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# Understanding the Islamist Constituency: An Empirical Analysis of Turkey's 2002 Parliamentary Elections

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Understanding the Islamist Constituency:  
An Empirical Analysis of Turkey's 2002 Parliamentary Elections

By

Karl Gustav Hetzke

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for  
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## ABSTRACT

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Since 2002, Turkey's secular republic has been ruled by the Islamist politicians of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Confusing many observers, the AKP is simultaneously one of the most progressive parties to ever rule Turkey on issues like European Union membership and relations with the West, while also one of the most conservative parties to ever rule on issues related to the role of religion in public life, such as Islamic education in public schools. The goal of this project is to determine, through an empirical analysis of how the AKP came to power, whether the success of the AKP should be viewed as Islamist actors moving toward the center to accommodate a modernizing electorate, or as an electorate becoming more conservative and thereby choosing to vote for a conservative, Islamist party.

Using provincial-level data, this project examines the 2002 parliamentary election in light of competing narratives to explain the AKP's accession. This study finds that, contrary to many understandings, the AKP's efforts to make the party appear more modern and forward-thinking had very little impact on the election. This study also finds that the effects of the 1999 earthquakes in northwestern Turkey, though positive and significant for the AKP, were significantly tapered by existing ideology. The AKP should not be viewed as an Islamist party becoming moderate, but as a party succeeding with a more conservative electorate.



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## Chapter One:

## Introduction

Since 2002, Turkey's secular republic has been ruled by the Islamist politicians of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). Confusing many observers, the AKP is simultaneously one of the most progressive parties to ever rule Turkey on issues like European Union membership and relations with the West, while also one of the most conservative parties to ever rule on issues related to the role of religion in public life, such as Islamic education in public schools. The goal of this project is to determine, through an analysis of how the AKP came to power, whether the success of the AKP should be viewed as Islamist actors becoming more moderate to accommodate a modernizing electorate, or as an electorate becoming more conservative and thereby more accepting of a conservative, Islamist party.

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As the 20<sup>th</sup> century came to a close, a great deal of scholarly work went into answering the question of whether or not Islam is compatible with democracy. Extremely notable thinkers argued that something inherent in Muslim culture is ill-suited to establish the cultural values required for a stable democracy (Fukuyama [1992], Huntington [1984, 1991] Lipset [1994]) while others argued that Islam isn't necessarily adversarial to democracy, but may need to adopt democracy in its own way (Benin & Stork [1997], Eickelman & Piscatori [1996], Entelis [1997], Esposito & Voll [1996]). Both sides agreed, however, that there is something unique about Muslim society which makes



Western-style democracy difficult to install. To this day, Islamism persists as an almost shockingly powerful alternative to liberal democracy. The 2011 revolution in Egypt had all the makings of liberal, democratic reform – Egypt's long-ruling dictator, Hosni Mubarak, was peacefully overthrown by millions of religiously and economically diverse demonstrators, and free elections were held – but to the amazement of the West, 62% of the vote in the first parliamentary election went to two Islamist parties: the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, and the Salafi's Al-Nour Party (Elsayyad & Shima'a [2014]). The new parliament didn't last long before military authorities dissolved it, but the elections demonstrated that even when democracy is introduced to a state by its own citizens, Islamism remains a potent political force.

For over fifty years, Turkey has served as the West's beacon of hope for democratic reform in the Islamic Middle East. The fact that Turkey is the only Muslim-majority state in the Middle East where anything close to liberal democracy has been established has caused many scholars to speculate as to whether or not “the model” for reconciling Islam and democracy could be found in Turkey (Çavdar [2006], Secor [2011], Atasoy [2011], Khattab [2012]). Since 1950, Turkey has been a relatively free, election-holding, secular republic, and therefore the closest thing to a liberal democracy in the Islamic Middle-East. This is not to say that Turkey is a liberal democracy – since 1950, parliament has been dissolved by military authorities on four separate occasions – but Turkey has still made some of the largest strides toward liberal democracy in the Muslim world. Even in secular Turkey, however, Islamism remains a legitimate political force.

The first Islamist party to field candidates for parliament was the National Order

Party, founded in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan. Under Erbakan's leadership, National Order (renamed National Salvation in 1972) became one of the most polarizing parties of the decade. In 1980, political unrest forced the military to declare martial law, and Erbakan's National Salvation Party was forcibly disbanded. In the early 1980's Erbakan's colleagues founded a new party, the Welfare Party, and ran their first candidates in 1987. By 1995, the Welfare Party won enough votes for Erbakan to become Prime Minister. By early 1997, the military would once again intervene to rid themselves of Erbakan, whom they viewed as a threat to the Republic's secular constitution, and the Welfare Party was no more. After an unsuccessful attempt to field candidates under the banner of Virtue Party in 1999, a younger generation of Islamist politicians detached themselves from Erbakan and founded the AKP. In 2002, the AKP secured two-thirds of the seats in parliament and became the first Islamist party to form a unilateral government.

Many view the AKP as the most moderate of all Turkey's Islamist parties, and claim that the AKP's success is primarily driven by economic factors, not ideological ones (Taşpınar [2012]). With such a viewpoint, it is easy to interpret the AKP as having moved toward the center to appease the electorate, and by extension to interpret the AKP as a case-study for successful engagement between conservative Islamists and secular liberals in a democratic context. An alternative reading, however, is more suspicious of the AKP's Islamist roots, and sees their success as part of a changing ideological landscape where right-wing nationalism and religious conservatism are becoming increasingly powerful forces (Çarkoğlu [2002]). If one moment could be studied to distinguish between these two readings, it would be the 2002 parliamentary election.

Whether or not the AKP is an Islamist party that liberalized or an Islamist party that was elected by a more conservative population is entirely dependent on an understanding of how the AKP was actually elected.

Short-term readings of the 2002 elections often point to various campaigning strengths of the AKP, such as successfully framing themselves not as “Islamist” but as “conservative democratic” (Findley [2010]), or for the party's openness to traditionally non-Islamist policies like pursuing EU membership (Ersel [2013]), or simply for their hugely popular leader, former Istanbul mayor, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was able to successfully rally the periphery against the center and happened to come out on top (Hoşgör [2008]). Other, more long-term readings point to ongoing changes in the Turkish political climate during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which made Islamism, or influences of Islamist thought, much more palpable by the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as the state's official acknowledgment of Islam as part of the national heritage in the early 1970s, and the reintroduction of Quran courses in public schools (Şen [2010]). In a few studies, empirical methods are employed to explain how certain economic events, like a financial crisis in 2001, may have contributed to the AKP's support (Çarkoğlu [2002], Akarca [2008]).

This project examines how the AKP came to power through a close empirical examination of the 2002 election. Using *Ordinary Least Squares* regression estimations with provincial-level voting data, this project tests competing explanations for the AKP's accession. The analysis finds that the majority of the AKP's constituency in 2002 came from areas where Islamism and right-wing nationalism were already popular ideologies,

although a good number of votes did come from more liberal areas. Contrary to many understandings, the AKP's efforts to make the party appear more modern and forward-thinking had very little impact on the election. This is evidenced in this study's finding that the AKP was no more successful than their Islamist predecessors at winning votes from urban populations, educated populations, or populations where women composed a large part of the work force. The study also connects the AKP's success to two earthquakes in 1999 (which are thought to have discredited incumbent parties), but finds that the earthquakes cannot be held responsible for major ideological shifts. Taken all together, the empirical results presented in this paper suggest that the AKP should not be viewed as an example of Islamist actors adapting to meet a moderate electorate, but as an electorate adapting to accept Islamism as an ideology.

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The following chapters provide the basis for empirical analysis, and then present the findings of that analysis. Chapter Two provides historical background on secularism and religious opposition in Turkey from 1923-1982. Chapter Three reviews the events which led to the founding of the AKP, and identifies five distinct hypotheses scholars propose to explain their rise to power. Chapter Four reviews the collection of data and the details of empirical analysis, while Chapter Five reviews the conclusions from that empirical analysis. Chapter Six briefly discusses the implications of the conclusions drawn from the empirical analysis.



## Chapter Two

### A Brief History of the Republic:

#### From Atatürk to Constitutional Reform – 1923-1982

The goal of this chapter is to provide a historical narrative which, at its conclusion, gives the reader an understanding of Turkish political-culture until the constitutional reforms of 1982, and in particular, the relationship between secularist and Islamist forces in electoral politics. To understand how the AKP came to power in 2002, it is important to understand how Islamist parties developed their ideology, and how Islamist ideology fits into the ideological framework of Turkish political discourse. This chapter begins with an overview of the founding of the Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and the founding principles of Kemalism. From there, the narrative continues with an examination of how political participation evolved into a “center-vs-periphery” dichotomy during an era when military leadership often interfered with free-elections. Finally, this chapter ends with a discussion on the first attempts by Islamists to find their electoral voice from 1960-1982, under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan.

#### **The Foundation of the Republic: 1923-1950**

The influence of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on the Turkish Republic is difficult to overstate. Today, his exploits as an authoritarian, and at times brutal, leader are more controversial than ever, but it is neither the intention of this chapter nor this study to explore any of these controversies thoroughly; ample scholarly work has already been done on that subject (Bay [2011], Haniğlu [2011], Kinross [1964], Mango [1999]).

Nevertheless, Atatürk's legacy on Turkish political-culture remains intact, and an understanding of modern Turkey requires some basic understanding of the Republic's founding, in particular the foundational principles of Kemalism.

Upon completion of his studies at various Ottoman military colleges, Mustafa Kemal found himself in the company of some of the most liberal, westward-leaning political activists in the Empire, the Committee of Union and Progress (better known as “the Young Turks”), but his role in this organization was far from prominent. When the Ottomans joined with the Central Powers during World War I, Atatürk<sup>1</sup> was appointed commander of a division sent to the Gallipoli peninsula in 1915. At Gallipoli, Atatürk successfully contained a major allied landing – a success which would become the foundation for his reputation among his peers – and as defeated Germans withdrew from Anatolia, Atatürk briefly became commander of all remaining Ottoman forces on the front. In 1920, the Allies dissolved the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul, and in response, Atatürk established the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi* – TBMM) in Ankara. He valiantly led military resistance to allied partitioning of remaining Ottoman territory, expelled invading Greeks from Anatolia, and established an armistice with the Allies in 1923. On October 29, 1923 the TBMM proclaimed a republic and elected Atatürk as its first president. Over the next three years, Atatürk purged opposition from within his own party and, when an attempt on his life was thwarted in 1926, eventually shut down the major opposition parties, firmly establishing a single-party, authoritarian regime. (Mango [2002] 9-12).

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1 The surname “Atatürk” (translated “Father of the Turks”) was not appropriated until 1934, however for sake of simplicity I use it to reference the man at any point in his career

Here, a great historical paradox is uncovered. Atatürk, in many respects a Westward-gazing liberal, built into the first Turkish constitution all of the institutions necessary for a liberal, western style democracy, but left them inoperable throughout his reign – the man who built a democracy ruled it like a dictator. Atatürk's successor, General İsmet İnönü, continued to lead the Republican Peoples Party (CHP) at the helm of a single-party, autocratic regime where it remained until 1950. In 1950, however, the first open elections gave the opposing party a resounding victory, and the CHP stepped down. (Magnarella [1998] 223). Turkey is “perhaps the only country in modern history in which an autocratic regime peacefully gave up the reigns of government” (Tachau [1972] 382).

