

Explaining Turkish Party and Public Support for the EU

Seth Jolly, Syracuse University

Sibel Oktay, Syracuse University

September 2011 Draft

Prepared for the Political Science Research Workshop

October 7, 2011

Department of Political Science, Syracuse University

## **Introduction:**

What explains the levels of mass and elite support toward European integration in Turkey? To what extent do the established theories of public and elite attitudes toward integration explain the Turkish case? In other words, are Turkish attitudes toward the EU exceptional?

During the era of permissive consensus, European integration was an elite-driven process (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970). But the recent literature on attitudes toward European integration has established that the era of permissive consensus is over (Carrubba 2001, Hooghe and Marks 2005, De Vries and Edwards 2009); in other words, Euroskepticism should be studied at the mass level along with the elite level.

Corresponding to this new reality, public opinion research has received greater interest in the period following the Maastricht Treaty and, especially, during and after the French and Dutch referendums on the Constitutional Treaty. Scholars have focused on how voters' economic calculus and concerns on national identity and culture affect their attitudes on European integration, as well as the linkage between the public and the political elites, at the national and European levels (cf. Gabel 1998a, Gabel 1998b, Carrubba 2001, McLaren 2002, Carey 2002, Brinegar and Jolly 2005, Hooghe 2007, Herzog and Tucker 2009). Similarly, party system scholars have isolated the ideological and strategic factors driving party support for the EU (cf. Taggart 1998, Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002, Ray 2003, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004, Marks et al. 2006, De Vries and Edwards 2009).

As far as the geographical focus of these studies is concerned, a majority of them focused on Western Europe (Eichenberg and Dalton 1993, Gabel 1998a, Gabel 1998b, Taggart 1998,

Carey 2002, McLaren 2002, Ray 2003). With the Central and Eastern European countries' membership bids, however, this focus began to shift to the east and studies adopted a more comparative perspective (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004, Marks et al. 2006, Herzog and Tucker 2009).

In order to expand the geographical scope as well as the theoretical generalizability of this literature, we argue that Turkey needs to be included in this comparative approach to explaining public and elite attitudes toward the EU. While several studies consider current member attitudes toward Turkish enlargement (e.g. de Vreese et al. 2008), few focus on Turkish attitudes (for an exception, see Çarkoğlu (2003)). Turkey's lengthy and ongoing pursuit of full membership and its critical socio-economic and cultural profile make the country an important case for analysis.

To that end, we ask three research questions in this study. First, we ask whether Turkish party system is an exceptional case in the European context to understand the patterns of elite-level Euroskepticism by looking at strategic electoral and ideological explanations of support. This is an important question that lays the groundwork for our study, whose answer will provide us with the leverage to argue further that Turkey should be integrated to the comparative scope of the literature. Second, we ask the reasons behind public and elite reservations toward the EU by looking at utilitarian, cultural and national identity-based explanations of support. Data show that neither the elites nor the masses are fully in support of European integration, and we utilize qualitative as well as quantitative methods to analyze the reasons behind Turkish Euroskepticism. Finally, we look for possible linkage mechanisms that might be at work between the elite and mass levels of EU support. Our analysis shows that there is indeed some degree of linkage between the elites and the masses in terms of the mechanisms that drive their support (or

lack thereof) toward the EU, such that elite attitudes very much echo those of the masses and vice versa. Although further research is required to establish this linkage mechanism, we are still able to show that elites and masses are by and large in agreement in terms of how they view Turkey's future membership in the EU.

The outline of this paper will be the following. In the first section we give a brief review of the literature on party level support for the European Union, and compare Turkish party system with its counterparts in Eastern and Western Europe to establish a comparative framework by using the Chapel Hill Expert Survey data from 2006 and 2007. Next we look at Turkish mass attitudes toward the EU. This section begins with a review of the literature and continues with the quantitative analysis of EU support by using the 2007 *Eurobarometer* (EB 67.2) data to test the utilitarian, cultural and identity-based explanations. The next section borrows from the mass-level explanations and evaluates the level of support for the EU across major and minor Turkish political parties with a qualitative manifesto analysis of party attitudes toward the EU. This section also compares Turkish political parties with its counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe to discuss whether candidate countries share similarities in how they perceive EU integration. In the last section we present concluding remarks and avenues for further research.

## **I. Studying party-level support for the European Union:**

In the literature on party support for European integration, hypotheses revolve around mainstream and niche parties. For both ideological and strategic reasons, non-mainstream parties are typically Euroskeptic (Taggart 1998, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2001, Aspinwall 2002, Marks 2004, Jolly 2007). Ideologically, both extremes on the right and the left have reason to be

skeptical of European integration. Radical Leftists combine elements of anti-market and anti-centralist ideologies (Aspinwall 2002, 86). Radical Right politicians, on the other hand, focus on nationalism. In their view, the European Union is an economic and identity threat to state autonomy and independence (Aspinwall 2002, 87). In contrast, Centrist parties tend to support the European integration project, yielding the nearly classic inverted U-curve relationship between Left-Right ideology and support for European integration.

Analyzing party positions in 2002, Marks et al. (2006) find further evidence to support these propositions in the East and West for both the standard Left-Right dimension (e.g. economic redistribution, welfare regulation) and a New Politics dimension they label GAL-TAN (Green/Alternative/Libertarian – Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist). In the West, these two dimensions are strongly correlated (-0.65), with 83% of the parties either Left-GAL or Right-TAN. This dimension matches what Kitschelt (1993) labeled the Left/Libertarian – Right/Authoritarian dimension. In a simple regression, Marks et al. (2006) demonstrate that Right-wing and TAN parties tend to be more Euroskeptical (i.e. a negative linear relationship), but that extremism also matters so that far-Left parties also tend to be Euroskeptical in the West.

In Central and Eastern Europe, the relationship between Left-Right and GAL-TAN is reversed, with Left parties typically being TAN and Right parties leaning GAL, due to their historical trajectories toward the adoption of capitalism and liberal democracy. The correlation between the two dimensions (0.45) is not nearly as strong as in the West, yet 68% of the parties are in either the Left-TAN or Right-GAL quadrants in the two-dimensional space (Marks et al. 2006).

Though the relationship between the two dimensions is different between the East and the West, the simple models explaining EU support are surprisingly similar. In both regions in 2002, Rightist and TAN parties are more Euroskeptical (Marks et al. 2006). Further, extreme parties, on either end of the spectrums, tend to be Euroskeptical. Hooghe et al. (2002, 968) go so far as to call this inverted U-curve relationship between ideology and EU support an uncontested fact. Theoretically and empirically, ideology and particularly extreme ideological positions offer a useful starting point in an analysis of Turkish party support for European integration to help situate Turkey in the comparative context of European party systems.

However, ideological concerns, in isolation, are not sufficient to explain opposition to European integration (Taggart 1998). We must also consider strategic behavior by both mainstream and non-mainstream (niche) parties to assess the mechanisms behind support for integration.

In this framework, niche parties can be viewed in either ideological (e.g. extreme Left or Right) or competitive (e.g. low vote share or government opposition) terms. As with ideological extremism we have discussed above, niche electoral parties also tend to be Euroskeptical. Precisely because they are less successful under the current party competition structure, fringe parties typically need to set themselves apart to voters (Taggart 1998, 382; Hooghe et al. 2002, 968), regardless of their ideological extremism. Using Chapel Hill Expert Survey data, Marks et al. (2002) and Jolly (2007) show that Western European parties with greater electoral support are more supportive of the European Union. Turning to the East, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004, 15) demonstrate that parties in government, while sometimes expressing ‘soft Euroskepticism,’ are not ‘hard Euroskeptics.’ In fact, “all hard Euroskeptics are peripheral to their party systems” (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004, 16).

For both Eastern and Western European parties, this empirical regularity regarding the mainstream parties makes intuitive sense. As Hix (2007, 137) argues, the parties in government are the same parties that control the policy agenda and represent the states at the European level; thus, far more than their fringe party colleagues, mainstream parties are able to “shape policy outcomes at the European level in their preferred direction.” This agenda-setting power at the European level contributes to mainstream party support for the EU.

In the next few pages, we evaluate whether these hypotheses help make sense of the Turkish party system. In this section, we use the Chapel Hill Expert Survey data (Hooghe et al. 2010). Conducted in 2007, this survey asks country experts to evaluate each party’s position on the Left-Right dimension, the new politics dimension, and support for the European Union, along with several more specific policies.

Thus far, Turkey has not received much attention in the literature either on public or elite opinion on European integration.<sup>1</sup> One problem contributing to this lack of research, especially on elite attitudes toward the European Union, is that it is difficult to map Turkish political parties across the conventional two-dimensional policy space that we use for European political parties. Carkoglu and Hinich (2006) point to this difficulty of placing political parties across the policy space. In their attempt to construct a two-dimensional space of party positions for Turkey based on party preferences, the authors find that Turkish party system is significantly different from both Eastern and Western Europe. Rather than the economic (Left-Right) and non-economic (GAL-TAN) axes that constitute the two-dimensional policy space in Europe (Marks et al. 2006), the authors find that an economic left-right axis is relatively unimportant in the Turkish party system. Instead, they find that the policy space in this country is defined along the axes of

---

<sup>1</sup> Important exceptions include Carkoglu (2003), Senyuva (2006), and Kentmen (2008)

secularism – pro-Islamism and pro-Kurdism – anti-Kurdism. They also find that religiosity is the main determinant of voter choice and that the electorate is overwhelmingly centrist in economic terms. This is not an argument for Turkish exceptionalism, however, since these dimensions match the classic center-periphery cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Nevertheless, Carkoglu and Hinich's (2006) study is especially critical for the comparative study of party-based Euroskepticism in Europe, which looks at economic as well as non-economic explanations to understand attitudes toward European integration. While ideology is a powerful explanatory factor in both the West and the East, we should expect Left-Right ideology to play a smaller role in Turkish Euroskepticism. Caveats aside, though, our analyses below show that despite these facts about the Turkish party system, Turkish parties are nonetheless generally comparable to their counterparts in Western and Eastern Europe.

