



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF RIGHT WING VOTERS
IN THE POST -2002 PERIOD: BEYOND IDEOLOGY VS PRAGMATISM**

Master's Thesis

Olcay Emre Erdoğan

Master of Arts in Political Science

May 2023



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Understanding Voting Behavior Of Right Wing Voters In Türkiye Between 2002-2022

Abstract: This research aims to deepen and broaden our understanding of the political attitudes of right-wing voters, who are accepted to hold the key to Turkish politics due to their large numbers. While there is a wealth of quantitative macro-level analysis focused on identifying the political preferences and voting behaviour of Turkish voters in the post-2022 period, this research conducts in-depth interviews to understand the meaning-making processes of voters and to draw mental maps of right-wing voters. By this way, this research aims to throw light to how voters combine and interpret ideologies, values, collective memory, traditions, identities, emotions, and changing situational factors and create their own 'subjective political field'. The main argument of this research is that explaining political attitudes of right-wing voters with ideology versus pragmatism approach is highly superficial and inadequate. Going beyond this dichotomy, we try to identify how similar political, economic and cultural factors can strengthen or deter right-wing voting and how it can alienate voters based on voters' subjective political field.

Keywords: voting behavior, right-wing voters, subjective political field, political ideology, Turkish politics, political parties

Türkiye'deki Sağ Seçmenlerin 2002-2022 Yılları Arasındaki Oy Verme Davranışını Anlamak

Öz: Bu araştırma, Türk siyasetinde çoğunlukları nedeniyle anahtar rolü oynadığı kabul edilen sağ seçmenlerin siyasi tutumlarını daha derinlemesine ve geniş kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. 2022 sonrası dönemde Türk seçmenlerin siyasi tercihlerini ve oy verme davranışlarını belirlemeye yönelik nicel makro düzeyde birçok analiz bulunmasına rağmen, bu araştırma derinlemesine mülakatlar yaparak seçmenlerin anlam oluşturma süreçlerini anlamayı ve sağ seçmenlerin zihinsel haritalarını çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu araştırma, seçmenlerin nasıl ideolojileri, değerleri, kolektif bellekleri, gelenekleri, kimlikleri, duyguları ve değişen durumsal faktörleri birleştirip yorumladıklarını ve kendi 'özel siyasi alanlarını' nasıl oluşturduklarını aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın temel argümanı, sağ seçmenlerin siyasi tutumlarını ideolojiye karşı pragmatizm yaklaşımıyla açıklamanın son derece yüzeysel ve yetersiz olduğudur. Bu ikilemi aşarak, benzer siyasi, ekonomik ve kültürel faktörlerin sağ seçmenlerin karar verme mekanizmalarını çeşitli yönlerde nasıl etkileyebileceğini veya seçmenleri nasıl yabancılaştırabileceğini belirlemeye çalışıyoruz.

Anahtar kelimeler: oy verme davranışı, sağ seçmenler, özel siyasi alan, siyasi ideoloji, Türk siyaseti, siyasi partiler.

List of abbreviations

JDP: Justice and Development Party

NMP: Nationalist Movement Party

RPP: Republican People's Party

DP: Democrat Party

SPO: State Planning Organization

JP: Justice Party

NTP: New Türkiye Party

NSP: National Salvation Party

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

MP: Motherland Party

TPP: True Path Party

SDP: Social Democracy Party

PYD: People's Defense Unity

YPG: Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat (Democratic Unity Party)

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Voting is the most important and powerful form of democratic participation for citizens. Through the power of their vote, citizens reflect their ideas, beliefs, and expectancies for the country. Voting is a simple act at its core, with stamps and ballots. Voting behavior, on the other hand, means a lifelong process with ever-lasting change.

Democracy relies on the fundamental act of voting, and research into voting behavior can teach us more about how people exercise their right to engage in politics. We can learn more about how people make decisions and express their views through elections by analyzing voting behavior. What makes it democratic is the fact that it creates a unique communication channel between voters and politicians. Understanding voting behavior and motivations might reveal the preferences, issues, and priorities of voters and let politicians learn about them. This data can be used by policymakers to create agendas and programs that appeal to voters and meet their demands. Policymakers can better grasp the expectations of the public and make decisions that reflect the will of the people. Additionally, researchers can evaluate the efficiency of political campaigns, messages, and strategies by analyzing voting behavior. Parties and candidates can hone their strategies and communication to appeal to particular voter segments by looking at how various campaign tactics and messaging affect voter behavior. Parties and candidates can use this information to better understand the effects of their campaigning and modify their plans as necessary. Last but not least, understanding why people choose to vote or choose not to vote may help groups and politicians with developing strategies that encourage voter involvement and boost turnout. Policymakers can work toward a more inclusive and representative election process by eliminating voting-related obstacles and focusing outreach initiatives on certain populations, if they have this kind of concern whatsoever.

Voting behavior is usually seen as actions and choices individuals make when participating in the electoral process, specifically how they decide to cast their votes in elections. Though the outcome of voting behavior is a single answer, the process of development that led the voter to his/her final decision on a ballot box is a long and

complicated phenomenon. Before it is examined on an individual level, one must understand that voting behavior is affected by multiple social realities and can vary across different countries, cultures, and electoral systems. Within the same sample group, too, may have different voting behaviors due to personality traits. These traits can include childhood memories, everyday life experiences, emotional conditions, genetics, social media, education, and likewise factors.