During his reign as President, Atatürk ushered in a series of dramatic reforms not only to politics, but to culture and society as well. Atatürk's ideology, known now as Kemalism, rested on six pillars: republicanism, nationalism, statism, populism, reformism, and secularism. Although each pillar was, in its own right, a revolutionary break from the Ottoman past, it was perhaps the last pillar, secularism, which marked the most fundamental and dramatic shift in politics and culture from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Karpas [1959]).

While the institutional changes which brought Anatolia from an imperial sultanate to a republican, semi-liberal democracy were certainly huge, Atatürk's total severance between Islam and the state was without doubt his most ambitious reform. During his tenure as President, Atatürk oversaw the abolition of the Caliphate (an institution revered not only by Turks, but by much of the Sunni Muslim world) and Sultanate, the



Latinization of the Turkish alphabet, the closing of religious schools and orders, the removal of Islam as the official state religion, replacement of Islamic law with European codes, and the prohibition of the Fez. (Magnarella [1998] 220). Atatürk's distaste for Islam was both ideological and pragmatic. It was pragmatic in the sense that he did not feel Islam to be a strong enough unifying force on which to build a nation; he had personally witnessed Muslims fighting Muslims time and again, and various Ottoman leaders strive in vain to rally the "Muslim world" on behalf of whatever cause the Ottoman state needed to push. It was ideological in the sense that Atatürk was largely influenced by the political thought of the French Revolution; the revolution's *laïcité*-republic, as well as Rousseau's ideas of popular sovereignty. He also held no religious conviction himself, which made it very easy to separate religion from matters of state in his own thought. (Mango [2002])

Kemalist secularism is not simple separation of church-and-state. Kemalism dictates that religion ought to be controlled and monitored by the state so as to be kept out of the affairs of state. Ironically, the Republic accomplished a degree of religious suppression through institutions inherited from the Ottoman's era of state-sponsored religion. According to a study by RAND Corp. "The instrument for regulating Islam is the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*, or Directorate of Religious Affairs, an office that reports to the prime minister and has a budget larger than that of most ministries." (Rabasa [2008] 11) Until free-elections were held in 1950, the Republican People's Party often exercised the power of the state to regulate religion. During this period, the military developed a fierce loyalty to Kemalist secularism and for the remainder of the century would often

intervene to oust parliaments which strayed to far from this ideology.

### **Elections and Coups: 1950-1980**

As already noted, the first truly free elections held in the new Republic occurred in 1950, during which the controlling CHP lost (and peacefully ceded) power to the Democrat Party (DP). From 1950-1982, Turkey experimented with a multi-party democracy, which at times allowed for opposition groups to form and operate freely, and at others involved military takeovers of parliament. This era finally came to an end when martial law was declared in 1980, all political parties were disassembled and banned, and the constitution was rewritten in 1982.

The Democrat Party technically formed in 1945, filling its ranks with dissident members of the Republican Peoples Party. Very quickly the Democrats came to represent a diverse constituency of small-businessmen, religious minorities who had to pay discriminatory taxes, urban consumers disgruntled by high-costs of living, and “millions of peasants who resented the [Republican People's Party]'s neglect of agriculture and suppression of religious expression.” (Magnarella [1998] 222; Rustow [1957]). The Democrats contrasted themselves with their authoritarian predecessors by paying more attention to the needs of rural areas through electric projects, farm credits, roads and many other projects. The Democrats were also much more open to public expression of religion and religious tolerance, bringing back Arabic call to prayer and including Islamic courses as optional classes at public schools.

The reign of the Democrat Party gave rise to one of the most important social divides in Turkish politics and society, the divide between the “center” and the

“periphery.” Many scholars see in Turkey an ongoing, dichotomous and antagonistic relationship between center and periphery, or “state” and “society,” and would argue that this dichotomy offers the best model on which to base analysis. (Mardin [1973], Hoşgör [2008]) In these first experimental years with multi-party democracy, the Republican Peoples Party (loyal to Kemalist ideology) represented the state, or center, and was supported by urban elites, civil bureaucrats, military men, and the urban poor. The center-right Democrat Party represents the periphery; a diverse constituency of mostly rural civilians which make up the bulk of the nation's population. The divide between the two groups was exacerbated by the fact that while Atatürk's cultural reforms were strikingly successful in urban centers where the state's bureaucracy was actually strong enough administer them, many rural citizens found themselves far beyond the reaches of state propaganda. This divide was pronounced even further by both the state's inability to effectively regulate religious institutions beyond urban centers and the already more conservative and religiously devout nature of the rural population.

The Democrats ruled for a decade from '50-'60. During this time they lost the confidence of civil bureaucrats, and more importantly, the military. The military staged a bloodless coup in 1960, arresting and replacing most of the Democrat Party members holding office. For eleven months, political parties were banned and the state was overseen by a body called the National Unity committee. When the ban was lifted in 1961, former Democrat Party members reorganized themselves into the Justice Party and New Turkey Party, and the two parties collectively won almost 50% of the vote. This left the military discouraged. As the economy began to decline over the next decade, civil

society became restless. Leftist views became more prominent in the media and lower-level government bureaucracies while student demonstrations and often turned into violent strikes and anti-government protests. As a result, military leaders felt the need to step in again in 1971 and once again the elected government was replaced by the military. For the next two years, the military purged itself of leftist officers, and shut down some of the more extremist political parties, including the Marxist Turkish Workers Party and the Islamist National Salvation Party (a party which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section). (Magnarella [1998]).

When free elections returned in 1973, parties on both sides of the center/periphery divide were so weakened by factional splits that the ensuing decade could be characterized as weak coalitions unable to handle major challenges. These weak coalitions found themselves incapable of handling the turmoil which was about to ensue. On both the right and the left, dissident citizens joined political organizations which often advocated violence; terrorism and crime of all sorts spread throughout the country and in 1980, martial law was declared once more. This would be the last time the military interfered directly with civilian government.

What is perhaps most striking about this era of elections and coups is the tremendously high mortality rate of organized opposition groups. As platforms for free political expression devolved into chaos (violent student demonstrations, etc.) the military was remarkably successful during each period of martial law in halting whatever momentum these movements had, at least in the electoral sense. The first election after any period of martial law only ever consisted of a few parties, forming broadly along the

center-periphery dividing lines. There would be a Kemalist party loyal to the state and its founding principles; and there would be one or two opposing parties forming out of very broad coalitions of seemingly unrelated interests groups – conservative Muslims and religious minorities, agrarian peasants and entrepreneurial urbanites, secular-nationalists and Neo-Ottomans alike. While many of these groups have very different agendas, the organizational weakness of each group as its own electoral bloc and the frequency with which the state disestablished parties periodically forced these otherwise opposed pockets of voters into one ideologically-vacuous, often slightly right-of-center opposition party.

Despite the fact that these opposition parties were often no more than a hodge-podge of society's "periphery," they almost always won the first election after a period of martial law. In 1950, the Democrats won; in 1961 former Democrats won as a coalition between the Justice Party and the New Turkey Party; and in 1983 the center-right Motherland party won over the Kemalist People's Party. The only exception to this trend occurred in 1973 when factional splits in both the center-right Justice Party and Kemalist Republican People's Party had weakened both parties so much that many otherwise insignificant parties were able to gain seats in parliament. (Magnarella [1998] 277). Nevertheless, the phenomenon of center vs. periphery persists as a viable model for interpreting the Turkish political climate. The legacy of organizational weakness which coups and fractional splits have yielded gives voters on the periphery few options other than forming broad, center-right coalition parties which unify a diverse set of constituents around opposition to Kemalism and the state, and not much more.

### **Islamic Political Engagement: 1960-1982**

Turkey's Islamist religious-right did not have an independent electoral voice until the National Order Party was founded in 1970. Up until that point, religiously minded right-wingers aligned themselves with the rest of the periphery and actively participated in many center-right parties like the Democrat Party. Even after explicitly Islamist parties emerged, Center-right parties continued to pull support from the religious-right well into the 1990s. National Order was the first of many Islamist parties to be led by Necmettin Erbakan and took the stance that Kemalism and Westernization hurt Turkey's national character, and that Turkey must now turn her gaze back towards the Muslim world and its traditions. National Order was replaced in 1972 by the National Salvation Party, still under Erbakan's leadership. (Rabasa [2008], Özdalga [2002])

Erbakan began his career as a mechanical engineer; a successful academic having taught for 21 years at universities in Turkey and Germany, but an unsuccessful businessman having been a founding member of a failed motor factory in Istanbul. It was, however, his experience in industry which first brought him into public life, and in 1969 he was elected president of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Stock Exchanges of Turkey (*Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği* – TOBB). Erbakan had been an active member of TOBB for years, and became known in the organization as a strong critic of the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel (actually a former classmate of Erbakan). Erbakan's notoriety as a critic of Demirel's government prompted the government to cancel the TOBB election and use police force to physically remove Erbakan from his office which, in an act of defiance, he refused to leave peacefully. Later that year, Erbakan was elected to parliament in the 1969 elections as an independent candidate, and

in January 1970 founded his first Islamist party, the National Order Party. (Özdalga [2002] 128-9).

Erbakan was well known for his religious piety, and during his time with TOBB in the mid-'60s he formed close relationships with members of a small, pious, and highly influential inner-circle of leadership within Demirel's center-right Justice Party. After the 1969 elections, this inner-circle became an emboldened opposition faction, which did not sit well with the rest of the party. In 1971, a constitutional court closed the National Order Party on the grounds that it sought to create an Islamic state and was therefore a threat to the Republic; the court cited Erbakan's own speeches as evidence. Erbakan, always one for dramatic public gestures, then left the country. His influence, however, did not leave with him and the center-right remained in a state of bitter fragmentation. During Erbakan's "exile," his associates founded the National Salvation Party in 1972, which Erbakan took leadership of when he returned to Turkey in 1973. In October, 1973, under Erbakan's leadership, National Salvation won over 11% of the vote. Perhaps out of scorn for Demirel's own Justice Party, or simply emboldened by the opportunity a weak and fragmented right-wing presented, Erbakan surprised even those in his own party by agreeing to form a coalition with the Kemalist, Republican People's Party in 1973. (Özdalga [2002] 129-132).

Ideologically, this was a bold move. Most pious Muslims could not fathom the idea of an alliance with such staunch secularists as the Republican People's Party; after all, this completely breaks the center-periphery model. Nevertheless, the alliance between National Salvation and the Republican People's Party was made possible by

shared economic ideologies, namely, a belief shaped by anti-imperialist and pseudo-socialist rhetoric that Turkey's future as a developed nation rested on a strong heavy-industry sector. Apart from this, the coalition had little common ground to stand on, and would become very unpopular with both voters and party-leadership. The Republican People's Party were loyal to Kemalist principles, which also happened to be the very principles the Islamists thought would destroy Turkey. Central to the Turkish-Islamist worldview in this period was the idea that Turkey had lost her moral character by abandoning her Islamic roots – issues related to public-prayer, Quran courses in public-schools, etc. were of paramount importance to this first generation of Islamists (Özdalga [2002]). Most Islamists could not support the decision to coalesce with the Republican People's Party, and so by the 1977 election, the National Salvation had lost the support needed to stay powerful in parliament.