In the next part of the paper we intend to make contributions to the literature by first mapping Turkish party system next to its European counterparts and analyzing the levels of Euroskepticism at the elite level to see where the Turkish case fits in the comparative scope of the literature. Here, expert data will facilitate cross-regional comparison.

## **II. Turkish Parties in Comparative Context:**

In this section, we consider Turkish political parties in comparative context. Utilizing the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), which estimates party positions on ideological dimensions as well as European integration, we provide an overview of the Turkish party system and then compare party positions in Turkey with those in Western and Eastern Europe. At the most basic level, we ask which Turkish parties favor European Union membership. But more significantly,

do the standard explanations developed in Western and Eastern Europe help us understand the variation?

In the most recent election, fourteen political parties contested the election, but only three parties won enough votes under proportional representation voting rules to overcome the 10% threshold and earn seats. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a large plurality of votes (46.7%) and a clear majority of seats (62%). The disproportionality between votes and seats for AKP can largely be attributed to wasted votes due to the 10% threshold used in the proportional representation system. Table 1 presents the vote and seat shares for each of the main parties.

Table 1. 2007 Parliamentary Election Results, Turkey

Parties	Vote Share	Seats
Justice and Development Party (AKP)	46.7%	341
Republican People's Party (CHP)	20.9%	112
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)	14.3%	71
Democratic Party (DP) <sup>2</sup>	5.4%	0
Independents <sup>3</sup>	5.2%	26
Youth Party (GP)	3.0%	0
Others (9 parties)	4.5%	0
Total	100%	550

*Source:*

<http://secim2007.ntvmsnbc.com>

In the following pages, we focus on these five major and minor parties and their attitudes toward European integration, with particular emphasis on the three major parties that won seats.

<sup>2</sup> The Democratic Party (DP) is the successor party to the True Path Party (DYP), which changed its name prior to the 2007 election. Taken prior to the election, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey still refers to the True Path Party. In this paper, the two will be used interchangeably, though we try to use the more recent Democratic Party name.

<sup>3</sup> The Independents are predominantly the Kurdish candidates who coordinated but did not compete under a party organization in order to circumvent the 10% national threshold. Since the threshold only applies to political parties and not individuals, Kurdish candidates ran as independents during the election and formed their own party group in the parliament (Democratic Society Party – DTP) once they got elected.

We define “major political parties” as those which have a credible chance of winning the parliamentary elections, and “minor political parties” as those which come closest to the 10 percent national electoral threshold in the 2007 parliamentary election.

The CHES survey encompasses 227 national political parties in 29 countries. For our purposes, the survey is especially useful because it evaluates both current and potential EU members, including Turkey. In 2006, the survey contacted 632 experts and had a response rate of 42.9% (Hooghe et al. 2010, 692), and are generally found to be valid and reliable data.<sup>4</sup>

First, consider the electoral strategic argument. In both Eastern and Western Europe, smaller parties tend to be more Euroskeptical. Does this trend hold in Turkey as well? In the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, the membership support question evaluates the “overall orientation of the party leadership towards European Union membership in 2007.” The experts used a 7-point scale, with 1 denoting strong opposition to major domestic reforms to qualify for EU membership as soon as possible and 7 denoting strong support.<sup>5</sup> Following Marks et al. (2002), we rescale the variable from 0 to 1 for ease of interpretation.

---

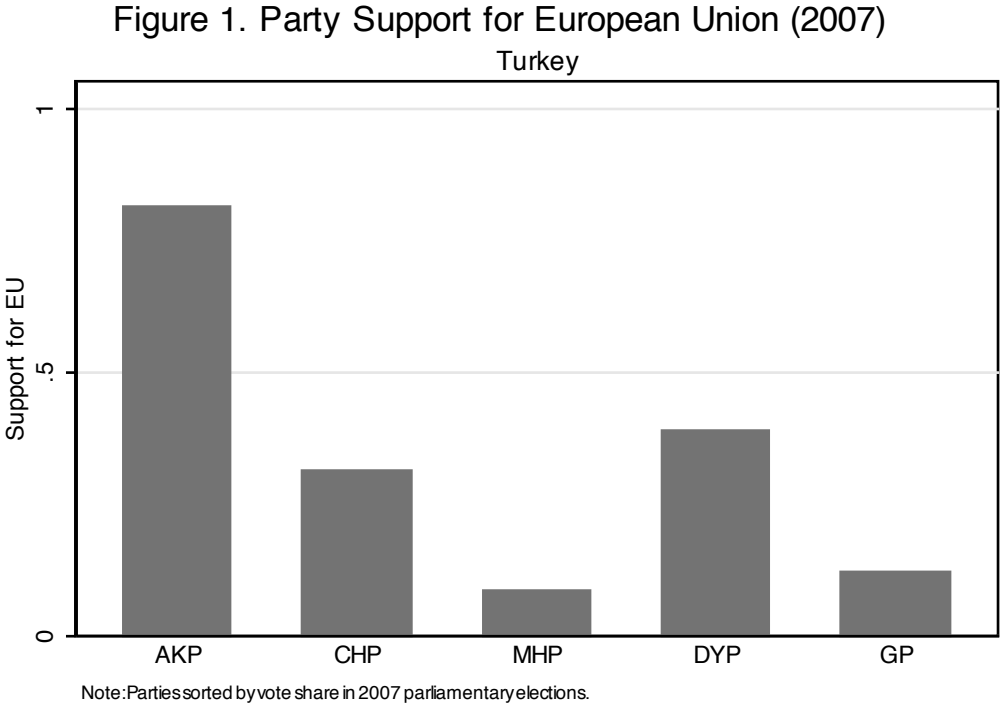
<sup>4</sup> Hooghe et al. (2010) validate the data by comparing the CHES with data from party manifestos, public opinion surveys, and elite surveys (especially MPs and MEPs). In a separate study, Marks et. al (2007) cross-validate the expert survey data with the manifesto project data (Budge et al. 2001), the European election survey (Eijk et al. 2002), and the 1996 Political Representation in Europe survey of members of national and members of European parliaments (Katz et al., 1999). Using factor analysis, they determine that the four measures share a common structure, and they determine that variance in the expert data set is very similar to the variance found in this common factor (Marks et al. 2007, 25). While these comparative data offer some leverage on our research questions, the expert responses cannot capture all the nuance of party positions toward the EU; thus, we do not rely solely on expert survey data but delve more deeply into the party positions by evaluating individual party manifestos in the next section.

<sup>5</sup> The question wording is as follows:

Q1. Consider EU membership for Turkey. Where did the party leadership of the following parties stand in 2007?

1. Strongly opposes major domestic reforms to qualify for EU membership as soon as possible
2. Opposes major domestic reforms to qualify
3. Somewhat opposes
4. Neutral
5. Somewhat favors

Figure 1 shows that the electoral-strategic argument generally fits the Turkish case for 2007. The largest party, AKP, is by far the most pro-Europe party, with the main opposition parties, the CHP and MHP, progressively more Euroskeptical. The political parties in Figure 1 are ordered from largest to smallest vote share (see Table 1 for vote shares), with the GP registering a mere 3% of the vote and 0 seats. With only the DYP/DP as a partial exception, the smaller parties in Turkey tend to be far more skeptical of EU membership than AKP.



Next, consider the ideological arguments based on Economic Left-Right and GAL-TAN. In both the East and the West, a curvilinear pattern is expected, where the extremes are less supportive of the EU while the center is largely supportive. Based on the CHES data from 2006, Figures 2 and 3 provide scatterplots of the unweighted party positions and a simple curve

---

6. Favors major domestic reforms to qualify  
 7. Strongly favors major domestic reforms to qualify for EU membership as soon as possible

reflecting a prediction for EU support from a linear regression of EU support on Economic Left-Right and Economic Left-Right squared, with confidence intervals (Stata qfitci command).<sup>6</sup>

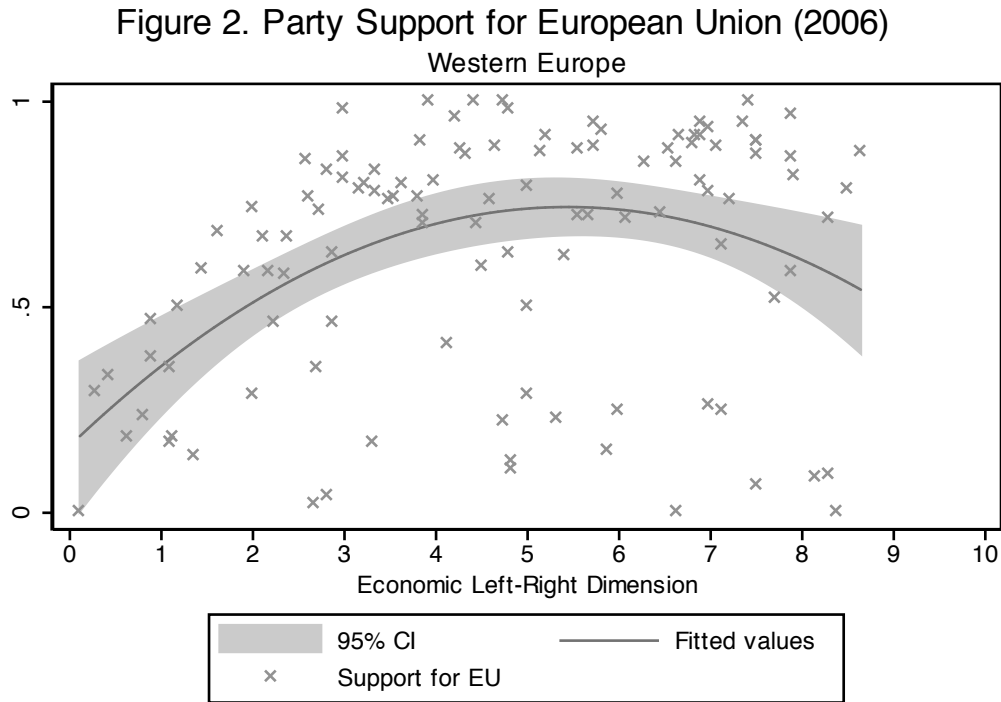


Figure 2 focuses on the Western European parties. It shows that support is clustered in the middle of the ideological spectrum, with major opposition at the Left and Right extremes. The simple qfit curve supports the ideological extremism arguments so prevalent in the literature, with fairly narrow confidence intervals; however, it should be noted that compared to a general Left-Right ideological dimension,

<sup>6</sup> For the figures, Western Europe includes the EU-15 countries (except Luxembourg): Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, UK, Portugal, Austria, Finland and Sweden. Eastern Europe includes the following countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The survey question on EU support in member states is simpler than in Turkey:

Q1: How would you describe the general position on European integration that the party leadership took over the course of 2006?