General theories about voting behavior have been coined as an attempt to understand and control voting behavior. Analysis of voting behavior can yield useful data for foreseeing election outcomes. Researchers and pollsters can predict the likely outcome of elections by looking at previous voting patterns, demographic trends, and other factors that affect voting behavior. To create successful campaign tactics, political parties, politicians, and campaign strategists need this information. Though the aim is more or less the same to this day, approaches to understanding how voters, individually or collectively, behave have been enriched greatly. There are grand classic theories that attempt to explain how certain personality traits and backgrounds are affiliated with consistent and recurring voting behavior in deductive methods. Later on, voting behavior is studied on individual levels and some generalization theories have been coined. It is still open to debate about which approach is better to analyze voters. Some voters, by their nature, may be open to being influenced by the community they live in which makes the deduction method more useful. Some, on the other hand, may have independent personalities which would require a study beginning from the grassroots.

Contemporary researchers usually study voting behavior parallel to election results and critical events that happened before elections. This action-reaction methodology is useful to understand mass reactions given by citizens to certain events. Especially in Türkiye where political history is rather unbalanced and tense. Voting behaviors, trends, and shifts in voter preferences can also be discovered by examining voting behavior over lengthy periods. Researchers can track shifts in party popularity, the effects of significant occasions or problems, and the development of political ideas. Understanding political system dynamics, the creation of fresh political movements, and the realignment of voter coalitions all benefit from knowing this information.

Though this approach is usually misled by indecisive voters who are more open to being affected by political actions that echoed before elections. The loyal voter base is usually ignored when using this approach since they do not change their voting behavior even though they are as irritated as indecisive voters about the political actions. The importance of voting behavior is not limited to its mobility. If a voter is not swinging his/her vote, it still should be a research concern because, within their subjective political field, these voters find another means to overpower that political action, therefore keeping their vote consistent. This process of evaluation is also a subject to be researched within voting behavior.

1.1) Research Question

This thesis aims to answer the following questions:

- How can we understand the process of decision- making of right-wing voters and which factors explain voting behaviour and how?
- Are voters really swinging between ideology and pragmatism, or do they have broader understanding for these concepts?

1.2) Limitations

The first and foremost limitation is the ambiguity of human psychology. Türkiye has an unrested political history that reflected and affected public opinion. The social memory, or maybe we can call it social chosen trauma, offers and guides citizens to keep silent about their political preferences. In interviews, though anonymity is an option, people may choose to be timid, not totally honest, and open to talking about their political views. As we cannot accuse anyone of misleading, we have to take their words for their voting behavior. Yet, still, even if the reasons interviewed people speak of are just excuses, it can be a clue to a deeper understanding of their motives based on the excuses they choose to say. If the reasons they say do not reflect their personal motives, they still can reflect what they think other people who support the same party vote for.

Swinging voters between ideologically and historically close parties is a limitation for data interpretation. Though Türkiye adopted the presidential election system, where close parties allied, previous elections in the parliamentary system offered no concrete unity and closeness between parties to track swinging votes even though coalition was a thing. Also, dramatic swings, from left parties to right, were not explained easily. Additionally, swinging votes don't always happen because of the indecisiveness of voters. Especially after switching to the presidential system, all parties shifted their stance to the center, they are trying watered-down versions of catch-all policies, therefore red lines are disappearing. Interestingly, the opposite of that is happening in the public sphere. As concluded in the end, Turkish public opinion is polarizing on the race- religiousness scale. Further research will explain the dynamic between party policies and public polarization.

Another limitation is the time this research was conducted. The interviews are done at a time when Türkiye went through one of its worst inflation and economic crises. Therefore, the economy inevitably held the center for fluctuating factors of voting behavior. Furthermore, the 2023 May elections were on the doorstep during the time interviews were done, therefore, in one way or another the interviews were affected by the upcoming election even though the research did not include the future behaviors of the voters. Mainly, voters were highly influenced by the talking points of leaders conducting electoral campaigns, and at a different time perhaps they could bring in more their own agenda. the election platforms of right-wing Also, some interviewers hesitated to share their ideas openly fearing their answers may be a cause to get targeted in a possible change of government. Though anonymity was promised and secured, political history and its longing effects were remaining in the minds of voters and they reasonably tried to avoid repeating the history at the cost of hiding their honest views on politics. Every now and then, people kept their distance from the beginning of the interviews. From time to time, people dramatically changed their narrative in the middle or late in the interviews and gave contradicting answers to similar questions.

The last limitation is numbers. This research is done by up to 20 people. Though their selection method serves the aim to represent ideas from every social status and class, they may miss a considerable amount of political motive that drives people to vote.

Human cognition on voting behavior has unlimited intersections of factors and explaining methods. This study covers a few of the endless possibilities.

1.3) Main Argument

Voters's approach to politics and its components can be forged in multiple ways according to their ability to describe reality and its emotional significance which makes up their subjective political field (Antunes 2010, p.165). Right-wing voters have a vast and rather complex agenda. Though they have relatively similar concerns, expectations, and demands from politics, the emphasis and power of these concerns vary and accordingly it changes their voting behavior. The main argument of this research is that explaining political attitudes of right-wing voters with ideology versus pragmatism approach is highly superficial and inadequate. For, voters can see their ideology as the ultimate benefit and they can act pragmatic by keeping their ideology on the power. In other words, taking economy as the sole component of pragmatism is not describing voters' reality.