Electurally, the Islamist movement pre-1980 can be described at its best times as a small but sufficient proportion of pious voters and politicians working to restore the nations moral compass; and at its worst times, the pre-1980 Islamist movement was disorganized and ideologically confusing, commanding only a small chunk of the conservative vote, but leaving a large portion of the pious citizenry in the arms of secular moderates like Demirel's Justice Party. It is possible that Islam may have had a bigger influence on political opinion during this period than the electoral success of National Salvation Party would suggest, but the private leanings of individuals cannot be determined. All we have to go by is how religion interfered with public life, and since public expression of Islam was suppressed by the state during much of this period, no



clear or very powerful Islamist ideology emerged. Although Islam certainly had its moments in the public eye during the 1970s, Islamic activism didn't really rise to prominence until the state began to lose control of religion in the 1980s. (Turam [2007] 17-23).

Much like the political climate at large, the Islamist movement going into the military junta of 1980-82 was a disorganized and often confusing landscape. Before the movement could affect any real change, the whole multi-party system would need to stabilize. Parties' ideologies would need to become clearer and more coherent, and voters would need to begin to align themselves along less general lines than center or periphery.

### **A New Constitution and Beyond**

The military coup of 1980, which established a period of martial law from 1980-83 and gave the Republic a reformed constitution in 1982, is arguably the most significant period of authoritarian intervention since Atatürk himself ruled.

The 1980 military regime had more far-reaching aims than those of 1960 and 1971 which went beyond the restructuring of the constitutional framework of the state...the Parliament and the government were dissolved, all political activities were banned and the leaders of four major political parties were put under custody...the first two executions since 1972 were carried out in October [1980; by '83 number had risen to 48]...Between September 1980 and February 1983 over 60,000 people suspected of terrorism and illegal political activities were arrested....All these aimed first to suppress the domestic opposition against the military intervention and then to re-form the whole political structure. (Dagi [1996] 125-6).

Military intervention was prompted by what the military viewed as an increasingly radical political climate, and most of the reforms from 1980-83 can be viewed as attempts to reduce the tendency of opposing factions (particularly devout Muslims) to radicalize. In many respects, the reforms were successful. There has been no martial law since 1983, and the field of parties participating in electoral politics has grown more diverse.

With a touch of irony, however, the diversity which emerged in the electoral system in the wake of stability also provided opportunities for some of the most polarizing political parties to not only participate, but win elections. In this environment of relative stability, the Islamist movement took full shape, and ultimately rose to the highest offices in Turkish government. The continuing development of the Islamist movement, as well as the eventual accession of the AKP, is discussed in the following chapter.



## Chapter Three

### The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of the Islamist Movement:

#### A Brief History and Lit-Review – 1983-2002

Turkish party-politics since the constitutional reform of 1982 has been a volatile mix of alliance and ideology, with at least one major party changing leadership or name almost every election cycle. Between 1987 and 2002, a span of only four election cycles, seven different parties held ruling positions in parliament,<sup>2</sup> (Akarca [2008] 12), and 25 different parties participated in elections. Out of this volatility, the Islamist movement became the most powerful political force in the country, by far. In 2002, the Islamist AKP won an unprecedented victory by becoming the first Islamist party to form a unilateral government in Turkish history, and the first party of any kind to form a unilateral government in the Motherland Party did so in 1983. Since their accession, their popularity has only grown, as they have won almost 50% of the vote in the past two national parliamentary elections in 2007 and 2011. The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the Islamist movement in the last two decades of the twentieth century, as well as present five hypotheses scholars propose to explain the victory of the AKP in 2002. These five hypotheses form a basis for later analysis by providing conflicting narratives which can be tested empirically.

#### **Rise, Fall and Resurrection: Islamists in the '90s**

The period of military rule from 1980-82 disbanded every existing party and forced the entire electoral system to start fresh. When multi-party democracy returned,

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<sup>2</sup> All as participants of coalition governments

only three, brand-new parties participated in the first election. These three parties were ideologically vacuous, and formed more or less along lines of the center-vs-periphery framework. While it is tempting to view this lack of ideological diversity as the natural outcome of initiating an election without affording much time for politicians to organize along clearer ideological lines, a much larger part of the story seems to be the fact that many of the most prominent and ideologically-divisive politicians of the 1970's were still tied up in court proceedings stemming from charges placed on them during the 1980 coup; not the least of these was Necmettin Erbakan. Without Erbakan's formal participation, the Welfare Party was formed in 1983, but did not participate in the election (Özdalga [2002] 132).

The Welfare Party participated in its first national election in 1987 receiving only 7.17% of the vote, but by 1991 their share of votes had more than doubled. By 1995, Welfare took first place in national elections, became the head of a coalition government with the relatively moderate True-Path Party, and Erbakan became prime minister. A study by the RAND Corporation attributes Welfare's success in 1995 to superior organization, a large legion of devout Muslims loyal to the party, a move away from religious themes toward more general social issues, and a few populist slogans and proposals which drew votes from the urban poor away from the Republican People's Party (Rabasa [2008] 42-43). Once in office, however, "Erbakan found it difficult to balance his anti-system campaign rhetoric with the need to consider the interest of the secular establishment, which was highly suspicious of his political goals." (Rabasa [2008] 43) Trying to strike a balance, Erbakan not only failed to please his hard-core

Islamist base, but also lost the trust of the secularists in government which prompted the military to oust him.

On February 28, 1997, an office of state dominated by the military, the National Security Council, in conjunction with various actors within civil society, staged a “post-modern” coup – military officials began a process which trapped Erbakan in a series of legal issues which forced him to resign in June that year, and by 1998, the Welfare Party was banned from politics (Çağlar [2010]) This became known as the “February 28 Process,” and revealed to many in Islamist leadership that power could not be maintained while mounting such an abrasive attack against secularism, Kemalism, and the status-quo. This sparked an internal debate within the party. Leadership was fiercely divided between a group of traditional Islamists led by Erbakan, who felt obligated to stick to their guns on almost every issue, and a younger generation of reformers, led primarily by Istanbul mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. These reformers were willing to reconsider a variety of issues, but most notably human rights and relations with the West. While the debate did not spark any immediate change (Welfare Party members still participated in the 1999 election under the banner of the Virtue Party), the party did formally split before the 2002 election into the AKP led by Erdoğan, and the Prosperity Party led unofficially by Erbakan.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended Sheikh Kotku's seminary at Iskanderpasa where he developed close ties with the Sufi brotherhood. (Rabasa [2008] 14) As a district leader for the Welfare Party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected Mayor of Metropolitan Istanbul in 1994. Though in many ways his mayoral administration was very successful, his term

in office ended prematurely in 1997 when he was arrested and imprisoned for reading an Islamic poem during a public address in Siirt. (“Biography” [2015]). In 2001 he, along with his close associate Abdullah Gül, founded the AKP as a party dedicated to bringing Islamic conservatism into the modern world by rethinking certain issues. (Rabasa [2008] 45).

The most striking difference between traditional Islamist parties and the AKP is the fact that the AKP “views and projects itself as a conservative democratic party” and not as an Islamic party (Akdoğan [2006]); although I will argue in a later chapter that saying the AKP is not an Islamist party is a false presupposition. In terms of real policy changes, the AKP's most blatant break with its Islamist roots is expressed in its foreign policy, in particular, its attitudes towards the West. The AKP has committed to pursuing membership in the European Union, and has made more advances in that process than any ruling party that preceded it. This policy shift, perhaps more than any other “[succeeds] in challenging the Kemalist equation of urban with modern and secular, and rural with backward and Islamic.” (Kösebalaban [2011] 153; Hermann [2003]) The AKP maintains, however, many of the socially conservative policies of their Islamist predecessors, particularly in their not only relaxed attitude towards religious expression, but even occasional direct promotion of religious expression, in public life. This is played out in policy reforms such as lifting the headscarf ban at public universities, and the insertion of Ottoman-script into the curriculum of public-schools. (Yengisu [2014]).

Although a great deal of scholarly work goes into analyzing the various policy positions of the AKP in order to determine what they stand for and represent (Akdoğan

[2006]), I believe the heart of this issue is understanding not what the AKP does with their power, but rather who they have won over by making those position changes. In order to understand this, the 2002 election is key.

### **Victory for the AKP: The 2002 Election**

The 2002 election year was possibly the most pivotal moment in Turkish political history since the first free-elections were held in 1950. Without a doubt, this election stands as the single most important achievement of the Islamist movement. The AKP's victory in 2002 was not only the first time an Islamist party was able to form a unilateral (non-coalition) government, but also the first time since 1983 that any party was able to form a unilateral government. It is hotly debated whether the AKP's victory is truly a victory for Islamism, or a victory made possible precisely because the AKP distanced themselves from their Islamist roots. Therefore, understanding how the AKP came to power is critical to an understanding of the Islamist movement.

Upon review of the existing work on the AKP's electoral success, I have identified five major factors which scholars speculate may have contributed to their rise:

- *Crisis and Response* – AKP victory was due to voters lashing out against incumbent parties for failed economic policies and corruption scandals
- *Growing Nationalist Sentiment* – AKP was well-received by a growing pocket of increasingly nationalistic voters.
- *New Message, New Alliances* – AKP successfully married Islamist social policy with more moderate stances on foreign and economic policy, and became the voice of not only Islamists, but Centrists as well.



- *Increasing Religious Piety* – AKP was well-received by increasingly religious voters.
- *Charismatic Leadership* – AKP leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is an exceptionally charismatic figure, and simply won the hearts of the people.

Some scholars present a hypothesis which incorporates, in one way or another, all five factors. Others may claim only one or two had any significant role in AKP accession. The remainder of this chapter will briefly discuss each hypothesis within existing scholarship and propose a few general empirical measures which could be used to test each one, respectively.

#### *First Hypothesis: Crisis and Response*

For most policy analysts and scholars, the Crisis and Response hypothesis is the most blatantly apparent. Simply put, the Crisis and Response hypothesis states that the AKP's success is due to a few notorious failures of the incumbent, secular parties from 1999-2001. In particular, two crises often cited as grounds for outrage against incumbents are a financial crisis in 2001, and the aftermath of two earthquakes in 1999.

Devastating earthquakes occurred on August 17 and November 12, 1999, both in densely populated, heavily industrialized areas of northwestern Turkey. As if tens of thousands of deaths and billions of dollars of damages were not enough scandal, the quakes brought years of corruption scandals into the public eye as news agencies reported on corrupt construction contractors and public inspectors (Akarca & Tansel [2008], Rabasa [2008], Green [2005]). In early 2001, a series of banking and currency crises plunged the Turkish economy into recession, bringing GDP down by almost 5 percent in

the average province.

A great deal of scholarship already exists on the subject of how voters respond to macro-economic conditions. In the literature on political forecasting and economic voting, scholars find that the economic performance under the incumbent government is weighed heavily in voter's decision making (Alvarez & Nagler [1998], Anderson [2000], Fair [1978], Kiewiet [1983] Lewis-Beck [1988]). In Turkey, voters are found to respond almost exclusively retrospectively to economic conditions, which means that only the economic performance of the recent past has any meaningful effect on a voter's decision-making (Toros [2012], Başlevent, Kirmanoğlu, & Şenatalar [2005], Akarca and Tansel [2006]). Ali T. Akarca and Aysit Tansel [2006] have gone so far as to build an empirical model for determining the vote shares received by the incumbent party in Turkey, which they claim accounts for 96% of the variation in votes for the incumbent party, in all elections held from 1950-2004. Their model is based almost exclusively on economic factors, setting changes in income and price as independent variables which determine changes in voter support for the incumbent government.

Akarca and Tansel's results are very useful. They determined that in almost every election in Turkey (1950-2004), the votes received by the incumbent majority party could be determined based only on the votes they received the previous year, and a few simple macro-economic indicators like inflation and GDP. Their regressions did include, however, dummy variables during years they hypothesized certain outstanding events would impact voters opinions (like the capture of a notorious terrorist, etc.). The only dummy variable found to be significant was the one for the 2002 election. The

coefficient on this variable shows that the year the AKP came to power the incumbent party lost 18.61% of votes *they would have otherwise received given the macroeconomic conditions*.