1. Strongly opposed
2. Opposed
3. Somewhat opposed
4. Neutral
5. Somewhat in favor
6. In favor
7. Strongly in favor

As with the Turkey support question, we rescale the variable from 0 to 1.

Economic Left-Right has a less dramatic inverted U-shape, with Euroskepticism more evident in the Economic Leftists than the Rightists.

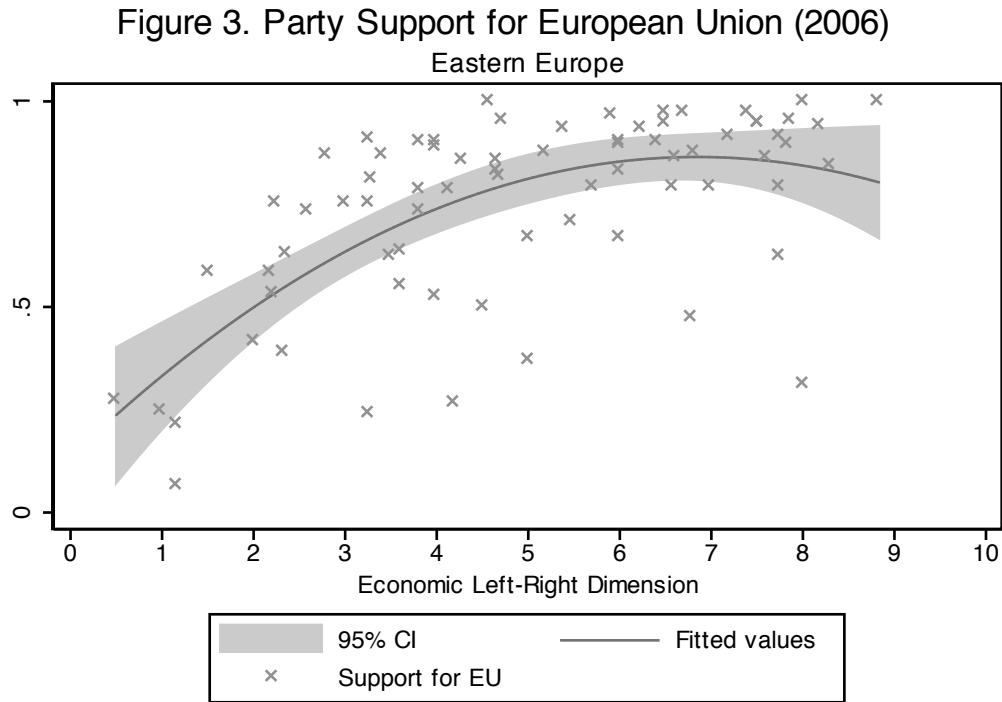
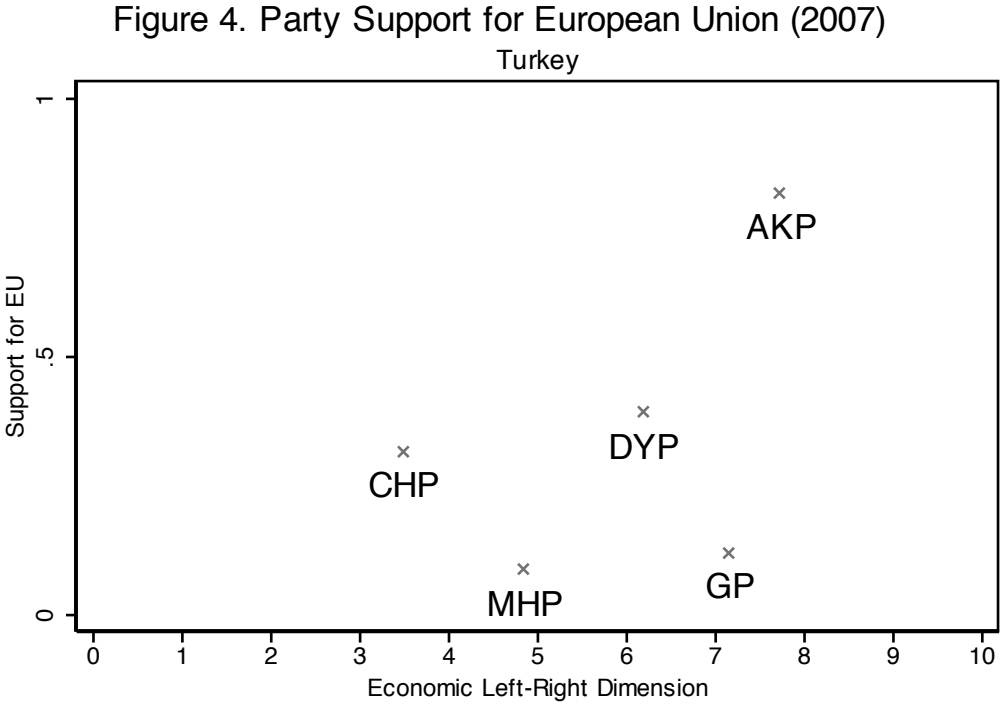


Figure 3 focuses on Eastern Europe. As in the West, it is the Economic Leftists that are more Euroskeptical, though the model supports a slight curvilinear shape. Again, the Centrist parties are still heavily clustered in support of the EU. In both cases, it also seems clear that the simplest regression model (Economic Left-Right ideology and extremism) leaves much variance to be explained.

Figure 4 below presents the Turkish parties in a scatterplot with Economic Left-Right ideology on the X-axis and EU support on the Y-axis. Compared to both the East and the West, the Economic Left-Right ideological scale appears more censored. There simply are not parties on the far Left end of the Left-Right scale, given the small number of electorally relevant parties during the 2007 elections that we focus in our study. In fact, the unweighted mean for Economic

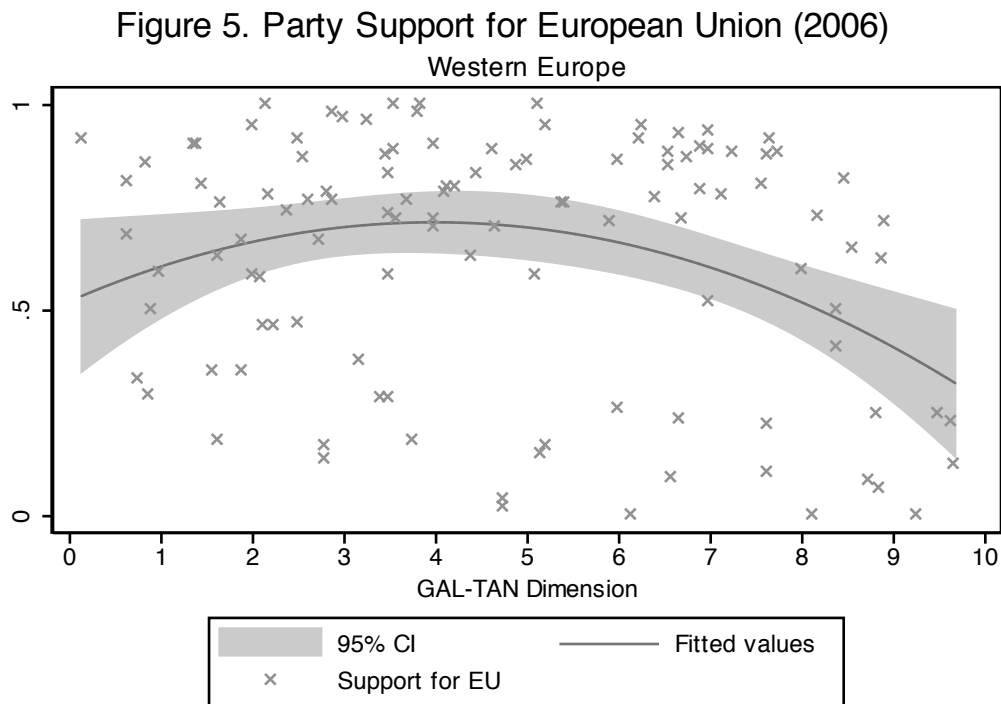
Left-Right is 5.9, compared to 5.0 in the East and 4.6 in the West. Nevertheless, there is a positive correlation between economic Left-Right and Support (0.46), as in the West and the East, which gives us confidence to argue that the Turkish party system is not exceptional in the context of Europe when testing the ideological explanations of support.



Turning back to Eastern and Western Europe again, we expect that the literature on the relationship between GAL-TAN and support for EU is supported with the 2006 CHES data, with extremists especially Euroskeptical. Figures 5 and 6 present scatterplots of party positions with a curve reflecting a prediction for EU support from a linear regression of EU support on GAL-TAN and GAL-TAN squared, with confidence intervals (Stata `qfitci` command).

In the West, the correlation between Economic Left-Right and GAL-TAN is 0.56, suggesting that most Left parties are GAL while more Rightist parties are TAN, thus confirming

Marks et al. (2006). And yet, despite this high correlation, the scatterplot in Figure 5 looks much different than Figure 2. In particular, no extreme Left parties are pro-Europe while multiple extreme GAL parties support the EU. This difference is reflected in the different shape of the curve. The Left-Right curve in Figure 2 clearly shows that Leftist parties are more Euroskeptical than Rightist, while the curve in Figure 5 has wider confidence intervals and predicted support is higher for extreme-GAL parties than for extreme-TAN parties.