This research aims to throw light to how voters combine and interpret ideologies, values, collective memory, traditions, identities, emotions, and changing situational factors and create their own 'subjective political field'. A voter's political attitude and function of vote for the voter can be explained in 4 major pillars in the subjective political field. First, certain factors can act as a solidifying factor of the voters' political attitudes where voters show more willingness and bravery to express their political ideas through voting for the part they see aligned with these ideas. Second, there are fluctuating factors that voters express their disapprobations and complaints about their favorite party or parties. Note that voters always compensate for these fluctuating factors with some other and heavier solidifying factors. In other words, fluctuating happens when voters state a reason why they might have not voted for their party, but in the end, they did vote for their favorite party. So fluctuating factors are where voters express mostly their reasoning and brain-storming about their own voting behavior. Third, political attitude towards voting can be alienation which means the voters ignore politics and does not care to vote. Last pillar is voters' being compelled to vote due to some "red lines" they see regarding some issues.

We argue that analyzing voting behavior on this four-pillar approach is more useful to understand the complex factors that interact to create voting outcomes and the structure of political attitudes.

1.4) Methodology

Voting behavior can be examined and analyzed through various research methods, including surveys, polls, focus groups, and data analysis. These methods can provide insights into the factors that influence how people vote and can help predict future election outcomes. Nonetheless, this prediction leads to the commodification of the field.

Survey research involves collecting data through questionnaires or interviews that ask respondents about their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to voting. Polling is a similar method that seeks to measure public opinion on political issues and candidates.

Focus groups involve a small group of individuals who are brought together to discuss their views on political issues and candidates. This method can provide more in-depth insights into voters' attitudes and beliefs than surveys or polling. Data analysis is another method that can be used to examine voting behavior. This involves collecting and analyzing large amounts of data from election results, voter registration records, and other sources to identify patterns and trends in voting behavior.

The methods used in the study were traditional ethnographic field research methods as outlined by Burgess (1984) and Schatzman and Strauss (1973). The fieldwork was guided by the aim to understand the voters' own perspective on the issues under study. Semi-structured interviews and field research methods were utilized to achieve this objective. There are multiple reasons for choosing the qualitative method. First, almost all of the voting behavior studies in Türkiye are done with qualitative methods. They are usually done by measuring election results and exit poll questionnaires. Specialized firms that offer political advice to political parties also use numbers and numeral data. Though it is a highly accurate data approach, it usually happens after the elections. The interpretation of underlying voting motivations is done regarding the election results. Therefore it becomes a justification rather than an analysis. We will also use the same

method, analyzing election results in parallel to what might be the reasons for ups and downs in votes received by parties. It will be helpful to illustrate the overall political atmosphere and tendencies of voters, yet it will not suffice to have a deeper understanding of what happened.

The importance of qualitative studies becomes especially clear here. Through interviews, a more abstract yet clear map of the voter's mind will be illustrated and it will open doors to understand them in a broader sense. For instance, we will have a chance to see factors influencing a voter's mind but not his actions. We will have a chance to see which factors overweight others, and in which conditions they do that. Last but not least, we will be able to see to what extent voters are ready to compensate and continue to support their parties and ideas.

The sampling of the study is done by harmonizing multiple methods. To be able to delineate better, people that took part in this interview are chosen by age, socio-economic condition, gender, and location criteria. Also, when possible, the snowballing technique is used to root out how similar and different the motivations can be, and when they are different, to see why. The sample group consists of 19 people, 8 female and 11 male, from the cities of Ankara and Kırıkkale. The ages of the volunteers vary from the middle of twenties to sixties. Almost all of the voters come from Turkic origin with one exception who comes from Kurdish origin. Similarly, most of the voters are consolidated right-wing voters with consistent voting behavior, however, some volunteers changed their voting behavior towards the exact opposite side, and some volunteers did not vote at all for a long time. Economically, they are usually in the middle class, with a couple of exceptions who are below the middle and above the middle. For party distribution, the largest voters are from the JDP, similar to its vote percentages in overall election results, followed by NMP and lastly the Good Party.

The number of the sample was decided to be 20. Interviews are deep and complex with a wide range of questions. To be able to examine the data closely and precisely, we decided to keep the number little, yet the content immersed. As the elections were approaching, as well as the deadline, some volunteers withdrew from the research. We compensated with new volunteers, as much as we can. In the end, we had 19 volunteers that shared their ideas on their voting behavior. Approved by Ethics Committee, the

interviews were carried with people from Ankara, Kırıkkale, Kilis, Erzurum and Paris provinces between years of 2022 and 2023.

When it comes to the last party voters voted for in the last election, the sample is well-adjusted. To understand the mobility of the voters, there swinging voters are much like consistent voters. In the sample, some people swung their vote from the JDP to NMP or Good Party, from NMP to Good Party, from JDP to RPP and from JDP/NMP to invalid vote. This was an intentional sampling to track underlying reasons for both swinging voters and consistent voters.