Akarca and Tansel followed up on this study two years later with an analysis of the 2002 election in light of earthquake damage and financial crises. Unlike the response to financial crisis, where voters tend not to look back beyond one year, the earthquakes brought to light major corruption scandals in construction codes at local and national government levels, which had been going on for years, and voters punished accordingly.

Our findings suggest that, in casting their ballots in 2002, the Turkish voters appear to have taken into account the performance of all governments that contributed to the magnification of the earthquake disasters. Not just the incumbent parties at the time of the earthquakes but others, which were in power when the substandard buildings were actually built, were also held accountable. Each and every party which ruled during the 1983-1999 period was adversely affected by the earthquake damage. The votes lost by these parties went to the Justice and Development Party (AKP). (Akarca [2008] 8)

Provinces which were most heavily damaged by the earthquakes were the most likely to punish former governing parties with their ballots.

More than enough empirical evidence exists to connect the earthquakes of 1999 and the economic crisis of 2001 to the failure of incumbent parties in 2002. This evidence, however, only hints that the AKP was the direct beneficiary of public-outrage against incumbents. Many non-incumbent parties participated in the 2002 election, and all could have benefited from public outrage. If the Crisis and Response hypothesis is true, in its fullest form, then the AKP would do very well in areas of the country most impacted by the 2001 financial crisis, and most sensitive to stories and scandals related to the earthquakes. Chapters Four and Five address this hypothesis by collecting data and

estimating the success of the AKP in a province based on proximity to the earthquakes and the macro-economic effects of the financial crisis.

*Hypothesis Two: Growing Nationalist Sentiments*

A. Çarkoğlu (2002) imposes a right-wing vs. left-wing model in his evaluation of the 2002 election, and attributes the success of the AKP almost exclusively to the economic and nationalist factors. Çarkoğlu's work operates on the basis that the AKP sits on the far-right, and that understanding their success requires understanding how the right-wing voting bloc grew prior to 2002. He attributes to growth of the right-wing to growing nationalistic sentiment. By mapping a shift in how voters self-identify on that spectrum using his own pre-election survey data, Çarkoğlu finds that from 1999-2002, the right-of-center faction of the electorate grew substantially, particularly in the areas most effected by the 2001 financial crisis. In addition to the economic crisis, Çarkoğlu associates the growth of nationalist sentiment with the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in 1999.

Simply put, the Growing Nationalist Sentiments hypothesis states that the AKP benefited from a growing, right-wing faction due to increasingly nationalistic feelings among voters. Çarkoğlu cites his own survey data as evidence of increased nationalistic leanings, but perhaps additional support for this claim is the fact that the Nationalist Movement Party achieved more votes in the 1999 election than ever before, and actually won enough seats to participate in a coalition government. If it can be demonstrated empirically that the Nationalist Movement voters of 1999 defected to the AKP in 2002 in significant numbers, then the Growing Nationalist Sentiments hypothesis must be taken

seriously. Chapter five discusses this hypothesis further by demonstrating that the AKP does exceptionally well in provinces where voters favored the Nationalist Movement Party.

*Hypothesis Three: New Message, New Alliances*

The New Message, New Alliance hypothesis says that the AKP reworked the traditional Islamist platform and rhetoric to appeal to a broader constituency. The changes in platform include a break from the anti-western/Eurosceptic policies of Islamist predecessors, and a re-branded form of social conservatism which appears less blatantly religious. By making these changes, the AKP is thought to have won over voters in less traditional, urban communities.

The 1980s saw a rise in a new business class loyal to Islamist social projects. Mustafa Şen (2010) refers to the work of Karl Polanyi to explain how the transition to a market-economy and a society based on individualistic achievement and wealth maximization requires some kind of complimentary social movement. In Turkey, “Islamists and religious brotherhoods have always had organic links with small and medium-sized business.” (Şen [2010] 71). During Erdoğan's mayoral term in Istanbul, the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association, MÜSİAD, rose to prominence and developed close ties with future AKP leaders. The organization represented over 10,000 firms, mostly new, small-business upstarts, and preached a new way to look at Islam which reconciled Islamic ethics with entrepreneurial achievement.

The significance of new alliances with regard to AKP victory can be tested empirically with a few proxy measures for modernization and entrepreneurship. The

New Message, New Alliance hypothesis will only be significant if the selected proxy variables are found to not only statistically significant determinants for AKP votes in the 2002 election, but if and only if the 2002 election showed an above-average correlation between modernization and Islamist voting. If modernization and entrepreneurship are found to be significant determinants for AKP votes in 2002, but not for Islamist voting overtime (say, for the Welfare Party), then there is a likelihood that the AKP's reformist-Islamist stance got them elected.

*Hypotheses Four: Increasing Religious-Piety*

The fourth hypothesis, the Increasing Religious Piety hypothesis, states that for decades religious adherence and devotion had been increasing across Turkey, in particular a brand of Sunni-Islam which is not only moderate, but right in line with AKP ideology. Proponents of this hypothesis point to the fact that beginning in the 1970s, the state greatly expanded its expenditure on religious services and religious schooling. Mustafa Şen writes that the state, by expanding its engagement in the religious field, participated in the dissemination of a particular brand of Sunni Islam throughout Turkey. For Şen, official Qur'an courses and compulsory religious classes in primary and secondary schools resulted not only in a more religious population, but a less diverse religious population. (Şen [2010]). For any observer, it seems like a natural fit that as voters became more religious they would vote for parties with more religious-oriented policies. Unfortunately, there are very few, if any, measures of religiosity which offer ways to meaningfully compare religiosity at the provincial level; the Turkish state does not keep track of religiosity, and other measures like World Values Survey do not provide

information at the provincial level. Therefore, the Increasing Religious Piety hypothesis must be left out of this study's empirical analysis.

*Hypothesis Five: Charismatic Leadership*

The Charismatic Leadership hypothesis states rather simply that Erdoğan's popularity translated to the AKP's popularity. Former Istanbul Mayor, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, already had a name made for himself, and was an exceptional campaigner. Almost every scholar writing on the AKP's success gives kudos to their leader. (Hoşgör [2008], Rabasa [2008], Findley [2010], Şen [2010], Bozkurt [2013]). As a local politician, there is no way to determine Erdoğan's popularity outside of Istanbul prior to 2002. Were he an aspiring parliamentarian in the past, his success at the polls could be of use, but alas, he was not. The best proxy measurement for Erdoğan's popularity is a relatively weak one, but may suffice. Assuming that any local politician, even the mayor of a major city like Istanbul, is best known in the areas closest to his power base. Erdoğan's regional popularity may be considered if voters in and around Istanbul are more likely to vote for the AKP than voters in other regions. This hypothesis is tested and discussed further in chapter five.

**Conclusion**

Understanding the AKP's victory in 2002, in terms of who voted them in, is crucial to understanding who they are and what they stand for. While their unique mixture of traditional and progressive policy positions casts elements of uncertainty over understanding their constituency, it may be possible, through empirical analysis, to determine the characteristics of provinces where the AKP finds support for their new

brand of Islamism, and thereby better understand which of the five hypotheses just described is the most likely to be true. In the following chapters, relevant measures are collected to test each hypothesis and the results of empirical testing are discussed.





## Chapter Four

### Testing the Hypotheses for AKP Accession:

#### Data Collection and Voter-Aggregation

With the exception of a few empirical studies discussed in the previous chapter (Akarca & Tansel [2006 & 2008], Çarkoğlu [2002]), most of the scholarly debate on AKP accession is built around qualitative evidence. Going beyond the election, the debate on whether the AKP represents a progressive integration of Islam and politics or is a reactionary movement against modernization almost exclusively uses qualitative arguments. Using only qualitative evidence, such as an analysis of policy positions, it is even difficult to assert beyond reproach that the AKP is an Islamist party. A quantitative analysis, however, has the potential to settle many of these arguments. The next two chapters cover empirical testing of the five hypotheses for AKP victory laid out in the last chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how data were collected and organized, and why certain measures were chosen over others.

#### **Collecting Election Results: Aggregating Votes**

The results of elections are the most fundamental data points in determining changes in public opinion towards certain political policies. Election results have been gathered from the Turkish Elections at the Provincial Level (TELP) data set produced by Güneş Murat Tezcür.<sup>3</sup> TELP provides data for each national-level parliamentary election held from 1983-2011. TEPL provides the total number of votes received by each party in

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<sup>3</sup> Tezcür Güneş Murat. Turkish Elections at Province Level (TEPL) Dataset, 2012. Chicago. 10/21/14. Website: [www.luc.edu/faculty/gtezcür/data.html](http://www.luc.edu/faculty/gtezcür/data.html)

each of the 81 provinces in Turkey, as well as the total number of registered voters in a province, the total number of votes cast (and the total number of valid votes cast), voter turnout, the number of seats in a province, and the number of seats won by an individual party in an individual province.

Even with the thorough data provided by TEPL, trends are still very difficult to analyze. The sheer number of parties which participate, and the year-to-year inconsistencies of that participation, makes the raw data appear to be a mess. Not including independent candidates, 45 different parties participated in parliamentary elections from 1983-2011. Table 4.1 displays the total number of parties participating in each election year.

The difficulty in analyzing this data is due, in large part, to the frequency which parties change names from one election year to the next. As discussed in previous chapters, it is not uncommon in Turkish politics for a party to be banned from participating in elections, and for the leaders of those parties to quickly reorganize a “new” party with a new name. In a great many of these cases, nominal changes are made without any change in ideology or even candidates (unless of course individual candidates happened to be banned from participation as well, as was the case with Necmettin Erbakan following his ousting from Premiership in 1998). Therefore, the first level of simplification is to establish party-lineages by determining which parties can be viewed as continuations of another a party. Tezcür, the author of TEPL, provides this information in the code-book for TEPL. Because the goal of this study is to find where the AKP fits within mainstream political discourse, the only party-lineages worth

analyzing are those which at some point become serious contenders for seats in parliament. Figure 1 displays all party-lineages which, at some point from 1983-2002, win at least five-percent of the total national vote in at least one election year.

It is worth noting that it is easier to treat Kurdish-nationalist parties as insignificant, even though they make up a lineage which in 2002 breaks 5% of the national vote. The most important reason to treat this party-lineage as insignificant is because the party leaders often chose to support independent candidates rather than run their own, which makes trends almost impossible to analyze if the only measure is electoral success of the party. It is also practical to remove the Kurdish-nationalist parties from a discussion of mainstream Turkish politics because the Kurdish-nationalist parties are only concerned with advocating for Kurdish independence and do not contribute in any meaningful way to the dialogue on issues every other party fights over (at least in the electoral sense). And even without the Kurdish-nationalist party-lineage, the remaining significant party-lineages account for 87-99% of the total number of votes cast nationally (*see Table 4.1*).

Even after insignificant parties are removed from the pool, and party-lineages have been established, ideological trends are still not entirely clear. Many party-lineages share overlapping positions on a great number of issues, and can therefore be viewed as substitutes for one another by voters. A voter can opt to vote for the Motherland Party in 1987, and then vote for True-Path Party in 1991, without changing their personal ideology. This poses a problem because this study is interested in changes in voter's *ideologies* and not just their preferences for certain parties or candidates. It is possible to

address this problem by aggregating significant party-lineages into four distinct ideological camps. These camps I have called Centrist, Kemalist, Islamist, and Nationalist.