The difference between Economic Left-Right and GAL-TAN is even more dramatic among Eastern European parties, as seen in Figure 6. Again, the curvilinear relationship is hardly evident at all, with a clear downward trend showing that TAN parties are far more Euroskeptical than their GAL competitors. In fact, no extreme GAL parties are Euroskeptical, based on the 2007 CHES. In contrast to the West, the few Leftist parties that oppose the EU are not in the GAL side of the spectrum, but rather on the TAN side.

Figure 6. Party Support for European Union (2006)

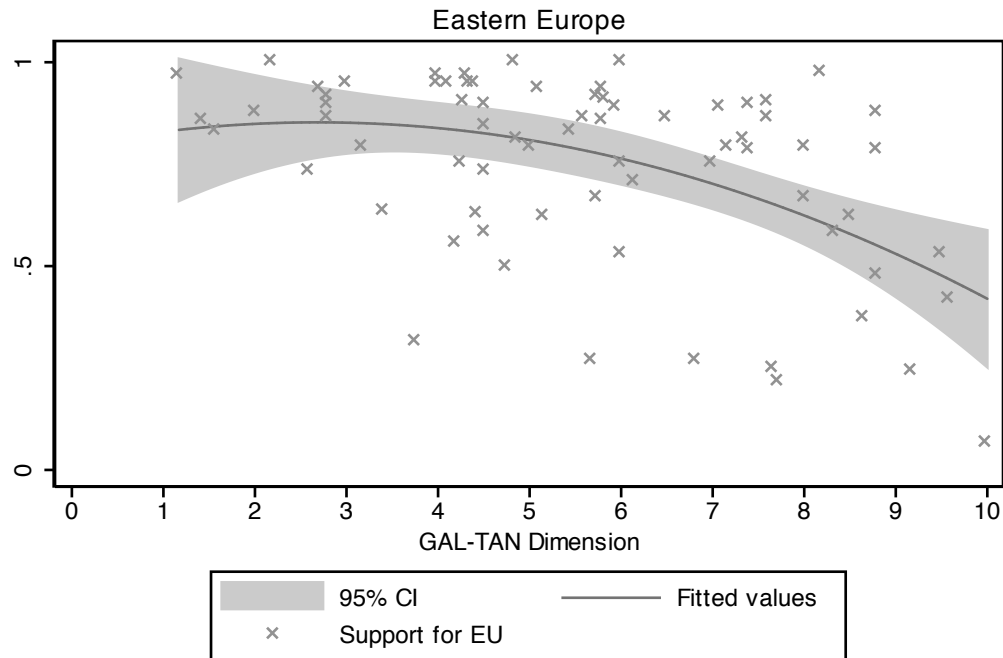
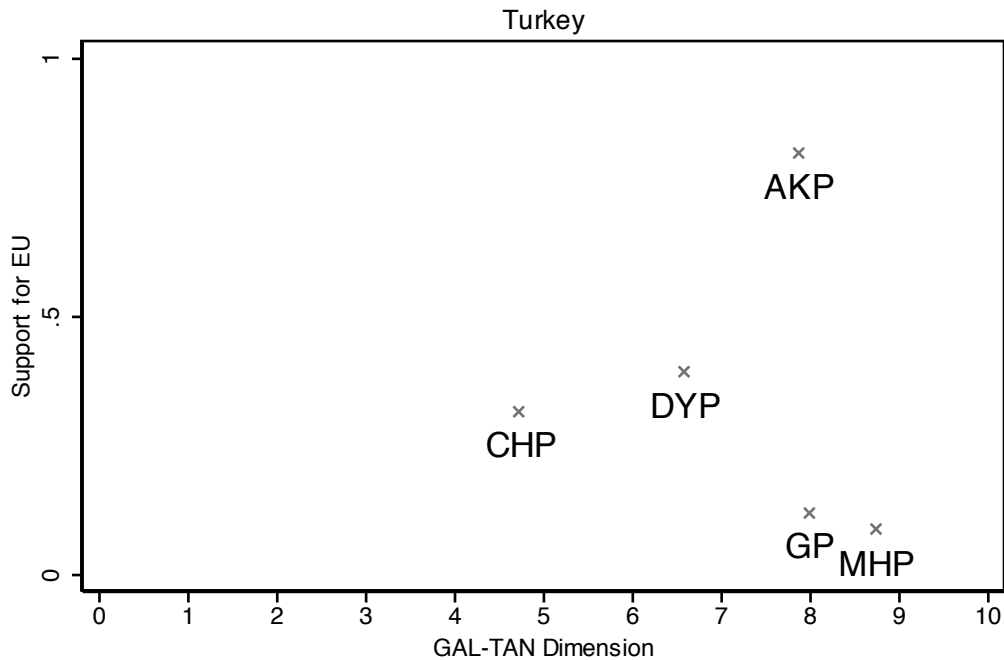


Figure 7 shows the Turkish parties, with GAL-TAN along the X-axis and support for the EU along the Y-axis. Noticeably, Figure 4 and Figure 7 are very similar, at least for the two biggest parties, AKP and CHP. In both cases, the AKP is to the right of CHP. As with Left-Right, the GAL-TAN or extremism variable does not especially illuminate support for the EU.

Figure 7. Party Support for European Union (2007)



Our findings echo Carkoglu and Hinich's (2006) argument regarding the dimensionality of the Turkish party system that we have discussed earlier. Neither do these findings tell us about the main explanations of support that we find frequently in the literature, such as utilitarian, national identity or culture-based. Although we believe that these findings provide good insights to make the case that the overlap of the two dimensions in their ability to explain support for EU is worth emphasizing, a two-dimensional explanation at the party-level is still inadequate to explain the reasons behind party-level Euroskepticism in Turkey as well as in Europe. This is not only evidenced by the wide confidence intervals we have shown in the above figures, but also by the fact that parties located at either extreme along the spectrum still show variation among each other. A two-dimensional explanation is especially problematic for Turkey, where there are only a small number of electorally relevant parties and they are also clustered around the center-right of the spectrum. Having said that, the correlation between Economic Left-Right and GAL-TAN

in Turkey is 0.59, slightly higher than the West (0.56) and in the opposite direction from the East (-0.28), which clearly suggests that the dimensionality of party system in Turkey is by and large comparative to its European counterparts. In other words, Turkish exceptionalism is not a convincing argument, and that the country can and should be studied in comparative context at the party-level.

In short, the ideological maps of party systems in both Eastern and Western Europe fall short of providing a meaningful explanation of Euroskepticism not just for Europe, but also for Turkey, the focus of our study. Our objective is to overcome this weakness in the context of Turkish party system by utilizing a qualitative analysis of party manifestos along with the expert survey findings. In particular, the general party positions do not differentiate between varieties of support or opposition. As Taggart (1998) argues, parties can be skeptical of the whole European integration project, or they can be skeptical of the institutional form of the EU. Similarly, parties can oppose the EU on the basis of perceived threats to culture and national identity, or due to the economic prospects of membership. We will turn to detailed case studies of the main Turkish political parties in the last section to isolate the types of elite support and opposition among them. First, however, we turn to the mass level and test how different hypotheses of support for the EU explain Euroskepticism in Turkish public opinion.

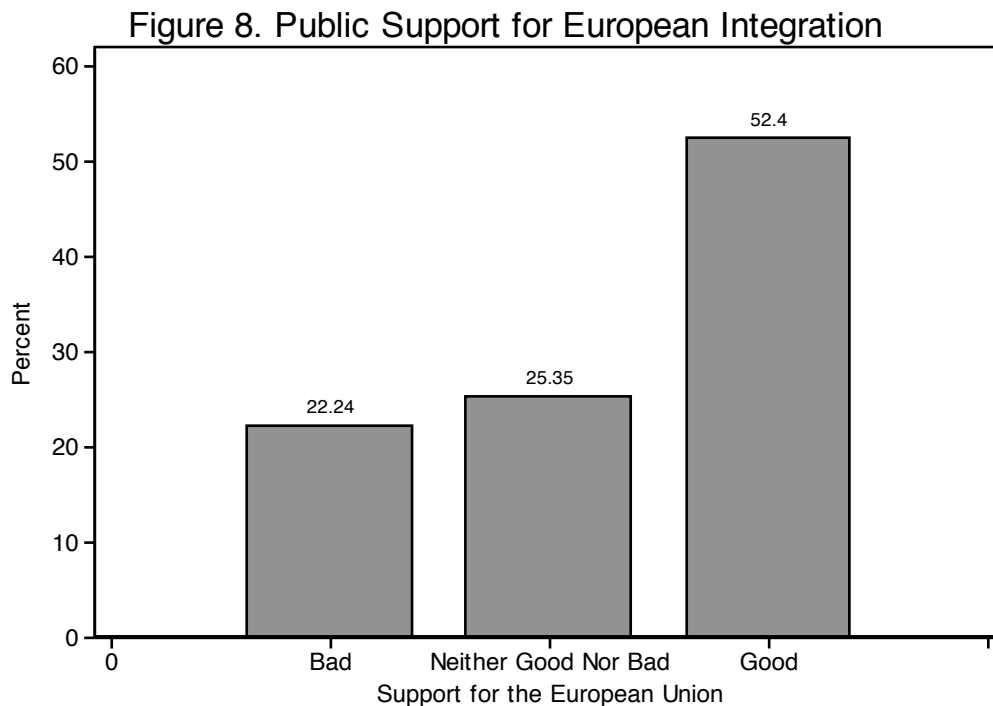
### **III. Public support for European integration: The state of the literature in Turkey**

In this section, we turn our attention to the public opinion in Turkey. Do the standard explanations found in Western and Eastern Europe help explain Turkish public support for the EU? In particular, do utilitarian or identity theories better explain public attitudes?