Time is essential for flows in motivations as well, to capture how it affected the voting behavior, the age gap between interviewed voters is chosen to be large. It helps not only to see differences between generations but to see how much social memory is conserved and inherited. Socio-economic conditions will be a crucial criterion. The economy is a strong factor that affects every citizen but it is vague how much it affects voting behavior. People in relatively better socioeconomic conditions may not be affected by the overall economy of the country. However, they can still take the economy as a factor for evaluating the incumbent party. Similarly, people in poor socio-economic conditions may ignore the economy as a factor even though they suffer from bad economic policies more than others. The aim of the study is not to determine which assumption is true, but to create a map, pointing out how factors may have different outcomes for voters.

Election results shown on a Türkiye map have similarities. For the last twenty years, Central Anatolia has become the castle of the incumbent party where western coastal cities supported the main opposition party. Though it is a huge generalization, certain cities are supporters of certain parties. To see how location affects the political agenda and voting behavior of citizens, we will interview people from different locations in Türkiye. Additionally, working on different locations will reveal a portion of the preservation of oral history. Also highly related to age, older generations will be the open gate to oral history for us to investigate. At the same time, though younger people from the same location, we will be able to observe how strong oral history is and how influential it is on voting behavior.

We will use semi-structured interviews for multiple reasons. First, close-ended questions may prevent me from detecting the factors and motivations of voters. They may need to reshape their answers to be able to give a fitting answer to the question. Second, the questions will usually continue with additional follow-up questions. Based on the voters' attitudes and interests, one topic may be elaborated more than others. To secure a natural flow of interviews, we will depend on voters' tendencies and willingness to speak in cases of the amount and most topics.

We asked the participants the following questions.

A) Voter Questions

- What is your age? What is your profession and education level?
- Where do you reside?
- What is your marital status?
- Besides your work, what other activities do you engage in?
- Are you a member of any civil society organization or community group, or do you participate in any?

B) Identity and Affiliation Questions

- Where do you place yourself on the Left, Center-Left, Center, Center-Right, and Right scale?
- Where do you place yourself on the Modern, Moderate, Traditional, Conservative scale?
- If you have a religious belief, to what extent do you fulfill its responsibilities?
- How much does religion influence shaping your life?
- In which sector do you work?
- How would you classify yourself economically? (Very good, good, middle-class, poor, very poor)

C) Party Questions

- Which party did you vote for in the last election?

- Does the party you voted for in the last election show consistency with your previous voting patterns?
- How satisfied are you with your voting behavior so far?
- Is voting a matter of voluntarism or obligation for you?
- What is your primary basis for decision-making when voting?
- Besides your primary basis, what other factors do you consider when voting?
- Do you have any ideology?
- If you do, does your ideology play a role in your voting behavior?
- To what extent is ideology a dispensable concept for you?
- Do you believe that religion and politics should be intertwined? If yes, to what extent? If not, why?
- How do you perceive the use of religious references in political matters?
- Does your voting behavior carry any sense of religious duty or responsibility?
- Do you follow the ideological discourse of the party you voted for? If yes, what is your opinion of it?
- How do the economic policies of the political party you support affect your voting behavior?
- Besides religion and economy, which other factors such as national security, prestige, and external threats influence your voting behavior?

1.5) Who Is a Right-Wing Voter?

Academia has different ideas and interpretations about who should be considered as a right-wing voter. From a global perspective, right-left cleavage is mostly affiliated with the French Revolution and its reflections on politics. Today, in global politics, right-left placement is mostly due to the economy, but these studies mostly focus on Western societies and even for them, the economy is not the sole definer of the edges of the spectrum. (Yağcı 2022, p.237 & 238-239). For Türkiye, a non-Western country, this is regarded as an individual issue and not fit. Çarkoğlu argues that right-left self-placement is an easy way for individuals to position themselves and saves them from enrolling in the crowded and complex nature of politics. (Çarkoğlu 2007, 250-254). Though it is easy, it brings many problems that are born out of shallowness, and it leads to unnecessary conflicts as it did in the 80s.

Nevertheless, Çarkoğlu concludes that right-left separation in Türkiye is mostly about values and the values are mostly religious. Yet it is not because religion is the heaviest factor for self-placement. Rather, it is the chaotic events that occurred in Turkish political history. As summarized above, the first political party to separate from the founding RPP was the Democrat Party. After its ten years in power, the coup took place and the party was shut down. Similar coups, though not as bloody, continued to occur which served to polarize Turkish politics.

The most famous and equally used separation of right-left distinction is the one coined by Şerif Mardin. A key work in the study of Turkish politics, his article, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" argues that the interaction between the center and the periphery is crucial to comprehending the dynamics of Turkish politics. He characterizes the center as "the locus of power and decision-making," and the periphery as "the rest of the society." According to him, there has been a lot of disagreement and tension in Turkey's center-periphery relationship. The periphery has been viewed as the repository of traditional Turkish culture, while the center has been perceived as the personification of Westernization and modernization. Economic disparity, political instability, and cultural alienation are just a few of the political issues that have resulted from this tension (Mardin 1973, p.170-178).

Mardin thinks that the center-periphery connection has changed over time rather than being constant. Early on in the Turkish Republic, the center was able to keep the perimeter under its authority by using both force and persuasion. However, the periphery has grown more forceful as the Turkish economy has grown and the nation has integrated more fully with the world economy. For the center, this has created a variety of difficulties, including how to handle the demands of the periphery and how to preserve national unity. The overemphasis on the relationship between the center and the peripheral in the article has also drawn criticism. Some detractors claim that Mardin's analysis ignores other crucial elements including class, ethnicity, and religion (Aslan 2013, p.38). However, Mardin's article continues to make a significant addition to the study of Turkish politics, and his interpretation of the link between the center and the periphery is still relevant today.