The Centrist camp represents the classical perception of the periphery. Centrist parties are right-of-center, generally moderate, often appeal to conservative Muslims as well as religious minorities and the middle-class. A major portion of their constituency traditionally comes from rural areas generally neglected by the Kemalist focus on urban industry. The Kemalist camp represents Kemalist parties. These parties generally have the most supporters within state bureaucracies, certainly the most support from within the military, and ideologically embody the founding principles of Kemalism (notably economic populism and laicite secularism). The Islamist camp represents all offshoots of Necmettin Erbakan's welfare party, the policies of which are discussed in earlier chapters. The Nationalist camp represents a hyper-nationalist movement which emerges in large part due to rising ethnic violence between Turks and Kurds.

The four ideological camps of Centrist, Kemalist, Islamist, and Nationalist represent the main actors in Turkish electoral politics. Focusing only on these four camps, ideological trends are much easier to pick up on. Figure 2 displays the share of the national vote each ideological camp receives from 1983-2011.

Some interesting trends to note are that the Kemalist camp fluctuates very little compared to the other three. The vote-share of the Kemalist camp hovers, for the most part, between 20 and 30 percent, fitting with the idea that Kemalist's maintain a certain niche of loyal voters in specific segments of society. What is most interesting is what

appears to be a direct trade between Islamists and Centrists. The space which the Islamist come to occupy in 2002 crowds out the Centrists, which either means that the Islamist camp has absorbed Centrist voters, or the Centrists have given their support to other camps, independent candidates, or insignificant parties. No matter what the case, the moderate-conservative, non-Islamist electoral wing that is the Centrist camp fades out of relevance after the accession of the AKP.

In order to go deeper than the national-level trends presented in Figure 2, the following variables were created to analyze changes in voter's preferences at the provincial level:

- $CenRVS_t$
- $KemRVS_t$
- $IslRVS_t$
- $NatRVS_t$
- $AKP_t$

Each of these variables refers to the share of votes received by an ideological camp in a given province at time  $t$ . In order to control for variation in turnout, the success of parties is measured in registered-vote-share, which refers to the total number of votes received divided by the total number of registered voters in a province. The variable  $CenRVS_t$  refers to the total number of votes going to significant Centrist parties divided by the number of registered voters, at time  $t$ ; Significant Centrist parties include the lineages of Motherland Party, True-Path Party and the Young Party. Using the same method of calculating real-vote-share,  $KemRVS_t$  refers to votes going to the party-lineages of Republican People's Party and the Democratic-Left Party;  $IslRVS_t$  refers to votes going to the Welfare Party-lineage; and  $NatRVS_t$  refers to votes going to the

Nationalist Movement Party-lineage.  $AKP_t$  refers to the real-vote-share received by the AKP in a given province at time  $t$ . Summary statistics for these variables can be found in Table 4.2 in appendix.

### Selecting Control Variables

Four variables were created to act as controls in each test. This study, and each hypothesis, is only concerned with how the AKP grew the Islamist camp, so any latent tendencies for a province to vote for Islamist parties must be included in each estimation as a control variable. To control for these tendencies, the variable  $IslAvgRVS_{90s}$  was created by calculating the arithmetic mean of  $IslRVS$  from 1991-99.

The second control has to do with nationalistic voting behavior. Voters who live in parts of the country where ethnic tensions are high are likely to have different priorities at the polls. In particular, Kurdish voters often vote exclusively for Kurdish-nationalist parties, or independent candidates. These tendencies, however, are very difficult to quantify in real terms, especially when the Turkish Statistical Institute does not record population by ethnicity. The best proxy measure for how concerned a province's voters are with issues related to nationalism seems to be the past success of hyper-nationalist parties. Therefore, to control for voters' concern for nationalist issues, the variable  $NatAvgRVS_{90s}$  was created by calculating the arithmetic mean of  $NatRVS$  from 1991-99.

Lastly, the Latitudinal and Longitudinal coordinates of each province's metropolitan center (each province is named for a metropolitan district, like Istanbul or Ankara) were collected by searching for each city on Google Maps. This was done in order to control for any factors related to geographic location which have not been

identified, and yet may still be present. The variables *Lat.N* and *Long.E* are defined as the coordinates of the center of each province's eponymous city in degrees North, and degrees East, respectively.

Summary statistics for these variables can be found in Table 4.2 in appendix.

### **Selecting Crisis Variables.**

Three independent variables were selected for use in tests narratives of the Crisis and Response Hypothesis, which link the AKP's success to a financial crash and two earthquakes. The first of these variables was selected to capture the extent of the financial crisis. Using data provided online by the Turkish Statistical Institute, the variable *Crash* was created by multiplying the provincial-level growth rate of real GDP per capita by negative-one.

To measure the effect of the earthquakes, the distance of a province's city-center to both the earthquakes' epicenters was calculated using latitude/longitude coordinates and the Pythagorean theorem. Coordinates of city-centers were already collected, the epicenters of the two earthquakes were recorded by the U.S. Geological Survey. The variable *MinD\_EQ* was created by taking the minimum distance (in degrees latitude/longitude) of province's city center to one of the earthquakes. Since very few provinces were actually touched by the earthquakes, but the political ramifications associated with widespread public knowledge of the events seem so large, distance is used rather than any alternative measures. Distance is selected of the assumption that voters who live closer to the provinces effected by the quakes are more sensitive to the issues that come to light in the wake of the quakes. It should be noted that there is a



slight amount of error in calculating distance in degrees latitude/longitude, but given Turkey only spans six degrees north to south, and is fairly close to the equator, the error is not large enough to significantly distort estimations of general trends.

The third variable used in testing the crisis and response hypothesis is the share of votes received by the incumbents in the previous election. If incumbents are being punished for these crises, then the effects of the crises on voting patterns should be stronger among voters who actually voted for them in the past, and then changed their minds. The variable *Inc<sub>99</sub>* was created to account for the total share of votes incumbent parties received in 1999; this variable is defined as the sum percentage of the vote in 1999 which went to the Nationalist Movement Party and the Democratic-Left Party.

Summary statistics for these variables can be found in Table 4.2 in appendix.

### **Selecting New Messages, New Alliance Variables**

In order to test the New Messages, New Alliance hypothesis, four variables were selected to measure modernization, and five others were selected to measure level of interest in certain foreign policy goals. Measures of modernization were selected to test the narrative which says that the AKP successfully challenged the public perception of Islamism as rural and backwards, and thereby gained support from modern urbanites. All four modernization variables were created using data from the year 2000 General Population Census provided online by the Turkish Statistical Institute. These four variables are *URB*, *EDU*, *WOM*, and *ENT*.

*URB* refers to Urbanization Rate, and is defined as the percent of the population living in an urban setting, as opposed to village setting. *EDU* refers to Education, and is

defined as the percent of the population with a non-vocational high school education or greater. *WOM* refers to Women in the workforce, and is defined as the percent of women in the non-agricultural workforce. Finally, the variable *ENT* refers to Entrepreneurship, and was created to directly test the aspect of the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis which says that AKP leadership developed close ties with an emerging class of Muslim entrepreneurs. *ENT* is defined as the percent of the workforce listed as either “self-employed” or “employer.”

The five other variables created to test the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis were selected to serve as loose proxies for level of interest in certain foreign policy goals. The first variable, *Number of Container Ports*, was selected as an approximate measure for a provinces stake in international trade. Only four container ports operate in Turkey in three provinces, one in Mersin, one in Izmir, and two in Istanbul. About 40% of Turkish imports and exports pass through these container ports. This data was collected from a powerpoint-presentation delivered by Hakan Erdogan, a Port Expert in the Turkish State Railways Ports Department, at a Seaports Conference hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in 2008. The remaining four variables, *Border*, *Ext. Coast*, *Int. Coast*, and *Asian Border*, are all dummy-variables which receive a value of 1 if a province fits the geographic description connoted by the name and a value of 0 if otherwise. *Border* refers to any province, coastal or landlocked, which sits on a the edge of the country, while not referring to interior provinces on the Sea of Marmara. *Ext. Coast* refers to any province sitting on the Black Sea or Mediterranean Sea. *Int. Coast* refers to provinces sitting on the Sea of Marmara, and

*Asian Border* refers to land-locked provinces sitting on a border with an Asian country like Iraq or Syria. Since a major break the AKP makes with their Islamist roots is in their policy towards the European Union, these dummy variables were created to see whether provinces more likely to come in contact with Europe (via the Mediterranean) were now more likely to vote for the AKP.

Summary statistics for these variables can be found in Table 4.2 in appendix.

### **Selecting Charismatic Leadership Variables**

To test the Charismatic Leadership Hypothesis, each province's distance to Istanbul was calculated in degrees latitude/longitude using the Pythagorean theorem, and a dummy-variable was created that received a value of 1 if the province was Istanbul, and zero if otherwise. Distance to Istanbul is included on the assumption that voters are more aware of local politicians in neighboring provinces than in provinces far away, so if Erdoğan's local/regional popularity had any meaningful impact on the election, then provinces closer to Istanbul would be more likely to vote for the AKP. The dummy-variable was included to test if Istanbul voters gave any additional support to the AKP.

Table 4.2 displays summary statistics for all variables used in regression analysis, while Table 4.3 displays definitions for all variables.

## Chapter Five

### How Justice and Development Came to Power:

#### Empirical Results

Using the data collected in the previous chapter, four separate rounds of regression analysis were conducted to test the merits of various aspects of the Crisis and Response hypothesis, the Growing Nationalist Sentiments hypothesis, the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis, and the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis. The empirical evidence, once analyzed, affirmed the Growing Nationalist Sentiments and Crisis and response hypotheses, while exposed weaknesses in the New Messages-New Alliances and Charismatic Leadership hypotheses. This chapter highlights the findings of those four rounds of regression analysis.

First, the 2002 election is analyzed on the basis of competition between ideological camps. Second, the Crisis and Response hypothesis is tested using GDP figures and distance from the earthquakes. Third, the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis is tested using various modernization variables, as well as geographic dummy variables. Finally, the Charismatic Leadership hypotheses is tested using distance to Istanbul as a metric for Erdoğan's regional popularity.

#### **Basic Party-Competition Regression Analysis**

The first round of analysis was conducted using election-results as data points, not to test any individual hypothesis, but in order to attain a better understanding of which parties (or ideological camps) retained their constituents, and which ones lost

them. Using an *Ordinary Least Squares* regression model, the provincial-level electoral success of the party, or ideological camp, in 2002 was estimated as a function of the provincial-level electoral success of the four main ideological camps in 1999.<sup>4</sup>

$$Party_{02} = \alpha + \beta_1 IslRVS_{99} + \beta_2 CenRVS_{99} + \beta_3 KemRVS_{99} + \beta_4 NatRVS_{99}$$

This regression was run five times, with the dependent variables  $AKP_{02}$ ,  $Prosperity_{02}$ ,  $CenRVS_{02}$ ,  $KemRVS_{02}$ , and  $NatRVS_{02}$ . The results of all five regression estimations are shown in Table 5.1.

These regressions simultaneously confirm and undermine the conservative-but-not-Islamic narrative, which attributes the AKP's success to appearing to distance themselves from Islamist roots by creating a separate, conservative identity prior to the 2002 election. The narrative is confirmed because these regressions demonstrate that the AKP drew supporters from every ideological camp. Each independent variable under  $AKP_{02}$  has a coefficient that is both positive and significant – the coefficient on  $NatRVS_{99}$  demonstrates that about 57% of voters in the Nationalist camp in 1999 voted for the AKP in 2002, and that about 26% of Kemalist voters and 25% of Centrist voters also voted for the AKP.