In her comprehensive survey of public opinion research on Turkish attitudes toward the EU, Senyuva (2006) argues that the scholarly literature on public attitudes toward the EU is largely undeveloped. The literature suffers from data problems as well as a lack of theoretical depth (Senyuva 2006). These weaknesses are only exacerbated by the fact that Turkey was only included in Eurobarometer surveys in 2001, some 30 years after the initiation of the enterprise. In other words, a lack of a credible and continuous time series survey contributed to this lack of attention.

One of the most important works on Turkish public attitudes on the EU belongs to Carkoglu (2003), which Senyuva (2006) mentions. Arguing that public preferences in Turkey provide the “very background” of Turkey’s relations with the EU, Carkoglu utilizes a nationwide representative survey to show the rates of public support for the EU across a number of demographic, political and cultural dimensions, including gender, education, location, socio-economic status, party preferences and fragmentation at the individual and geographic levels, as well as religious and ethnic affiliations of individuals. He concludes that although political parties are polarized in their rhetoric towards the EU, the masses show overwhelming support for membership.

Since 2002, though, the prospects for membership have dimmed somewhat for Turkey, due in large part to rhetoric from Western European politicians worried about immigration and over-enlargement. Yet, using 2007 survey data, we find that Turkish public support for EU membership is still strong. In *Eurobarometer 67.2* (Papacostas 2010), 52.4% of respondents view membership in the EU as a good thing for Turkey, with a mere 22.4% viewing it as a bad thing. Figure 8 provides a histogram of these data.



In the 2007 Eurobarometer, this level of support is fairly consistent with current EU member countries. For comparison, 57.4% of respondents in EU-15 countries while 54.3% in the new 12 EU members viewed the EU as a good thing. In contrast, support among candidate countries varies dramatically. 74.7% in Macedonia and only 28.7% in Croatia support the EU in this question, leaving Turkey in the middle of candidate countries.

While support among Turkish respondents is similar to EU respondents, Carkoglu (2003) finds that many of the usual explanations for Euroskepticism do not explain variation in Turkey, but he leaves this analytical puzzle unresolved. Indeed, his study is largely a descriptive attempt at understanding the nature of public support toward the EU along with some preliminary reflections on the nature of party support for integration rather than testing the established theories of economic calculus and identity that began to dominate the literature elsewhere.

Moreover, the incredible pace of change in Turkey's foreign policy and domestic politics since 2002 and the corresponding deceleration of relations with the European Union justify an updating of this research. AKP's regional diversification of Turkish foreign policy, the rejection of the Annan Plan in 2004 prior to the accession of Cyprus to the EU, the resurgence of Kurdish separatism in southeast Turkey, and the remarks from European capitals such as Paris and Berlin and the public's reaction to them require us to re-evaluate the extent of Turkish public support for the European Union.

More recently, Kentmen (2008) evaluated the effect of religion on public support toward EU membership. In this study, where she uses Eurobarometer data from 2001, 2002 and 2003, Kentmen tests utilitarian and identity explanations for Turkish public support for the European Union. She concludes that religiosity (Islamic devotion) does not affect attitudes toward the EU. Instead, utilitarian considerations and national identity provide much of the explanation.

In this section, we extend Kentmen's (2008) study in two ways. First, we use a more recent dataset, EB 67.2 (April – May 2007). Second, we choose to move beyond a narrow definition of identity based on religion and understand identity in terms of fears of cultural threat (McLaren 2002) as well as territorial attachment (Carey 2002). After briefly explaining the hypotheses, we test them across multiple models to show how well different conceptualizations of utilitarian and identity-based explanations do in predicting the public level of support toward European integration.

One version of the utilitarian model suggests that lower-skilled citizens are likely to be more Euroskeptical of the EU (Gabel 1998a, 1998b). In a fully integrated regional economy, lower-skilled workers are less competitive and more skeptical of job losses and lost income.

Following economic trade theory, Gabel's original formulation suggests that trade liberalization, a significant component of European integration, favors citizens with higher education and more occupational skills (Gabel 1998a, 43-44).

At the individual-level, we follow Kentmen (2008) (and Gabel 1998a) and use education to proxy for skill level. We create a series of dummy variables for low-education, low-mid education, high-mid education, and high education.<sup>7</sup> Based on findings in the EU member states, we might expect higher skilled respondents to be more favorable to the EU; however, we offer a cautionary note in advance. We do not expect strong effects for the utilitarian variables. Turkey is a country with abundant labor vis-à-vis capital, and compared to the EU, abundant unskilled labor; thus, based on the Heckscher-Ohlin model, low skilled labor should benefit more from liberalization in Turkey than in most European countries (cf. Brinegar and Jolly 2005). The support gap between high and low-skilled citizens, therefore, may be muted.

***Hypothesis 1: Higher educated respondents should be more supportive of European integration.***

In addition to skill levels, we also include occupational dummies (manual, professional, student, unemployed) to test the utilitarian model.<sup>8</sup> As with skill, based on the literature in the EU member states, we expect the professionals to be more supportive, but, like skill, we also expect this relationship to be modest.

---

<sup>7</sup> Respondents are counted as Low Education if their education stopped before age 15; Mid-Low Education if education stopped between ages 15 and 19; Mid-High Education if education stopped at age 20 or 21; and High Education if the respondents attended school after age 21. If respondents were still in school, the skill variable was simply recoded as their current age.

<sup>8</sup> The coding follows Hooghe and Marks (2004) and Kentmen (2008). Professional includes self-employed, employed professionals, business professionals, general managers, desk workers, directors, top management, middle management and professionals. Manual worker includes farmers, fishermen, craftsmen, skilled and unskilled workers, travelling employees, service jobs, and supervisors. We include a student dummy variable, but students were excluded in Kentmen (2008). Unemployed includes those persons responsible for housework, unemployed, retired and unable to work. We do not include income variables, another common utilitarian variable, because the survey did not ask these questions.

A second utilitarian argument turns from ego-centric concerns to socio-tropic ones. In this argument, respondents may be more concerned about how European integration will affect the national economy (Brinegar et al. 2004). Using 2001-2003 Eurobarometer data, Kentmen (2008) finds support for this argument. In the Eurobarometer 67.2, respondents are asked whether “we would be more stable economically if Turkey would be a member of the EU.” We use this question to test hypothesis 2.

***Hypothesis 2: Respondents who think EU membership will improve the Turkish economy will be more supportive of the EU.***

Beyond the utilitarian starting point, more recent work focuses on identity issues (cf. McLaren 2002, Hooghe and Marks 2005, Kentmen 2008). Hooghe and Marks (2005), in particular, make a strong case that an exclusive national identity contributes to Euroskepticism. In this context, exclusive national identity favors attachment to the home state over other territorial identities (e.g. the EU). Individuals with exclusive national identity, not surprisingly, are expected to oppose regional integration; Hooghe and Marks (2005) find significant evidence for this hypothesis in Western Europe. In the Turkish context, Kentmen (2008) tests this argument and also finds it significant.<sup>9</sup>

Since the identical question used in Kentmen (2008) is not available, we constructed a dummy variable using two attachment variables, whether respondents feel attached to the state and to the EU. The new exclusive national identity variable is coded as 0 if respondents either feel fairly or very attached to the EU, or if they do not feel attached to Turkey. Otherwise, respondents are coded as having exclusive national identity. In Turkey, this measure captures

---

<sup>9</sup> Kentmen (2008) also tests whether Islamic identity affects Euroskepticism, but finds it has no statistically significant effect. Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer 67.2 does not include religiosity questions so we cannot replicate this interesting null finding.

73% of respondents. Building on the previous literature, we expect exclusive national identity to be a powerful determinant of support.

***Hypothesis 3: Respondents with exclusive national identities will be more Euroskeptical.***

Finally, we consider cultural threat. McLaren (2002) argued that fear of cultural threat must be included alongside any objective or subjective utilitarian variables. She found significant evidence that cultural threat was a powerful determinant of public Euroskepticism. Previous work on Turkish public opinion ignores this argument, but it seems to be as plausible in Turkey as in the West, especially with how enlargement has been politicized in Turkey and in the EU. In a series of questions, Eurobarometer 67.2 asks what the EU means to the respondents. One response is loss of cultural identity. In contrast to the exclusive national identity, only 17% of respondents fall into this category. But we expect these respondents to be especially leery of regional integration.

***Hypothesis 4. Respondents who fear that EU membership will lead to a loss of cultural identity will be more Euroskeptical.***

To test these hypotheses, we utilize the *Eurobarometer 67.2*, a survey taken in 2007 (Papacostas 2010). Included are all respondents in Turkey aged 15 and older, yielding a sample size of 998. Because we eventually want to test mass-elite linkage arguments, we chose a 2007 Eurobarometer to match the Chapel Hill expert survey data. Unfortunately, the 2007 Eurobarometers do not ask respondents for party vote intention or any indicator of party support, which complicates mass-elite linkage tests. We will return to this issue in the discussion section below.

For the dependent variable, we utilize the standard good/bad question, used by Gabel (1998) and most studies since. The question is modified for Turkish respondents to reflect its

candidate status: “Generally speaking, do you think that Turkey's membership of the European Union would be a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?” Following standard practice, the responses are reordered (1-3) so higher scores indicate support for the EU.<sup>10</sup>

Table 2 presents a series of simple OLS regression models, with age and gender controls alongside the variables of theoretical interest. Model 1 represents a basic utilitarian model, with the skill and occupational variables testing Hypothesis 1.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> For this analysis, we simply coded the “don’t knows” as being in the middle, along with “neither good nor bad.” For reference, only 88/998 respondents answered “don’t know.”

<sup>11</sup> The number of observations is reduced in Models 1, 2 and 4 due to missing responses to the education question.