Another influential approach to right-left division is made by İdris Küçükömer who argues that Türkiye's process of Westernization has led the Turkish people to become alienated from their own culture and customs. According to him, social issues like economic disparity, political unpredictability, and cultural deterioration have been brought on by this estrangement. The premise of Küçükömer's argument is that the elites forced Westernization on the Turkish masses from the top down. He contends that elites have taken advantage of Westernization to preserve their privilege and power at the expense of the Turkish people. From this perspective, he argued that right-left division is the exact opposite of what it is in the global political agenda. For him, the RPP is a right wing party that tries to conserve the status quo and right-wing parties are challengers (Küçükömer 1969).

His revolutionary distinction attracted quite an attention. However, his classification gets superficial sometimes, especially regarding leftist ideas. Some critics argue that Küçükömer neglects the agency of the Turkish people and that he portrays them as passive victims of Westernization (Asal 2018, p.123).

On the other hand, some scholars argue that mostly the right wing does not consist of a systematic chain of ideas or a homogenous type of people (Kayacı 2017, p.158) and it is because of its historical background. Center-right wing of the Turkish political spectrum went through processes where it got smaller, fragmented, and then became whole again. The process of fragmentation began in the 1960s, then it evolved parallel to the actions and fate of the Justice Party (Buçukçu 2021, p.13-14). After the Justice Party, successor parties more or less carried the legacy until 2002 when JDP rose as a unitary place for the right wing.

For conducting this study, we predicated on the self-claiming of the people we had interviewed with. This raised a couple of questions. First, are common folk capable of accurately placing themselves among the right-left spectrum? According to a recent study (Yağcı 2022, p.249) they are. Turkish society is not alien to overall political polarization and they more or less know where they belong. Moreover, for Turkish society, the placement and perceive men of wings are mostly about religion, a conclusion that supports Çarkoğlu's previously mentioned findings. In other words, as

religion is a highly individual and private matter, people do not hesitate to take the initiative and pace themselves accordingly.

Naturally, religion is not the sole factor. The right-wing did not decide for itself. Instead, left parties' discourse and battle for being the defining actor of the left has pushed right parties to the other side of the spectrum. As Buçukçu argues, the definition of right became clear against the left parties who strive for defining themselves (Buçukçu 2021, p23). As the opponent obtains a more clear and strong agenda, the right parties feel obliged to do the same.

1.6 The History of Voting Behavior in Türkiye: What is Voting Behavior?

In democracy, the interests and ideas of groups are defended and sometimes shaped, by political parties. The most effective way for a voting citizen to execute political power is to vote. Thus, election results are the primary source of voting behavior. They are like a gateway to the voters' political world. However, political-party-based evaluation of the political system and electoral behavior is complex and sometimes misleading. Voting behavior itself is hard to grab and portray since it contains many implicit and explicit attitudes as well as other economic and social factors. Also, it is taken for granted that voters always cast their votes by their interests or values. However, many other factors compete for the decisive factor in casting ballots. These will be discussed later in the following chapters.

Recurring interventions in Turkish politics resulted in instability and fragility of the whole political regime and an ever-going process of mobilization that political parties have to keep up with. These interventions were not grassroots, rather they reflect an oppressive military power that disrupts democratic power and the interchangeability of balances that should defend different interests of groups in society. The stability of the regime, normally, is secured by governments that are shaped and portrayed by power balances in society (Kışlalı, 1998:22). However, in Turkish politics, for a long time power balances changed through non-democratic means so it is troublesome to understand the political behavior of citizens through a democratic means, voting. Almost every ten years, a direct or non-direct military intervention disrupted Turkish democracy, so every ten years, we get to see voter behavior towards these interventions,

instead of what we need to see, which is a long and stable voter base reacting to the natural components of politics.

So when we ponder about Turkish voting behavior, we have to do it in ten-year periods. Within ten years, we can still observe voting behavior changing according to political matters but for every ten years, we have to consider military intervention as the biggest component that affects voting behavior unnaturally. Though some studies suggest that sometimes military intervention is seen as necessary by people (Demirel 2003, p.271), it definitely is regarded as a horrible and bloody event. Latest coup attempt in 2016 revoked the fears of voters and brought Türkiye to the edge of repeating another democratic backsliding. This time however, in contrast to earlier military interventions, the trauma that civil politics experienced has made it necessary to fight back against a sophisticated spiral that has meticulously organized itself in the government, business, sports, media, and many other significant sectors. (Kaya Osmanbaşoğlu 2018, p.582)

Among the many studies focusing on Turkish voting behavior, Mardin's center-periphery distinction is the most known and accepted one. It assumes a sociological cleavage between the Kemalist, secular elite center represented by RPP and the low-income, conservative periphery that is represented by parties that fall on the right side of the spectrum, starting with the Democrat Party (DP) from 1950. (Kalaycıoğlu, 1994). Here, the center means not merely abstract values but physical settlement as well. Place of accommodation, such as Ankara and İzmir, which were subject to republican modernization and transformation, is a factor for voting behavior. For example, it is no secret that Ankara, the new capital of the Republic, was meant to be the homeland for newly created citizens who carry all modern values and live a modern secular life, however, the city did not always play the designated central role. As the city grew big and offered economic and social opportunities, it also became a popular target for internal migration. It led to a massive demographic change in the city which eventually led to a shift in political balance (Sönmez, 2010, p.243–265).

