaining overall stability in party systems and the make-up of political cleavages in a country, whereas it is not very helpful in explaining election to election changes. The latter, also known as the spatial approach, has the opposite strength: it predicts a dynamic electoral market in which voters have preferences on different issues, and choose the party that happens to offer positions that are closest to their individual preferences. Parties, on the other hand, adjust their positions from election to election, in search of ever more votes, trying to tap into new issues that happen to arise on the election’s eve and to successfully predict which positions are most likely to be favored by large numbers of voters. This paper provides indirect support for the latter hypothesis, charting the sometimes dramatic shifts that Turkish parties underwent in 2000s.

⁵⁷ Lipset and Rokkan’s work on cleavages was a major influence on the sociological approach to voting behavior. See Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, “Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: an Introduction”, in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross National Perspectives*, edited by Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967).

⁵⁸ Downs was such an important influence on spatial approaches to party competition and voting behavior that these approaches are sometimes referred to as Downsian. See Anthony Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy”, *The Journal of Political Economy* 65, no. 2 (1957).

Appendix

Manifesto Project's coding categories, classified under seven separate headings, are as follows:

Domain 1- External Relations: 101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive, 102 Foreign Special Relationships: Negative, 103 Anti-Imperialism: Positive, 104 Military: Positive, 105 Military: Negative, 106 Peace: Positive, 107 Internationalism: Positive, 108 European Integration: Positive, 109 Internationalism: Negative, 110 European Integration: Negative.

Domain 2 - Freedom and Democracy: 201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive, 202 Democracy: Positive, 203 Constitutionalism: Positive, 204 Constitutionalism: Negative.

Domain 3 - Political System: 301 Decentralisation: Positive, 302 Centralisation: Positive, 303 Governmental and Administrative Efficiency:, Positive, 304 Political Corruption: Negative, 305 Political Authority: Positive.

Domain 4 - Economy: 401 Free Enterprise: Positive, 402 Incentives: Positive, 403 Market Regulation: Positive, 404 Economic Planning: Positive, 405 Corporatism: Positive, 406 Protectionism: Positive, 407 Protectionism: Negative, 408 Economic Goals, 409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive, 410 Economic Growth, 411 Technology and Infrastructure: Positive, 412 Controlled Economy: Positive, 413 Nationalisation: Positive, 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive, 415 Marxist Analysis: Positive, 416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive.

Domain 5 - Welfare and Quality of Life: 501 Environmental Protection: Positive, 502 Culture: Positive, 503 Equality: Positive, 504 Welfare State Expansion, 505 Welfare State Limitation, 506 Education Expansion, 507 Education Limitation.

Domain 6 - Fabric of Society: 601 National Way of Life: Positive, 602 National Way of Life: Negative, 603 Traditional Morality: Positive, 604 Traditional Morality: Negative, 605 Law and Order: Positive, 606 Civic Mindedness: Positive, 607 Multiculturalism: Positive, 608 Multiculturalism: Negative.

Domain 7 - Social Groups: 701 Labour Groups: Positive, 702 Labour Groups: Negative, 703 Agriculture: Positive, 704 Middle Class and Professional Groups: Positive, 705 Minority Groups: Positive, 706 Non-Economic Demographic Groups: Positive