Table 2. OLS Results for Support for EU Membership in Turkey

	Model 1 Utilitarian	Model 2 Utilitarian 2	Model 3 Identity	Model 4 Utilitarian + Identity
Variable	Coefficient (Std Error)			
EU Help National Economy		0.76*** (0.05)		0.64*** (0.05)
Manual	-0.03 (0.08)	0.01 (0.07)		0.06 (0.06)
Professional	-0.08 (0.13)	-0.06 (0.11)		-0.03 (0.11)
Student	-0.18 (0.12)	-0.05 (0.11)		-0.01 (0.10)
Exclusive National Identity			-0.52*** (0.05)	-0.33*** (0.06)
Age	-0.004* (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)		-0.001 (0.002)
Low Education	0.02 (0.12)	0.05 (0.11)		0.00 (0.10)
Low-Mid Education	0.05 (0.12)	0.06 (0.11)		0.04 (0.10)
High-Mid Education	-0.12 (0.16)	-0.12 (0.14)		-0.14 (0.14)
Female	0.03 (0.07)	0.11 (0.06)		0.11 (0.06)
EU Hurts Culture			-0.52*** (0.06)	-0.49*** (0.06)
Constant	2.44*** (0.17)	1.80*** (0.15)	2.78*** (0.05)	2.19*** (0.15)
Observations	868	868	998	868
Adjusted R2	0.0028	0.2055	0.1588	0.2947

Note: \* Significant at .05 level; \*\* Significant at .01 level; \*\*\* Significant at .001 level.  
The base categories are unemployed, male and high education.

Clearly, Model 1 does a poor job explaining individual attitude. Age is the only statistically significant predictor and its effect is substantively negligible. This finding supports Kentmen's (2008) results from the earlier time period, and provides evidence that *Hypothesis 1* is inadequate by itself.

Simply adding one socio-tropic variable, though, changes the picture significantly. In Model 2, we add the question that asks respondents whether joining the EU will benefit the Turkish economy. The variable is statistically and substantively significant. Recall that this variable is dichotomous, so the interpretation is straightforward. The dependent variable is coded on a 3-point scale, with a mean of 2.3 and a standard deviation of 0.81, so a coefficient of 0.76 is dramatic. Further, the  $R^2$  increases dramatically, from 0.00 to 0.21. Clearly, perceptions that the EU will benefit the state's economy are a significant predictor of public support for the EU.

Before moving to a fully specified model, we tested the identity variables alone. In Model 3, both identity variables (Exclusive National Identity and EU Hurts Culture) are statistically significant and in the predicted direction, supporting *Hypotheses 3* and *4*. Consistent with earlier work on Western Europe, respondents with exclusive senses of identity are far more likely to be Euroskeptical than respondents who are either less attached to Turkey or who feel attachment to the EU in addition to Turkey. Further, if Turkish citizens view the EU as a threat to the country's culture, then support for the EU falls.

In the final model, we combine the utilitarian and identity models and fully test the four hypotheses. The explanatory power of the model increases significantly. Even in the fully specified model, only the socio-tropic variable and the two identity questions are significant. In fact, if all the insignificant variables are dropped from Model 4, the adjusted  $R^2$  only drops from 0.295 to 0.293.

When discussing *Hypothesis 1*, we considered the possibility that objective measures of the utilitarian model may have little effect; this expectation is supported by the regression results. Higher-skilled workers have less to fear, on average, from liberalization than lower-skilled

workers because their skill level allows them to adapt to new markets. But lower-skilled workers in Turkey also have little to fear from liberalization, offering some evidence that the abundant resource of Turkey vis-à-vis the EU recognizes that it will benefit from regional integration.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the objective utilitarian measures, national identity behaves as predicted. Citizens with an exclusive sense of national identity are less supportive of European Union membership; however, the substantive significance of the coefficient (-0.33) is less than either of the other two main variables.

Subjective perceptions clearly matter. Citizens who view the EU as a means to stabilize the economy support EU membership whereas citizens who fear a loss of their cultural identity in an enlarged Europe are far more Euroskeptical. It is exactly in these perceptions that political parties play a crucial role. Indeed, EU membership is largely, almost entirely, framed on the basis of identity in Turkey and, to a lesser extent, on the basis of free movement. Business organizations and the AKP do emphasize the economic benefits of joining the single market (Turkey will provide the much needed labor force) as we will show below, but such statements remain at the level of rhetoric once they start phrasing it in terms of "Europe needs us."

How political parties frame the EU will affect whether the public continues to support European Union membership, or whether Euroskepticism rises as it has in many EU member countries. To investigate whether elite-level framing matches with the public opinion, we present an in-depth analysis of party manifestos in the next section.

---

<sup>12</sup> Alternatively, as Herzog and Tucker (2009) argue, the winners-losers gap is simply less relevant when there is not yet a realistic prospect of membership. In the current political environment, the Turkish public views the prospect of membership as distant. Perhaps if membership becomes more plausible, the winners-losers gap based on utilitarian measures will become more relevant for explaining Turkish public attitudes, and lower-skilled workers' attitudes may become more skeptical of the EU.

#### **IV. Different shades of grey? Turkish party attitudes on the European Union:**

In this section we look at the party manifestos of the five major and minor political parties to discuss their varying levels of Euroskepticism and thus supplement our findings from the CHES data, as well as compare and contrast the ways in which the elites echo the opinions of the masses.

Taggart (1998, 366) argues that Euroskepticism “expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration.” In a subsequent work, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) clarify this definition by introducing the concepts of “hard Euroskepticism” and “soft Euroskepticism,” where hard Euroskepticism implies “outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration” and soft Euroskepticism “involves contingent and qualified opposition” (2004, 3-4). As such, all major and minor Turkish political parties in this study qualify as soft Euroskeptics, as also seen in Figure 1.

Taggart (1998) further classifies political parties by looking at the ways in which they manifest Euroskepticism. Of the four types (single-issue Euroskeptical parties, protest-based parties with Euroskepticism, established party with Euroskeptical position, Euroskeptical factions within the party) our analysis shows that except for the Young Party (GP) which was a “protest-based party” established prior to the 2002 national elections, all political parties that this paper looks at are “established parties with Euroskeptical positions.” While generally supportive of Turkey’s bid for full membership, with the AKP being the most supportive, all five parties qualify their positions by stressing their concerns over specific issues that the EU requires Turkey to fulfill, which are frequently expressed in documents such as the European

Commission's yearly progress reports. Furthermore, the party manifesto analysis supports the electoral strategic argument we have discussed earlier: as we move away from the mainstream toward the electorally fringe parties at the Left and the Right we find that they express their concerns over the European project more than their counterparts around the center.

In this section we move beyond the electoral strategic explanation and borrow from the literature on public opinion toward the EU that we have discussed in the previous section, and scrutinize the political parties against the utilitarian, national identity, and cultural explanations of support.

In the case studies we classify Turkish political parties according to the scheme proposed by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004, 4), and find that they mostly fall into the group of "national-interest Euroskeptics," which refer to "employing the rhetoric of defending or standing up for the national interest." Nevertheless, issues such as the enactment of possible benchmarks on "the four freedoms" following the accession push these parties over to "policy Euroskepticism" that "results from opposition to measures designed to deepen significantly European political and economic integration," although these are not voiced frequently in party manifestos since membership is not yet in horizon. The only exception to this trend is Cyprus, which the political parties discuss more on the basis of national interest rather than policy Euroskepticism. On the other hand, utilitarian concerns regarding the economic prospects of membership either at the socio-tropic or ego-centric level are not emphasized significantly in the party manifestos. In other words, utilitarian considerations do not seem to be a cause for party-level Euroskepticism. As we will show below, our findings on elite-level Euroskepticism nicely fit those at the mass level, which implies that mass-elite linkage mechanisms might well be at work.

Below we analyze the manifestos of the five political parties by focusing on the main explanations of Euroskepticism and make conclusions on the extent to which Turkish parties are comparable to their counterparts in Western and in Central and Eastern Europe.

*Justice and Development Party (AKP)*: Since it was founded in 2002, the AKP singlehandedly redefined the dynamics of competition in Turkish politics by emphasizing the importance of political and cultural liberties and a flourishing democracy that the European Union would also appreciate. The AKP is currently serving its third consecutive term in government, following the June 2011 elections in which they won a comfortable 49.9% share of the national vote.

As the major mainstream party located at the core of the political system, the AKP is the least Euroskeptical of the Turkish parties. Although it does not state clearly in its party manifesto that the party supports full membership and rejects any alternative schemes of cooperation,<sup>13</sup> it states that Turkey will be dedicated to fulfilling the promises and the conditions “which the EU also expects other candidate countries to fulfill” for full membership. In other words, the AKP rejects those conditions that the EU introduces unless the same conditions also apply to other candidate countries.

Yearly progress reports released by the European Commission (EC) are useful guides to these conditions. Three main themes are commonly referred to by the EC. The first is improvements on the cultural and political rights of minorities. More specifically, the EU expects the Turkish state to grant a) the Kurds “full rights and freedoms,” including the right to education

---

<sup>13</sup> Unlike any other mainstream party, the AKP website provides a separate Frequently Asked Questions section on Turkish – EU relations, where the party clearly states that it demands full membership, believes that EU membership will benefit Turkish economy, and that it does not take seriously the opinions about the EU inherently opposing Turkish membership for historical or cultural reasons. (Source: [http://www.akparti.org.tr/disiliskiler/turkiye-avrupa-birligi-iliskileri\\_1140.html](http://www.akparti.org.tr/disiliskiler/turkiye-avrupa-birligi-iliskileri_1140.html))

in their mother tongue as well as the right to political association and b) let the Greek Orthodox train their own clergy in their private seminary and let the Patriarch use the ecumenical title (EC 2007, 17-23). Second, the EU expects Turkey to open its border to Armenia and establish good neighborly relations (EC 2007: 74), an issue which is still under the shadow of the genocide accusations of 1915. Finally, the EU expects Turkey to apply the clauses of the Additional Protocol of the 1963 Association Agreement without discriminating against the Republic of Cyprus, which became a member in 2004 (EC 2007: 24).