To truly understand voting behavior, it must be ensured that there are optimal opportunities for voters to reflect their stance, so there must be at least two political parties, a secure voting system, and freedom of thought. Only after that, a healthy voting

behavior can be observed. In light of these requirements, we will begin the historical analysis from 1950, the first election that fulfilled these criteria.

Table 1. Results of the 1950 Turkish Elections

1950	
Date of Election: 14/05/1950	DP:4.391.694 (%55,2) (416 MP)
Registered Number of Voters: 8.905.743	CHP:3.148.626 (%39,6) (69 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote: 7.953.085	BGMZ: 44.537 (%0,6) (1 MP)
Turnout Ratio: 89,3	MİLLET PARTİSİ:368.537 (%4,6) (1 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: -	
Number of MP's: 487	

Source: Supreme Election Council

Democrat Party's victory in all three elections it participated in relied heavily upon the ideological stand. Though the DP implemented several economic policies that are mostly regarding development in agriculture, its voter base was still built on ideology. Economic successes, as well as failures, were not the decisive factor. In other words, economic policies, or any other ones, were not influential for DP voters because DP did not lose a significant amount of votes when implemented policies failed to meet the expectations of farmers who created more than half of the electoral base (Eroğul, 2003). What we can observe here is that Democrat Party voters have a psychological affinity towards their party which represents the anger and opposition people felt for policies and poverty during the single-party regime (Oktar & Varlı, 2010).

Religion and conservatism were the main pillars of the Democrat Party's appeal to voters. The Western transformation process forced on society was causing huge displeasure on voters and the shady results as well as the election system in 1946 had people look for alternatives, any alternatives. In this atmosphere, the Democrat Party was the only way out of political incarceration and it portrayed itself as the side of anything or anyone against the Republican People's Party and its policies. In the economic field, The Democrat Party had no base or chance to propose economic promises other than harshly criticizing RPP's policies, and it actually worked.

Interestingly, the foundation of the Democrat Party was paved through a strong opposition to an economic policy (Zürcher 2018). Then, later on, the DP did not leave economic policies and sayings out of its political agenda. The global crisis Second World War brought, as well as the follow-up economic crisis was surely also effective for the 1950 elections. Voters were looking for an economic alternative as well and the Democrat Party was once again the only option (Topçu & Arslan, 2017).

The DP's huge success was a result of harmony. A party offering itself as the defender of religion, conservatism, and ideology of the majority and a voter base desperately looking for an alternative resulted in an almost absolute shift of seats in Parliament. The Democrat Party, at first results, won 416 total seats and a new era began in Turkish Politics and it began on ideological grounds that consist of religion and conservatism (Şahin, 2014).

DP's policies reflected the emotional burden of its voter base. People, overwhelmed by RPP, showed DP great support and then DP began undermining RPP's branches and soft power that were built up in the last 27 years.

The 1954 elections proved to be a continuation of the current situation. Democrat Party gained more votes, increasing its rate from 55,2 to 58,4. For Menderes, it was due to voters' satisfaction with economic policies and the improvement of democracy. This outcome was also a dual approach of agenda-setting for the Democrat Party. The components of party propaganda duality were still the same. Promising economic prosperity and avenging a single-party regime. Both in 1950 and 1954 these two were the main pillars of the political agenda for meetings, speeches, and any kind of propaganda the Democrat Party carried out.

The Democrat Party did not lean on ideology alone though. Between 1950 and 1954, DP implemented several policies for farmers including tax exemptions, loans and re-allocation of lands. This eventually increased overall production and the trust people have in the new government (Başgil, 2011). Also, in his meetings, Menderes was constantly reminding people of his party's economic achievements and investments, also promising further actions to improve the economy. Again, he was backing his economic policies with an ideological stance, the milli irade (national will).

Results of the 1954 elections also clearly put it that Turkish politics was highly polarized with DP and RPP as two opposite sides, which supports Mardin's center-periphery distinction (Özbudun, 2011: 60-61 cf Kaya, 2018). The intended multi-party pluralist democracy was not achieved because the election system led DP to gain unprecedented power in the assembly where DP gained more than %90 percent of seats with %58,4 votes. This power opened the way for DP to get oppressive in a civil way even more than it did after the 1950 elections. The overall situation and DP's attitude towards other political parties were the same after the 1950 elections but this harsh stance was backed by ideology and economy. After 1954, when the economy began worsening, DP's ideological and oppressive policies started to disturb public opinion (Kaya, 2018). Voters' emotional attachment that once carried the Democrat Party to government seems to be overpowered by economic problems after 1954. This shows that the Democrat Party government was not built solely on ideology.