These regressions undermine the conservative-but-not-Islamic narrative because they show that the explanatory power of the narrative can be overstated. Perhaps the most important conclusion that can be drawn from Table 5.1 is that the AKP, despite claiming to be secular conservative-democrats, is actually an Islamist party. If Turkish voters believed that the AKP was not an Islamist party, then we would expect Islamist

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4 As discussed in the previous chapter, provincial-level electoral success is measured in registered vote-share

voters to be less likely to vote for them, but this expectation is contrary to the empirical evidence. The coefficient estimated for  $IsIRVS_{99}$  when  $AKP_{02}$  is the dependent variable is largest positive coefficient on Table 5.1, by far, indicating that 1999's Islamist voters supported the AKP more than any other party. By contrast, the coefficient on  $IsIRVS_{99}$  under *Prosperity*<sub>02</sub> indicates that the more traditional Prosperity Party only retained a miniscule portion of the Islamist vote.

The explanatory power of the conservative-but-not-Islamic narrative is further undermined when we realize that the Centrist camp not only gave the least support to the AKP proportionally, but also contributed the fewest actual votes. 57% of 1999's Nationalist vote translates to about 9.17% of the national-vote given to the AKP, while 26% of the Kemalist vote is about 5.62% of the national vote and 25% of the Centrist vote is only about 4.44% of the national vote.<sup>5</sup>

Another, perhaps equally significant conclusion, that can be drawn from these party-competition regressions is that the AKP was the only party to compete with the Nationalist camp for hyper-nationalistic voters. Other than from the Islamist camp, the AKP drew the most support from the Nationalist camp, as evidenced by the coefficient on  $NatRVS_{99}$  under  $AKP_{02}$ . The Nationalist camp was the only camp to lose more votes to the AKP than they retained for themselves. This exactly fits the narrative presented in the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis, which states that the AKP's victory is the result of the party grabbing support from growing bloc of right-wing nationalists.

It is also interesting to note that competition for the Nationalist vote occurs only

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<sup>5</sup> National-vote estimated by multiplying a variable's mean [see summary statistics] by its coefficient under  $AKP_{02}$

between the AKP and the Nationalists. Neither Centrist nor Kemalist parties are stealing significant numbers of votes from the Nationalists, and Nationalist parties are not stealing votes from either the Centrist or the Kemalist parties. This is evidenced by the fact that coefficients on  $NatRVS_{99}$  are both small and insignificant when either  $CenRVS_{02}$  or  $KemRVS_{02}$  is set as the dependent variable, and by the fact that coefficients on both  $CenRVS_{99}$  and  $KemRVS_{99}$  are even smaller and less significant when  $NatRVS_{02}$  is set as the dependent variable.  $NatRVS_{99}$  has a sizable and significant coefficient when  $NatRVS_{02}$  is set as the dependent variable, and the coefficient is even bigger when  $AKP_{02}$  is set as the dependent variable. This all implies that competition for Nationalist voters, which represent the hyper-nationalistic voting bloc, occurred only between the AKP and the Nationalist camp. Therefore, the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis is strengthened.

Finally, these regressions hint at the beginnings of the Centrist constituency fading into obscurity. Taking all five regressions together, we see the Islamist, Kemalist, and Nationalist voters from 1999 being distributed across the four main ideological camps. Adding horizontally across Table 5.1, the sum of all five coefficients on  $IsRVS_{99}$ , as well as  $KemRVS_{99}$  and  $NatRVS_{99}$ , is about equal to one. This suggests that Islamist, Kemalist, and Nationalist voters of 1999 stayed within the four main ideological camps when they cast their ballots in 2002. The sum of the five coefficients on  $CenRVS_{99}$ , however, only amounts to about 0.77, which implies that almost 25% of 1999's Centrist voters switched over to either insignificant parties or independent candidates 2002.

This is not an insignificant change. A quick glance at Figure 4 in the previous

chapter shows that by 2011, significant Centrist parties are non-existent. This would not be a problem for Centrist voters if the AKP was a suitable substitute, but as has already been discussed, Centrist voters were the least likely of the four ideological camps to vote for the AKP in 2002. The AKP does not appear to be absorbing Centrists into their constituency, but is winning in spite of them, and crowding out the electoral space. Islamism seems to have replaced, rather than absorbed the more moderate conservatism of the Centrists, which is a major paradigm shift away from center-vs-periphery, where Centrists used to represent the majority of the opposition to Kemalism.

### **Crisis and Response Regression Analysis**

The second round of regressions was conducted to test the Crisis and Response hypothesis. In this round, six OLS regressions were estimated, each setting  $AKP_{02}$  as the dependent variable. The first regression estimated  $AKP_{02}$  as a function dependent only on the four controls described in the previous chapter.

$$AKP_{02} = \alpha + \beta_1 IslAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_2 NatAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_3 Latitude.N + \beta_4 Longitude.E$$

Regression II adds *Crash* as an independent variable, in order to test whether or not the financial crisis, on its own, had any effect on AKP success. In regression III,  $Inc_{99}$  is added along with the interaction term  $Crash * Inc_{99}$  in order to test whether or not the political-effects of the financial crash are related to how large a vote-share the incumbent parties won in the previous election year – the hypothesis being that if more votes went to incumbents who were blamed for the financial crash, then there would be more votes available for the AKP to steal in the election. Regression IV estimated  $AKP_{02}$  as just a function of distance to the earthquakes and controls, and regression V added  $Inc_{99}$  along



with the interaction term  $MinD\_EQ*Inc_{99}$  for the same reasons as regression III. The sixth and final regression combined all of these variables together, and is displayed below.

$$AKP_{02} = \alpha + \beta_1 IsIAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_2 NatAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_3 Latitude.N + \beta_4 Longitude.E \\ + \gamma_1 Crash + \gamma_2 (Crash * Inc_{99}) + \gamma_3 MinD\_EQ + \gamma_4 (MinD\_EQ * Inc_{99}) + \gamma_5 Inc_{99}$$

Table 5.2 records the results of these estimations.

There are no shocking revelations from regression I, which used only controls, but it is nice to see that all of the coefficients are significant. The coefficient on  $IsIAvgRVS_{90s}$  reveals a close to 1:1 ratio between votes received by Islamists in the past and votes received by the AKP. Similarly, the coefficient on  $NatAvgRVS_{90s}$  reveals that about 70% of the past hyper-nationalistic votes went to the AKP. The fact that the coefficients on  $Latitude.N$  and  $Longitude.E$  are significant reveals that geographic location has something to do with the success of the AKP, although what that is remains unclear.

Regression II,  $Crash$  on its own, seems to reveal that the AKP did not benefit at all from financial crisis, as the coefficient on  $Crash$  is small and highly-insignificant. Regression III, however, tells a much more interesting story. The coefficients in regression III on  $Crash$  and  $Crash*Inc_{99}$  are significant, and very informative, but must be understood in terms of partial derivatives. Figure 1 displays these coefficients interpreted as a partial derivative.

$$\frac{\partial AKP_{02}}{\partial Crash} = 0.655355 - 0.0205077 * Inc_{99}$$

Figure 1: Interpreting Coefficients

These coefficients reveal that for every percentage point decline in GDP growth, the AKP increased their share of the vote by about 0.655 percentage points, but for every

percentage point increase in  $Inc_{99}$ , that 0.655 percentage point bump declines by about 0.02 percentage points. This means that the financial crash only had a positive effect on AKP success in provinces where the incumbent's vote-share was less than 31.94 percent, which also means that the financial crisis had a negative effect on AKP success in 47 provinces, just more than half of the country. Because the mean of  $Inc_{99}$  is 30.455 percent, the average effect of the financial crash was only a 0.03 percentage point bump in registered vote-share for the AKP for every 1.0 percentage point decline in real GDP – essentially no effect. This explains why in regression II to coefficient on  $Crash$  was highly insignificant (with a p-value of 0.92). That coefficient was insignificant, not because the financial crisis had no effect on voters, but because in the average province, the effects of the crash were almost completely negated by the existing popularity of the incumbent parties

Regression IV, quakes alone, reveals that the earthquakes benefited the AKP on their own right. The coefficient on  $MinD\_EQ$  was negative and significant, revealing that for every degree away from the closest earthquake's epicenter, the AKP lost 1.93 percentage points of the vote-share. It is also interesting to note that when  $MinD\_EQ$  is included in a regression, the significance of the coefficients on the controls  $Latitude.N$  and  $Longitude.E$  disappears, implying that geographic location is only a relevant determinant for AKP success so far as it captures proximity to the earthquakes.

When the interaction term  $MinD\_EQ*Inc_{99}$  is inserted into the regression V, the effects of the earthquakes are even more pronounced. For every degree of distance between a province and an earthquake epicenter, the AKP loses 3.2 percentage points of

the registered vote-share, but for every 1 percent increase in incumbent registered vote-share, that 3.2 percentage point drop declines by 0.044 percentage points. This means that the share of votes going to incumbent parties in 1999 would have to be about 73% to completely negate the effects of the earthquakes – far higher than the maximum value for *Inc<sub>99</sub>*, which is 47.988. Therefore, the earthquake crises had a positive effect on AKP success in every province, with the average effect being that for every degree of distance from the closest epicenter, the registered vote-share received by the AKP declines by 1.87 percentage points. The province furthest away from the earthquakes, Hakkari at 12.558 degrees, would give 23.48 percentage points fewer of votes to the AKP than a province right on top of the earthquakes, holding incumbent vote-share and controls constant. Even with the affirmation that the earthquakes played a major role in the election, it is perhaps even more important to affirm that the effect of the quakes was still diminished by the the popularity of incumbent parties in the previous election.

The most significant conclusion that can be drawn from these regressions is that the AKP benefited the most from the two crises in areas where incumbents were already unpopular. Because each regression controlled for latent tendencies to vote for Islamist parties, we can say that the crises created room for the AKP to grow the Islamist camp, but we cannot say that the AKP stole the most votes from incumbent parties. It is even still possible (even probable) that the incumbents lost a great deal of votes due to the crises, but they did not necessarily lose those votes to the AKP.

### **New Messages, New Alliances Regression Analysis**

As discussed in the previous chapter, data was collected to test two aspects of the

New Messages, New Alliances hypothesis; those aspects being modernization and internationalization. In order to test the modernization aspect of the New Messages, New Alliances hypothesis, AKP success was estimated as a function of controls and various measures of modernization. Five separate regressions were estimated using the equation displayed below: four regression where each modernization variable was tested individually, and one where all variables were included.

$$AKP_{02} = \alpha + \beta_1 IslAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_2 NatAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_3 Latitude.N + \beta_4 Longitude.E + \gamma_1 Modernization Variable$$

The results of these regressions are displayed in Table 5.3.

In the first three regressions, not one of the modernization variables had a significant coefficient. When controlling for latent Islamist and Nationalistic tendencies, neither urbanization, nor education, nor gender progressivism had any correlation, positive or negative, with AKP success. The fourth regression did produce a significant coefficient on *Entrepreneurship*, but that coefficient was negative, which provides contrary evidence to the hypothesis that part of the AKP's success is due to ties with a growing class of Muslim entrepreneurs. The fifth regression affirms the insignificance of urbanization, education, and women in non-agricultural work, as well as affirming the negative significance of entrepreneurship.