Cyprus is a particularly problematic theme: Turkey is accused of not implementing the policy obligations secured by earlier bilateral agreements with the EU. But the AKP manifesto makes it clear that the party takes the “Cyprus problem as one that concerns the identity, existence and future of Turks on the island, and that Cyprus’ membership in the EU will only make the problem more complicated” (AKP Party Program, section on Foreign Policy: [http://www.akparti.org.tr/vi-dis-politika-\\_79.html?pID=50](http://www.akparti.org.tr/vi-dis-politika-_79.html?pID=50)).

The AKP considers all of the three issue domains above—most importantly the Cyprus problem—as issues of national interest rather than policy-based reasons for Euroskepticism. Nevertheless, it should be reemphasized that the tone and saliency of these themes in the manifesto compared to other, domestic, issues is extremely low. The AKP is by and large supportive of Turkish membership in the EU, and is clearly the most supportive of the Turkish parties. This evidence also buttresses the results from the CHES data and the general strategic arguments about party positioning on the EU. Furthermore, it is noticeable that the AKP manifesto does not focus on the economic advantages or disadvantages of EU membership but frames its concerns in the context of national identity, national security and culture.

*Republican People's Party (CHP)*: Located to the left of the AKP in the political spectrum,<sup>14</sup> the CHP also supports Turkey's EU membership on the level of national interest rather than specific policies. Whereas the AKP's support for EU membership is defined in terms of Turkish democratic consolidation, however, the CHP supports EU membership with the belief that the EU is the final destination in Turkey's journey toward Westernization. The understanding that Turkey will complete its historical modernization-Westernization process by becoming a full member of the EU provides the backbone of CHP's positive attitudes toward membership. To that end, the CHP openly states that their "primary demand is Turkey's full, decent and unconditional membership that respects the foundational values of the Republic" (CHP Party Program, [http://www.chp.org.tr/?page\\_id=70](http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=70)).

Having said that, the CHP manifesto is visibly more Euroskeptical in tone than the AKP, thus matching the expert evaluations of the CHES data. Whereas the AKP refrains in its manifesto from making negative statements about EU policies or possible frictions that might arise during the negotiation process, the CHP clearly states what it cannot accept in Turkey's relations with the EU.

Another difference between the two parties is that the CHP shows traits of both national interest Euroskepticism and policy Euroskepticism, particularly in terms of the economic domain. However, their approach to the economy is rather socio-tropic consequences than ego-centric. In other words they care more about the future of the national economy in general, rather than the specific economic impact that integration might have on the CHP constituency. For example, the manifesto states that the CHP "demands that the EU lifts the permanent limitations

---

<sup>14</sup> Whether we take the main axis of competition to be Left-Right, or secularism-Islamism, the CHP still stands to the left of the AKP.

on free movement, agricultural subsidies and development, and that EU's bilateral agreements with third parties are simultaneously transformed into parallel agreements between Turkey and said parties" (CHP Party Program, [http://www.chp.org.tr/?page\\_id=70](http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=70)). Clearly, the CHP is concerned more about how the national economy might be jeopardized in the process of membership than what the individuals, that is the CHP constituency, might suffer.

The CHP is also more assertive in terms of national-interest based Euroskepticism, stating that "Turkey will reconsider its obligations under the Customs Union agreement and take the necessary steps to protect our national interest in the event that subjective policy opinions that exclude Turkey based on geographical or cultural differences become the EU's official position." Moreover, the party seems to be especially sensitive to the Cyprus issue. The manifesto reads that the party "refuses to make Turkey's accession process conditional upon the Cyprus issue and on the one-sided concessions that Turkey is expected to make (...) [The party] is absolutely opposed to the understanding that the Republic of Cyprus represents the entire Cypriot community at the EU," thus implying that the tensions with the EU over the island are inseparable from concerns of national identity, and more specifically the political security of Turkish Cypriots. In sum, the CHP is more conditional on its support for the EU and its party manifesto shows that it is also more vocal than the AKP. However, the primary reasons behind the opposition to the EU seem to be more about threats to national identity and security than about what the EU membership might bring economically.

*Nationalist Action Party (MHP):* Located at the far right of the political spectrum, the MHP is the most Euroskeptical of the major parties that this study looks at. In stark contrast to the CHP and the AKP, the MHP contends that the party "does not view Turkey's relations with the EU as a matter of destiny" and defends the position that "Turkey is not doomed to, nor does

it have to orbit the EU at any cost” (MHP Party Program 2009, [http://mhp.org.tr/mhp\\_parti\\_programi.php](http://mhp.org.tr/mhp_parti_programi.php)).

Nevertheless, the MHP states that it is supportive of Turkey’s full membership, although this support is again conditional – the party supports EU membership only to the extent that “the EU’s approach towards Turkey’s national and territorial unity, its fight against terrorism and separatism, as well as the issues concerning Cyprus, Greece and Armenia do not jeopardize Turkey’s national interests. The respect that EU members will show to our national concerns will provide the basis of our relations with these countries.”

With respect to Cyprus, the MHP maintains the strongest position in arguing that it is “the most important national interest.” In short, the MHP differs from the other two major parties in Turkey in two ways. First, it is much more vocal than either of the other two parties in its skeptical view of the European Union. Second, its source of Euroskepticism is based on defending the national interest rather than concerns over specific policies of European integration. Again, it is important to note that as we move away from the AKP toward the electorally less successful major parties both on the left and on the right, Euroskepticism increases and becomes more vocal in the manifestos.

*True Path Party (DYP):* The DYP is the reincarnation of the Democratic Party (DP), which was founded by Adnan Menderes and competed in the first multiparty elections against the CHP in 1945. The party has been one of the staples of Turkish party system following the military intervention in 1997 that caused the resignation of the centre-right/Islamist DYP – RP coalition government, but since 1997 the DYP has never been able to get back on its feet. The last election that it competed under this name was in 2002, in which it was only 0.5% short of entering the

parliament. In the run up to the 2007 elections it agreed to merge with another center-right party, Motherland (ANAP) under a single new name, Democratic Party. However, ANAP dropped out of the electoral coalition and the new DP ran alone, this time receiving less than 6% of total votes. We include the DP/DYP in our study, however, since it was still a visible minor party in the political system by 2007.

The DP party manifesto<sup>15</sup> makes no reference to Turkey's relations with the European Union, which is striking. In the lengthy section on its foreign policy vision the party mentions its attitudes toward the US and NATO, the Middle East and the Muslim world, the Black Sea region and Eurasia, but leaves the European Union outside of this vast geographical scope (DP Party Program 2010, <http://www.demokratparti.tv/gorsel/DP.Yeni.Program.pdf>). The erratic change in party leadership and the party structure over the few years resulted in a lack of visionary foreign policy in the DYP/DP, which might be a reason behind this lack of attention to the EU.

*Young Party (GP)*: Leading up to the 2002 elections, Cem Uzan, a former media and telecommunications mogul, founded the Young Party. Although the party had a narrow time frame for a national election campaign it was able to get a significant amount of protest votes in the elections and almost made it to the 10% threshold. Indeed, the GP neatly falls into the category of the “protest-based Euroskeptical party” (Taggart 1998). The YP was a Rightist party that supported liberal market economy and deregulation, and along the non-economic axis it was extremely traditional and nationalistic.

In its approach toward the EU the GP supported full membership and the economic benefits of integration but it was opposed to the EU's regulatory policies, which fits its

---

<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, we could not locate the DYP manifesto from 2002, so we used the DP manifesto of 2010.

economically liberal outlook. It was still largely Euroskeptical, however, in the sense that it believed that “Turkey should not entirely depend on the full membership of the EU” (GP Party Program 2002, <http://www.belgenet.com/parti/program/gp-1.html>). The GP had a significantly weak party manifesto that did not clearly signal the position of the party on the EU either from utilitarian or national interest perspective, though utilitarian concerns were slightly more visible than other major and minor parties. The primary reason for their blurry manifesto might be that the party was the political instrument of a single man, Cem Uzan, who was politically very inexperienced as opposed to the members of other newly established parties, such as the AKP, whose members were well-known figures in Turkish politics. In fact, the slightly more visible emphasis on the utilitarian concerns might be explained by the personal economic objectives of the party leader, although more qualitative data is necessary to support this argument.

In sum, the above analysis of party manifestos shows that the level of support for European integration at the party level varies between mainstream and minor parties, both to the left and the right of the political spectrum. This finding is not only supportive of our findings from the 2006 and 2007 CHES data, but also the findings of the existing literature on electoral strategic explanations of support.

Nevertheless, almost all parties put much more emphasis on national interest and identity issues than the economic consequences of future membership. Indeed, the case studies clearly reflect that there is a nice fit between the public opinion and the elites regarding the level of support for the EU. Both the elites and the masses share the opinion that the level of support for European integration is contingent more on the issues of national identity and interests, rather than socio-tropic or ego-centric utilitarian concerns. Although we presently lack the qualitative and quantitative data to test such propositions, we believe that this shared opinion at the elite and

the mass level implies that mass-elite linkages are at work. Explicating the linkage mechanisms will be the next step in our research program.

This analysis of Turkish party manifestos not only yields results that are comparable to the analysis of CHES data, but also offers insight into whether and how Turkish party attitudes compare to Western and Central and Eastern European party-based Euroskepticism (Taggart 1998, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004, Herzog and Tucker 2009).

First, with regard to party-based attitudes on European Union, the Turkish party system seems to resemble its counterparts in Central and Eastern Europe. In their study on Central and Eastern Europe Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) find out that unlike what Taggart (1998) found in Western Europe, in this region there do exist mainstream parties that are Euroskeptic. Indeed, in Turkey, the MHP is one of the most vocal Euroskeptical parties and yet it is a major party in the political system.

Second, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) claim that hard Euroskepticism is likely to be less evident than soft Euroskepticism in candidate states. As a candidate country Turkey supports this proposition. None of the political parties we look at are hard Euroskeptics, including the electorally fringe parties.