Table 2. Results of the 1954 Turkish Elections

1954	
Date of Election: 02/05/1954	DP:5.313.659 (%58,4) (503 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:10.262.063	CHP:3.193.471 (%35,1) (31 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:9.095.617	CMP:480.249 (%5,3) (5 MP)
Turnout Ratio:88,6	BĞMZ: 56.393 (%0,6) (2 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: -	
Number of MP's:541	

Source: Supreme Election Council

With a considerable drop in vote rate, DP began to lose blood in the 1957 elections. The situation before the 1957 elections was tight. Lots of provocative events were breaking out. 6-7 September events, for example, shook the nation and harsh precautions were taken to prevent further disturbances. In-party conflict and dissidence were also weakening the Democrat Party. Additionally, opposition parties' rightful criticism of the economy and politics increased the tension which eventually led the Democrat Party to get oppressive. Along with that, Democrat Party's narrative for political agenda was mostly based on the economy. It was full of economic promises and pledges about a developed market mechanism. When promised goals seemed

impossible, the Democrat Party decided to emphasize the other side of the spectrum, that is ideology. Constantly reminding the single-party regime, the Democrat party was enthusiastic to portray itself as the true bearer and protector of democracy. (Atayakul, 2007). All these reasons are why DP won the 1957 elections with a lower percentage than in the 1954 elections.

Between the 1957 elections and the coup, Turkish politics went through a rigid and tense path. Parties began to tickle the dragon's tail, criticizing each other on a harsh level. The DP created an investigation commission to look for any possible embezzlement of public property during the single-party regime of RPP. Furnished with immense authority and political power, the commission began the corner RPP, increasing the tension even more. Interestingly, while DP was trying to avenge the single-party regime, the opposition newspapers were criticizing DP by saying it aspires to create a new single-party regime (Bulut 2009, p.138). This was more or less true in the sense of DP using the state authority to hinder RPP, for example, preventing İnönü from traveling to Kayseri. Actions like this resembled the single-party regime in people's opinion too because public opinion began to shift towards RPP (Albayrak 2004, p.538 cf Bulut 2009, p.138).

Table 3. Results of the 1957 Turkish Elections

1957	
Date of Election: 27/10/1957	DP:4.497.811 (%48,6) (424 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:12.078.623	CHP:3.825.267 (%41,4) (178 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:9.250.949	CMP:604.087 (%6,5) (4 MP)
Turnout Ratio:76,6	HÜRRİYET PARTİSİ:321.471 (%3,5) (4 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: -	
Number of MP's:610	

Source: Supreme Election Council

Events and political tension leading to the 1960 coup cannot be in the scope of our research unfortunately for they are highly overpowered by the coup itself. They are important for understanding how and why the coup took place, but they are not significant for voting behavior because the 1961 elections were totally under the

influence of the coup. However, they are important to understand the fragmented vote share of the 1961 election results.

Table 4. Results of the 1961 Turkish Elections

1961	
Date of Election: 15/10/1961	CHP: 3.724.752 (%36,7) (173 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:12.925.395	AP: 3.527.435 (%34,8) (158 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:10.522.716	CKMP: 1.415.390 (%14) (54 MP)
Turnout Ratio:81,4	YTP: 1.391.934 (%13,7) (65 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 10.138.035	
Number of MP's:450	

Source: Supreme Election Council

As the stability of democracy is crippled by a coup, so is the consistency of voters. There have been shifts in the share of voters. Center-left voters shifted towards independents and nationalists, and RPP lost votes, just like the Justice Party and New Türkiye Party (NTP) which are successors of DP (Yıldırım 2013, p.18). Pluralist democracy was more or less achieved actually. Four political parties competing in assembly with close vote rates was a success for the intended type of democracy. However, the chronic problem of the multi-party system kicked in not long before. Weak governments could not carry comprehensive policy frameworks and due to harsh opposition, the assembly began to function slowly. Nevertheless, the 1961 elections underlined many crucial facts. Though RPP got first place in rates, it was not enough to create a government. The Democrat Party successors, the Justice Party and New Türkiye Party surpassed RPP in total. Therefore, true enough, right-wing voters were confused, yet not confused enough to alter their voting behavior.

The 1960s were subject to a great discussion of the economy. With the establishment of the State Planning Organization (SPO), it was sure economic development was still intended, the question was how. Most of the debates between political parties are polarized with the options, foreign capital, and domestic development. Also, land reformation, oil exploration and other economic matters were trend topics of politics (Toktaş&Görür 2020, p.331). However, in the 1965 elections share of seats did not

represent a healthy allocation of political ideas due to the newly adopted national reminder system. Based on the reallocation of votes that did not suffice to carry a candidate to lists, it was aimed to increase representation.

The successor of the Democrat Party, The JP, won the majority in the 1965 elections. This was without a doubt a revenge for the coup. Right voters could not reflect their ideas on ballots as the 1961 elections were carried out in a very foggy and uncertain atmosphere. Up to the 1965 elections, many democratic and pluralist steps were taken. Universities gained independence, Constitution Courts were opened, and a new pluralist and freedom-promising constitution came into force. So the 1965 elections allowed right-wing voters to reflect their stance without oppression or fear.

Table 5. Results of the 1965 Turkish Elections

1965	
Date of Election: 10/10/1965	AP: 4.921.235 (%52,9) (240 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:13.679.753	CHP: 2.675.785 (%28,7) (134 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:9.748.678	MİLLET PARTİSİ: 582.704 (%6,3) (31 MP)
Turnout Ratio:71,3	YTP: 346.514 (%3,7) (19 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 9.307.563	BĞMZ: 296.528 (%3,2) (1 MP)
Number of MP's:450	TİP: 276.101 (%3) (14 MP)
	CKMP: 208.696 (%2,2) (11 MP)

Source: Supreme Election Council

The Justice Party's victory in the 1969 elections and public opinion surveys made by Günaydın newspaper is useful in understanding right-wing voters' electoral behavior. We should mention that this election was the first time the D'Hondt method was used. However, this change in the electoral system and how it affected the share of seats of parties in parliament are beyond the scope of this research. About the factors that lead voters towards the Justice Party, Hale narrates interviews from Günaydın, where people openly talked about their political preferences and motives for voting for the Justice Party (Hale, 1970). According to him, the overall table of Justice Party voters contains almost every example of voting behavior models. Some people rely on emotional attachment as a base for voting, as well as people who, more or less, claim that they rationally evaluate the policies and achievements of the party. Block voting is also

common, especially in eastern provinces where religious or kinship communities copy the voting behavior of their leader (Hale, 1970).