To test the internationalization component of the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis, four regressions were estimating using dummy-variables which distinguished between border provinces and interior provinces. In the first regression, the only variables included are *Border* and *Int. Coast*. In the second, to distinguish between land-locked border provinces (all of which happen to border Asian states) and coastal border

provinces, *Border* is left out of the regression in favor of *Ext. Coast* and *Asian Border*. In the third regression, *Number of Container Ports* is added to control for which coastal provinces are the largest trading hubs. Finally, in the fourth regression, *Number of Container Ports* is estimated as a lone, non-control variable. The results of these four regressions are displayed in Table 5.4.

Not one geographic dummy-variable bears a significant coefficient, which provides, at best, very weak evidence to suggest that the AKP's foreign policy played an insignificant role in their election. The only conclusion that can be definitively drawn from these insignificant coefficients is that whether or not a province falls on a border or a coast is not a meaningful indicator of voting trends. More, however, can be reasonably deduced from the insignificance of the coefficients on *Number of Container Ports* in regressions III and IV. The number of container ports in a province is a very real measure for the amount of international trade which passes through that province compared to another. If these provinces with the most trade don't alter their preferences for the AKP, then it provides stronger evidence to suggest that the AKP's foreign-trade policy was not a significant factor in voter's decision-making. The safest conclusion, although, is to say the from these regressions, no evidence exists to affirm the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis.

Upon review of the modernization and internationalization test regressions just presented, it is safe to say that New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis has no grounding in the empirical evidence presented thus far. The idea that the AKP won by differentiating themselves from previous Islamist parties as more modern and forward

thinking, and thereby winning the votes of more-educated urbanites and entrepreneurs, cannot be affirmed with by these regressions. This is not to say that some individual voters did not find the AKP's message more modern, but the “modernness” of their message cannot be considered a driving force behind their victory when not one of the variables selected for modernization or internationalization was estimated to have had both significant and positive effects on the AKP's success.

### **Charismatic Leadership Hypothesis Analysis**

To test the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis, the possibility that Erdoğan had cultivated a regional popularity as mayor of Istanbul was tested by estimating  $AKP_{02}$  as a function dependent on  $D\_Istanbul$  (distance to Istanbul, in degrees),  $Istanbul$  (a dummy-variable for Istanbul to pick up any favorite-son voting), and controls.

$$AKP_{02} = \alpha + \beta_1 IslAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_2 NatAvgRVS_{90s} + \beta_3 Latitude.N + \beta_4 Longitude.E + \gamma_1 D\_Istanbul + \gamma_2 Istanbul$$

A second regression was estimated, this time adding  $MinD\_EQ$  to make sure that  $D\_Istanbul$  wasn't being estimated as significant because Istanbul is relatively close to both epicenters. The results of these estimations are displayed in Table 5.5.

In the first estimate, the coefficient on  $D\_Istanbul$  seems to support the possibility that Erdoğan's regional popularity played a role in AKP success. The second estimation, however, nullifies this possibility. When  $MinD\_EQ$  is included, all the variables become insignificant, which implies that the significance of the coefficient on  $D\_Istanbul$  in the first estimation was only piggy-backing off the already proven to be significant effects of the earthquakes. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that Erdoğan's regional

popularity played a meaningful role in the election of the AKP in 2002.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the empirical evidence, the strongest hypotheses are the Crisis and Response hypothesis and the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis. By contrast, the New Messages-New Alliances and Charismatic Leadership hypotheses are found to be very weak in terms of explanatory power. The fact that the Crisis and Response hypothesis was found to be most significant when using interaction terms to control for the incumbent's vote-share demonstrates that while many voters did in fact respond to the crises with positive attitudes toward the AKP, voters who most strongly supported the incumbent parties were unlikely to switch to the AKP. This suggests that ideology remained a significant force in a voter's mind when bread-and-butter issues like economic recession forced voters away from incumbent parties. The relative strength of the Growing Nationalist Sentiment over and against the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis (and even the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis) suggests that Turkish voter's were already moving toward a more conservative, nationalistic ideology embodied by the AKP, and not that the AKP was moving to the center to meet Turkish voters.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusions

The goal of this project is to determine, through an analysis of how the AKP came to power, whether the success of the AKP should be viewed as Islamist actors moving toward the center to accommodate a modernizing electorate, or as an electorate becoming more traditional and thereby choosing to vote for a conservative, Islamist party. Strictly qualitative analysis is insufficient to answer this question, as ample material exists for interested observers to write history around either side of the question – on the one hand, the AKP's policies on issues like European Union membership are much more moderate than Islamist predecessors, while on the other, the role of religion in public life seems to be increasing. The empirical study presented in the previous chapters was undertaken to engage with competing explanations found in existing scholarship for the AKP's success.

This thesis finds that the AKP should not be viewed as an example of conservative Islam adapting to become compatible in an increasingly liberal democracy, but should rather be viewed as an example of an electorate become more conservative and more receptive to the Islamist message.

Upon review of existing scholarship, five hypotheses were identified as narratives which explain how the AKP came to power, although only four of these hypotheses were tested through empirical analysis. The four tested were called the Crisis and Response hypothesis, the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis, the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis, and the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis. The Crisis and



Response and Charismatic Leadership hypotheses both offer an explanation which minimizes the influence of ideological trends. In these hypotheses, bread-and-butter issues and clever campaigning explain why the AKP won, not ideological shifts by either Islamist politicians or the electorate. The Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis rests on the idea that the electorate was changing their ideology, and the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis suggests that the AKP changed their ideology to meet the electorate.

Based on the empirical evidence, the strongest hypotheses are the Crisis and Response hypothesis and the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis, while the New Messages-New Alliances and Charismatic Leadership hypotheses appear much weaker.

The strength of the Growing Nationalist Sentiment hypothesis is affirmed by finding strong correlations between votes for the Nationalist Movement Party from 1991-1999 and votes for the AKP in 2002. This correlation is evidenced by the fact that in nearly all regression estimations the variable *NatAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub>* was found to have positive and significant coefficients. The first round of regressions presents the most significant empirical evidence for the strength of this hypothesis, by demonstrating that not only was the AKP winning over almost 60% of the Nationalist camp, but was also found to be the only party in serious competition with the Nationalist camp for hyper-nationalistic voters.

The strength of the Crisis and Response hypothesis is affirmed, but the results of the second round of regressions suggest that ideological factors significantly limited the effects of the crises. The AKP did in fact benefit from the earthquakes and the financial crash, but the benefits of the earthquakes were significantly tapered, and the effects of the financial crash completely washed out, by the popularity of incumbents in the previous

year. Provinces which voted for incumbent parties in the previous year were less likely to be convinced to vote for the AKP on account of the earthquakes or financial crisis, which suggests that ideological convictions were, in many instances, stronger than the bread-and-butter issues exposed by the crises.

The New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis, and the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis, are revealed to be weak in terms of explanatory power. The narratives presented in the New Messages-New Alliances hypothesis are not necessarily false – the first round of regressions did demonstrate that meaningful portions of voters from each ideological camp did vote for the AKP – but the insignificance of modernization and internationalization variables suggests that voters who changed their minds based on the AKP's reformist attitude toward traditional Islamism were not so numerous as to have a meaningful impact on the outcome of the election. Additionally, the insignificance of coefficients on the variable *Istanbul* suggests that Istanbul residents were not more or less likely to vote for the AKP, which weakens the Charismatic Leadership hypothesis. Again, none of the narratives presented in these hypotheses are falsified, but the empirical evidence suggests that these narratives do not represent a big enough part of the picture to explain why the AKP won – the AKP could very well have attracted new types of voters with their newer messages, but not enough to explain why they won the election.

In sum, the biggest contribution to the AKP's 2002 victory appears to be ideological shifts within the electorate, which were partially influenced by the discrediting of incumbent parties after 1999's earthquakes, towards religious

conservatism and hyper-nationalism. Whatever actions the AKP took to appear less-Islamist should not be interpreted as actions taken to please the electorate, because these actions do not appear to have contributed meaningfully to the election. The AKP drew the most support from traditionally Islamist voters and hyper-nationalistic voters, and very little support from the secular center-right (Centrists). The disappearance of significant Centrist parties after the 2002 election should not be viewed as the AKP having absorbed the secular center-right into its own constituency, but rather as having crowded out the Centrists by absorbing only about 25% of their voters while forcing the rest to vote for insignificant parties or independent candidates. Taking all these things together, it is not right to say that the AKP is an example, at the electoral level, of conservative Islam adapting to liberal democracy, but rather a semi-liberal democracy adapting to become more accepting of conservative Islam as a political force.

Whether or not Turkey can still be called “the model” for reconciling Islam and democracy remains to be seen. While the AKP's accession should be viewed as evidence of major changes within the Turkish electorate, those changes do not carry any inherent threats to the democratic process. This project has not examined in detail anything that has happened since 2002, but even if religion has become a more powerful aspect of public life and political discourse under the AKP, there are still no major threats to the democratic process. The true test of whether AKP Islamism and semi-liberal democracy can coexist will come when the AKP is in serious danger of losing an election, which remains to be observed and discussed. Despite the fact that Turkish voters have become more receptive to Islamism, Turkey may still very well be the best case-study for

reconciling Islam and democracy. Turkey is still the only thing close to liberal democracy in the Islamic Middle East, and as such deserves all of the scholarly attention it has already been given.



## Appendix A: Tables and Figures

**Table 4.1: Basic Election Information**

Election Year	Number of Parties Which Participate	Number of Significant Parties	Percent of National Vote Going to Significant Parties
1983	4	3	98.53
1987	8	6	98.81
1991	7	5	99.42
1995	13	6	93.69
1999	21	6	89.53
2002	19	8	87.65

\* Number of parties which participate includes independents as one party

\*\* In this figure, Kurdish-nationalist parties are not included as significant

**Figure 4.1: Graphic Outline of Party Lineages within Ideological Camps**

Year	Centrist Parties		Kemalist Parties		Islamist Parties	Nationalist Parties
1983	Motherland P.	<u>Nat. Dem. P.</u>	People's P.			
1987	Motherland P.	True-Path P.	Socialist People's P.	Democratic-Left P.	Welfare P.	Nat. Work P.
1991	Motherland P.	True-Path P.	Socialist People's P.	Democratic-Left P.	Welfare P.	<i>dnp</i>
1995	Motherland P.	True-Path P.	Republican People's P.	Democratic-Left P.	Welfare P.	Nat. Movement P.
1999	Motherland P.	True-Path P.	Republican People's P.	Democratic-Left P.	Virtue P.	Nat. Movement P.
					// \\\	
2002	<u>Motherland P.</u>	True-Path P.	Young P.	Republican People's P.	Democratic-Left P.	AKP Prosperity P. Nat. Movement P.