In addition, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004: 3) argue that “in the case of candidate countries, we suggest that some parties might adopt Euroskeptic language in terms of detailed and specific issues, as well as in their rhetoric, while still maintaining a nominal commitment to action.” Our analysis supports this proposition as well. Despite their Euroskeptic tone in their party manifestos, all the parties in our study show at least an average commitment to full membership.

Third, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) find that Euroskepticism transcends the Left-Right spectrum in Central and Eastern Europe. We find that this conclusion is also supported by the Turkish party system where all political parties, regardless of their position in the system, show some minimal level of Euroskepticism, not to mention the fact that most of these parties are skewed to the center and right of the political spectrum.

Fourth, and most importantly, Herzog and Tucker's (2009) economic winners thesis—that economic winners will be more likely to support the EU project—does not find support in our analysis of party manifestos. Although we assume that the AKP's neoliberal economic vision would be most supportive of the EU's economic prospects, its manifesto remains mostly silent on these prospects, except discussing a few of them on its website (see fn. 7). We can think of three reasons for this apathy toward such utilitarian explanations of support. First, as Carkoglu and Hinich (2006) also point out, the economic Left-Right dimension that is so dominant in Europe is not a salient dimension of political competition in Turkey. Second, the EU is mostly discussed as a political agenda item rather than an economic one, and since the economic dimension of membership does not find salience in domestic political competition, it is also absent from party manifestos. And third, since EU membership is not yet in the horizon neither of the political parties highlights the economic costs and benefits of membership to their respective constituencies.

Finally, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) argue that experiences of state building cause Euroskepticism to be associated with the defense of national identity in Central and Eastern European countries. The recurring rhetoric on the protection of national interests vis-à-vis European integration across all political parties included in this study might point to a similar causality in Turkey. More specifically, the emphasis of the Turkish elite on national interest-

based Euroskepticism could be a reflection of the historical grievances of Turkish elites and masses against the idea of “the West.” This, however, needs to be investigated further with more qualitative data, such as elite and public interviews.

Ultimately, the variation in support for the EU at the party-level can be explained by a combination of electoral strategic arguments and those that focus on the EU’s threatening impact on national identity, national security, and culture. This section has shown that the mainstream parties are mostly in support of the EU whereas the fringe parties are either opposed to it for either economic or political reasons, or they simply choose not to state any position on Turkey’s bid for membership. In tandem with the electoral strategic explanations, political parties also focus significantly on the political aspects of Turkey’s future membership in the EU rather than its possible economic consequences.

We must also reiterate that all of these scenarios regarding the lack of economic concerns as well as the experiences of state building in Turkey inevitably follow from the nature of public opinion on the EU, and imply that there are linkage mechanisms that need to be explored.

## **V. Discussion**

In order to grasp the full picture of attitudes toward European integration in Turkey, we believed that scholars must move beyond the elite level and support our analysis with public opinion data. Supporting party-level analysis with mass-level analysis not only provides a more thorough story but also can show us to what extent the elites and the masses share similar opinions about EU membership.

For both political parties and the public in Turkey, support for the EU is driven by national interest and identity. Even the most pro-EU party, the AKP, is skeptical of many EU conditions

that threaten Turkish interests. Similarly, citizens are driven more by identity concerns and socio-tropic concerns about Turkey than their own utilitarian, ego-centric concerns.

In Central and Eastern Europe, public Euroskepticism has not led to support for explicitly Euroskeptical parties. Mainstream parties remain very pro-EU (Taggart 1998, Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004). In contrast, the Turkish party system reflects more diversity, with the two main opposition parties evaluated as far more Euroskeptical than most mainstream parties in EU member states. But another finding from Eastern Europe seems to be relevant to Turkey, namely that the EU is a second-order issue in national elections. Given its rhetorical importance in many EU countries, it appears to be less salient in Turkey than it was in Eastern Europe prior to accession.

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2004) argue that the rarity of hard Euroskepticism corresponds to the elite consensus over the overall advantages of accession. Indeed, this might well be the case in Turkey also, but this fact may change if the accession process is continually delayed.

Similar to the political parties, the Turkish public is largely supportive of European Union membership, but Euroskepticism exists and it is based on identity and economic concerns. Coincidentally, it is also identity and economic concerns that affect whether EU citizens oppose Turkish accession, though identity has more weight than economic concerns when it comes to Euroskepticism.

This paper offers some preliminary analysis of elite and mass support for European Union membership in Turkey. Yet, clearly, much work remains. First, we need to connect the elite and mass public to explore the linkage mechanisms at work. The overarching theoretical argument we want to make is who follows whom—the elites or the masses—and to what extent

they follow each other's cues. Again, it will be interesting to test whether the linkage mechanisms work the same in Turkey as they do in Western Europe.

Second, we need to more systematically compare our findings to those in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe in order to assess the extent to which Turkish public opinion differs from these regions in terms of the relationship between party positions, public attitudes and EU integration.

## Works Cited

- Aspinwall, Mark. 2002. "Preferring Europe: Ideology and National Preferences on European Integration." *European Union Politics* 3.1: 81-111.
- Budge, Ian, Klingemann, Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Andrea Volkens, and Judith Bara. 2001. *Mapping Policy Preferences. Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments 1945-1998*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Carey, Sean. 2002. "Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?" *European Union Politics* 3.4: 387-413.
- Çarkoğlu, Ali. 2003. "Who Wants Full Membership? Characteristics of Turkish Public Support for EU Membership." *Turkish Studies* 4.1: 171-194.
- Çarkoğlu, Ali and Melvin Hinich. 2006. "A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences." *Electoral Studies* 25.2: 369-392.
- Carrubba, Clifford. 2008. "The Electoral Connection in European Union Politics." *Journal of Politics* 63.1: 141-158.
- Commission of the European Communities. 2007. *Turkey 2007 Progress Report*. Brussels, SEC (2007) 1436.
- de Vreese, Claes H., Hajo G. Boomgaarden, and Holli A. Semetko. 2008. "Hard and Soft: Public Support for Turkish Membership in the EU." *European Union Politics* 9.4: 511-530.
- de Vries, Catherine and Erica Edwards. 2009. "Taking Europe To Its Extremes: Extremist Parties and Public Euroscepticism." *Party Politics* 15.1: 5-28.
- Eichenberg, Richard and Russell Dalton. 1993. "Europeans and the European Community: The Dynamics of Public Support for European Integration." *International Organization* 47.4: 507-534.
- Gabel, Matthew. 1998a. *Integration and Interests: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion and European Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gabel, Matthew. 1998b. "Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories." *Journal of Politics* 60.2: 333-354.
- Herzog, Alexander and Joshua Tucker. 2009. "The dynamics of support: the winners–losers gap in attitudes toward EU membership in post-communist countries." *European Political Science Review* 2.2: 235-267.

- Hix, Simon. 2007. "Euroscepticism as Anti-Centralization: A Rational Choice Institutional Perspective." *European Union Politics* 8.1: 131-150.
- Hooghe, Liesbet. 2007. "What Drives Euroskepticism?: Party-Public Cueing, Ideology and Strategic Opportunity." *European Union Politics* 8.1: 5-12.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, Ryan Bakker, Anna Brigeovich, Catherine De Vries, Erica Edwards, Gary Marks, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Vachudova. 2010. "Reliability and Validity of the 2002 and 2006 Chapel Hill Expert Surveys on Party Positioning." *European Journal of Political Research* 49.5: 687-703.
- Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks. 2005. "Calculation, Community and Cues: Public Opinion on European Integration." *European Union Politics* 6.4: 419-443.
- Hooghe, Liesbet, Gary Marks and Carole J. Wilson. 2002. "Does Left/Right Structure Party Positions on European Integration?" *Comparative Political Studies* 35.8 (October): 965-989.
- Jolly, Seth. 2007. "The Europhile Fringe?: Regionalist Party Support for European Integration." *European Union Politics* 8.1: 109-130.
- Katz, Richard, Pippa Norris, Jacques Thomassen, and Bernhard Wessels. 1999. *The 1996 Political Representation in Europe Survey of Members of 11 National Parliaments and Members of European Parliaments*. Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung, Cologne, Germany (Study Numbers 3078 [MEP] and 3079 [MNP]).
- Kentmen, Cigdem. 2008. "Determinants of Support for EU Membership in Turkey: Islamic Attachments, Utilitarian Considerations and National Identity." *European Union Politics* 9.4: 487-510.
- Kitschelt, Herbert. 1993. "Class Structure and Social Democratic Party Strategy." *British Journal of Political Science* 23.3: 299-337.
- Lindberg, Leon and Stuart Scheingold. 1970. *Europe's Would-be Polity*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Marks, Gary. 2004. "Conclusion: European Integration and Political Conflict." In *European Integration and Political Conflict*, eds. Gary Marks and Marco R. Steenbergen. New York: Cambridge University Press, 235-259.
- Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Moira Nelson and Erica Edwards. 2006. "Party Competition and European Integration in the East and West: Different Structure, Same Causality." *Comparative Political Studies* 39.2 (March): 155-175.

- Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, Marco R. Steenbergen, Ryan Bakker. 2007. "Crossvalidating Data on Party Positioning on European Integration." *Electoral Studies* 26.1: 23-38.
- McLaren, Lauren. 2002. "Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis or Perceived Cultural Threat?" *Journal of Politics* 64.2: 551-566.
- Ray, Leonard. 2003. "When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinion about European Integration." *Journal of Politics* 65.4: 978-94.
- Senyuva, Ozge. 2006. "Turkish Public Opinion and European Union Membership: The State of The Art in Public Opinion Studies in Turkey." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 11.1: 19-32.
- Taggart, Paul. 1998. "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems." *European Journal of Political Research* 33.3: 363-88.
- Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2004. "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the Systems of the European Union Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe." *European Journal of Political Research* 43.1 (January): 1-27.
- van der Eijk, Cees, Mark Franklin, Klaus Schönbach, Hermann Schmitt, and Holli Semetko. 2002. *European Elections Study 1999, Design, Implementation and Results*. (Computer File and Codebook). Steinmetz Archives, Amsterdam.