\* Abbreviations: P. = Party ; Nat. = National (or Nationalist) ; Dem. = Democratic ; *dnp* means a lineage did not participate in that election year

\*\* Two horizontal lines indicate a party-lineage has ended

**Table 4.2: Definitions of All Variables**

Variable	Definition
<i>AKP</i> <sub>02</sub>	In 2002; Total Number of votes going to the AKP / Number of registered voters
<i>Prosperity</i> <sub>02</sub>	In 2002; Total Number of votes going to the Prosperity Party / Number of registered voters
<i>CenRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	In 2002; Total Number of votes going to Centrist parties / Number of registered voters
<i>KemRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	In 2002; Total Number of votes going to Kemalist parties / Number of registered voters
<i>NatRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	In 2002; Total Number of votes going to the Nationalist / Number of registered voters
<i>IslRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	In 1999; Total Number of votes going to Islamist parties / Number of registered voters
<i>CenRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	In 1999; Total Number of votes going to Centrist parties / Number of registered voters
<i>KemRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	In 1999; Total Number of votes going to Kemalist parties / Number of registered voters
<i>NatRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	In 1999; Total Number of votes going to the Nationalist / Number of registered voters
<i>IslAvgRVS</i> <sub>90s</sub>	Average share of registered voters voting for Islamist parties in the three elections from 1991-1999
<i>NatAvgRVS</i> <sub>90s</sub>	Average share of registered voters voting for Fascist parties in the three elections from 1991-1999
<i>Latitude.N</i>	Coordinate, Latitude North
<i>Longitude.E</i>	Coordinate, Longitude East
<i>Crash</i>	Negative Growth in per capita GDP in 2001
<i>MinD_EQ</i>	Minimum distance, in degrees, from a 1999 earthquake epicenter
<i>Inc</i> <sub>99</sub>	In 1999; Total Number of votes going to Incumbent Parties / Number of registered voters
<i>URB</i>	Population living in an urban setting / Total population
<i>EDU</i>	Population with a non-vocational high-school education, or greater / Total population
<i>WOM</i>	Number of women employed in the non-agricultural workforce / Total female population
<i>ENT</i>	Total number of workers listed as either “self-employed” or “employer” / Total workforce
<i>Border</i>	Dummy: value of 1 if provinces is a border or exterior coastal province, 0 otherwise
<i>Ext. Coast</i>	Dummy: value of 1 if provinces is a lies on the Mediteranean or Black Sea; 0 otherwise
<i>Int. Coast</i>	Dummy: value of 1 if provinces is a lies on the Sea of Marmara; 0 otherwise
<i>Asian Border</i>	Dummy: value of 1 if province shares a land-locked border with an Asian country, 0 otherwise
<i>Number of Container Ports</i>	Number of container ports operating in a province
<i>Istanbul</i>	Dummy: value of 1 if province is Istanbul, 0 otherwise
<i>D_Istanbul</i>	Distance, in degrees, to Istanbul

**Figure 4.3: Summary Statistics for all Variables (excluding dummies)**

Variable	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<i>AKP</i> <sub>02</sub>	25.115	25.435	10.522	4.5987	44.215
<i>Prosperity</i> <sub>02</sub>	1.9841	1.5755	1.3542	0.25562	7.3711
<i>CenRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	17.247	15.085	6.8936	4.0649	32.734
<i>KemRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	13.19	12.135	6.1626	2.003	29.428
<i>NatRVS</i> <sub>02</sub>	7.1393	7.0541	3.3197	1.0429	22.191
<i>IslRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	12.234	11.831	5.6121	1.8994	26.482
<i>CenRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	17.247	15.068	6.8936	4.0649	32.734
<i>KemRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	21.18	21.701	10.578	2.7778	48.124
<i>NatRVS</i> <sub>99</sub>	15.895	16.105	7.948	1.5432	33.8
<i>IslAvgRVS</i> <sub>90s</sub>	14.937	15.098	6.9172	2.5729	30.462
<i>NatAvgRVS</i> <sub>90s</sub>	7.7426	7.5261	3.7419	0.95608	16.051
<i>Latitude.N</i>	39.25	39.417	1.5294	36.2	42.033
<i>Longitude.E</i>	35.091	34.954	5.0365	26.414	44.044
<i>Crash</i>	4.6432	4.4	6.9557	-13.2	21.2
<i>MinD_EQ</i>	5.2684	4.1844	3.5347	0.062672	12.558
<i>Inc</i> <sub>99</sub>	30.455	34.531	12.087	3.6137	47.988
<i>URB</i>	55.467	54.476	11.917	26.053	90.686
<i>EDU</i>	12.958	12.386	3.516	7.1257	26.832
<i>WOM</i>	9.8623	7.8888	5.4686	2.126	28.012
<i>ENT</i>	23.939	24.239	3.7227	14.537	33.479
<i>D_Istanbul</i>	7.0587	6.4846	0	15.176	4.3043



**Table 5.1: Simple Party-Competition Model**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables				
	$AKP_{02}$	$Prosperity_{02}$	$CenRVS_{02}$	$KemRVS_{02}$	$NatRVS_{02}$
<i>constant</i>	-12.9438 (0.00175)***	0.197507 (0.7828)	-4.10456 (0.12780)	8.69645 (0.00007)***	4.8539 (0.00309)***
$IslRVS_{99}$	1.42178 (<0.00001)***	0.1767671 (<0.00001)***	-0.148142 (0.11649)	-0.2128 (0.00437)***	-0.243853 (0.00004)***
$CenRVS_{99}$	0.257335 (0.01762)**	0.0240624 (0.2086)	0.637066 (<0.00001)***	-0.156951 (0.00558)***	0.014116 (0.73902)
$KemRVS_{99}$	0.265665 (0.00026)***	-0.00752347 (0.5465)	0.340165 (<0.00001)***	0.459195 (<0.00001)***	-0.0207766 (0.45444)
$NatRVS_{99}$	0.577289 (<0.00001)***	-0.0481134 (0.0013)***	0.0909245 (0.09516)*	0.0595871 (0.15781)	0.338923 (<0.00001)***
R-Squared	0.75478	0.526073	0.744957	0.807675	0.609672

\*The numbers in parentheses are the p-values associated with each coefficient

**Table 5.2: Tests of the Crisis and Response Hypothesis**

Independent Variables	Regressions (dep. Variable: $AKP_{02}$ )					
	I <i>Controls</i>	II <i>GDP</i>	III <i>GDP+</i>	IV <i>Quakes</i>	V <i>Quakes+</i>	VI <i>All</i>
<i>Constant</i>	-21.2172 (0.2412)	-21.1396 (0.2465)	-15.0195 (0.4077)	-17.9714 (0.2759)	-4.74771 (0.7863)	-3.52694 (0.8412)
<i>IslAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	1.07156 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.07207 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.07346 ( $<0.00001$ )***	0.909041 ( $<0.00001$ )***	0.878234 ( $<0.00001$ )***	0.881125 ( $<0.00001$ )***
<i>NatAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	0.686277 (0.0007)***	0.690418 (0.0010)***	0.476236 (0.1494)	0.466561 (0.0139)**	0.270555 (0.3577)	0.258195 (0.3965)
<i>Latitude.N</i>	1.2531 (0.0032)***	1.25888 (0.0036)***	1.00341 (0.0388)**	0.459124 (0.2806)	0.327486 (0.4809)	0.311595 (0.5103)
<i>Longitude.E</i>	-0.688818 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.697191 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.611888 (0.0275)**	0.514247 (0.1128)	0.587508 (0.1102)	0.503815 (0.1937)
<i>Crash</i>		-0.01088 (0.9262)	0.655355 (0.0392)**			0.347551 (0.2453)
<i>Crash*Inc<sub>99</sub></i>			-0.0205077 (0.0265)**			-0.0108183 (0.2183)
<i>MinD_EQ</i>				-1.93044 (0.0001)***	-3.20391 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-2.88362 (0.0006)***
<i>MinD_EQ*Inc<sub>99</sub></i>					0.0437361 (0.0383)**	0.0365849 (0.0954)*
<i>Inc<sub>99</sub></i>			0.10795 (0.4572)		-0.245824 (0.2252)	-0.179559 (0.3923)
R-Squared	0.741819	0.741849	0.759842	0.788763	0.801848	0.806065

\*The numbers in parentheses are the p-values associated with each coefficient

**Table 5.3: Modernization Tests for the New Messages Hypothesis**

Independent Variables	Regressions (dep. Variable: $AKP_{02}$ )				
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>	<i>V</i>
<i>Constant</i>	-26.9427 (0.1801)	-23.215 (0.2090)	-20.9952 (0.2492)	-9.309 (0.6065)	-13.2049 (0.5178)
<i>IslAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	1.06084 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.08392 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.06611 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.08002 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.06896 ( $<0.00001$ )***
<i>NatAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	0.70775 (0.0006)***	0.668789 (0.0011)***	1.24424 (0.0008)***	0.734686 (0.0002)***	0.766876 (0.0004)***
<i>Latitude.N</i>	1.32081 (0.0027)***	1.24656 (0.0035)***	1.25525 (0.0034)***	1.18188 (0.0041)***	1.2231 (0.0053)***
<i>Longitude.E</i>	-0.660267 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.669304 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.687283 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.685691 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.656745 ( $<0.00001$ )***
<i>URB</i>	0.0371353 (0.5006)				0.0220079 (0.7368)
<i>EDU</i>		0.117335 (0.5373)			0.054572 (0.8087)
<i>WOM</i>			-0.0395622 (0.7337)		-0.0760191 (0.5105)
<i>ENT</i>				-0.406191 (0.0140)**	-0.406186 (0.0163)**
R-Squared	0.743386	0.743134	0.74222	0.761917	0.764227

\*The numbers in parentheses are the p-values associated with each coefficient

**Table 5.4: Geographic Tests for New Messages Hypothesis**

Independent Variables	Regressions (dep. Variable: $AKP_{02}$ )			
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>	<i>IV</i>
<i>Constant</i>	-19.534 (0.2825)	-18.8046 (0.3063)	-15.2911 (0.4068)	-19.1108 (0.2937)
<i>IslAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	1.1357 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.13063 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.14443 ( $<0.00001$ )***	1.07313 ( $<0.00001$ )***
<i>NatAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	0.736836 (0.0006)***	0.735865 (0.0007)***	0.704818 (0.0011)***	0.659536 (0.0012)***
<i>Latitude.N</i>	1.17484 (0.0068)***	1.12775 (0.0129)***	1.07358 (0.0176)**	1.23433 (0.0037)***
<i>Longitude.E</i>	-0.713016 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.678847 (0.0002)***	-0.717543 ( $<0.00001$ )***	-0.719254 ( $<0.00001$ )***
<i>Border</i>	1.98028 (0.2104)			
<i>Int. Coast</i>	0.213189 (0.9536)	0.475998 (0.8990)	0.273652 (0.9415)	
<i>Ext. Coast</i>		2.2568 (0.1991)	2.75691 (0.1236)	
<i>Asian Border</i>		1.30175 (0.5900)	1.46105 (0.5436)	
<i>Number of Container Ports</i>			-3.30981 (0.1754)	-2.39403 (0.3104)
R-Squared	0.747711	0.748192	0.754576	0.745361

\*The numbers in parentheses are the p-values associated with each coefficient

**Table 5.5: Erdoğan's Charisma Tests**

Independent Variables	Regressions (dep. Variable: $AKP_{02}$ )	
	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>
<i>Constant</i>	-42.3395 (0.0184)**	-17.7128 (0.4711)
<i>IslAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	0.923838 (<0.00001)***	0.9189 (<0.00001)***
<i>NatAvgRVS<sub>90s</sub></i>	0.554479 (0.0039)***	0.440171 (0.0319)**
<i>Latitude.N</i>	0.415082 (0.3545)	0.479985 (0.2839)
<i>Longitude.E</i>	1.47873 (0.0153)**	0.483141 (0.5976)
<i>D_Istanbul</i>	-2.65321 (0.0003)***	0.0367188 (0.9854)
<i>Istanbul</i>	-7.44881 (0.1736)	-3.55667 (0.5569)
<i>MinD_EQ</i>		-1.95779 (0.1552)
R-Squared	0.784179	0.790111

\*The numbers in parentheses are the p-values associated with each coefficient

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