Up to 1969, the Justice Party's voter base resembled the DP's base in the sense that the hinge of voting is attached to both economy and ideology. However, the '60s were subject to many chaotic and unrestful events. The free and pluralist atmosphere led to the formation of leftist ideas. Protests and politically threatening meetings were taking place easily and coup attempts were turning into a norm in the military (Şen 2014, p.84). Also, the press was utterly free like it had never been before. All the conservatively dangerous ideas and coup attempts created constant fear for right-wing voters. So it was of course influential, taking lessons from the Democrat Party, right-wing voters were strict with their votes, they sided with the JP yet not with NTP who lagged behind the JP. Yet, that did not stop another military intervention.

Table 6. Results of the 1969 Turkish Elections

1969	
Date of Election: 12/10/1969	AP: 4.229.712 (%46,6) (256 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:14.788.552	CHP: 2.487.006 (%27,4) (143 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:9.516.035	GP: 597.818 (%6,6) (15 MP)
Turnout Ratio:64,3	BĞMZ: 511.023 (%5,6) (13 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 9.086.296	MİLLET PARTİSİ: 292.961 (%3,2) (6 MP)
Number of MP's:450	MHP: 275.091 (%3) (1 MP)
	BİRLİK PARTİSİ: 254.695 (%2,8) (8 MP)
	TİP:243.631 (%2,7) (2 MP)
	YTP: 197.929 (%2,2) (6 MP)

Source: Supreme Election Council

12 March 1971 memorandum, where the head of military branches forced the then-president Cevdet Sunay into resigning, shook the nation once again. There were multiple reasons that shaped the process leading to the memorandum. University protests, new youth movements, the ambiguity of the economy, etc. However, the main reason was a failure to institutionalize the 61 constitutions (Akıncı 2014, p.66). There has not been a new election right after the memorandum so we cannot evaluate how it affected voting behavior. The closest election to the memorandum is the 1973 elections where RPP surprisingly turned the tables.

Before the general elections, the presidential elections shall be discussed. The memorandum was not a direct attack on democracy, rather it was for raising difficulties for political parties. Not taking the power directly, the military, the putschists to be exact, intended to shamble it, then for the next election they raised a candidate whom they assumed would win. However, the JP and RPP unified their powers and got Korutürk, a liberal and modest name, elected. This was avenging the memorandum (Gülbay 2017, p.59).

As it seems, the 1973 election resembled the 1961 election in the share of votes. The fragility brought by the memorandum is felt by voters and the resignation of Demirel, prime minister, was seen as a weak stance. However, the 1973 election is important because it was seen as a return to democracy. Voter turnout was 66,8, the second lowest return. Eight political parties carried out an immense election process and they set their political agenda on different things. The Justice Party highlighted its previous government years and called for consistency. The Nationalist Movement Party, NMP, was warning people of the Soviet threat, posing an ideological stance. Erbakan of the National Salvation Party, who will impact Turkish politics deeply, was using what the Democrat Party used in the 1950s, targeting leftist parties and their governing failures.

A close share of votes implied that voters were confused about their priorities. The significant loss of votes for the Justice Party was due to the party's incapability of governing the chaotic events. NMP's rise was purely ideological as it promoted itself as an anti-communist party. Yet according to the results, right-wing voters did not seem to prioritize the ideology, not for NMP at least. Erbakan, in contrast, stepped in at a significant rate that can mean one thing. Opposing the single-party regime was still influential for right-wing voters. A distinction should be made here. NMP's ideological stance was about foreign affairs and though communist activities such as riots and protests at universities were brawling public opinion, right-wing voters seemed to prioritize internal affairs first. Like avenging a single-party regime, even though it's been almost thirty years. However, we should keep in mind that the 1973, as well as 1977 elections, were carried out with the d'Hondt system but without a threshold. Voters may be aware of the situation and vote strategically or have no clue and vote based on other factors. There is currently any data to elaborate more on this topic. Additionally, though the Justice Party got second place in elections, it did not agree to

form a coalition government with RPP. Erbakan did, and Turkish politics entered a new and unique era where two opposite parties formed a government. It was also significant for it was the first time a defender of political Islam, the National Salvation Party, NSP, stepped into government.

Table 7. Results of the 1973 Turkish Elections

1973	
Date of Election: 14/10/1973	CHP: 3.570.583 (%33,3) (185 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:16.798.164	AP:3.197.897 (%29,8) (149 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:11.223.843	DEMOKRATİK PARTİ: 1.275.502 (%11,9) (45 MP)
Turnout Ratio:66,8	MSP: 1.265.771 (%11,8) (48 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 10.723.658	CGP: 564.343 (%5,3) (13 MP)
Number of MP's:450	MHP: 362.208 (%3,4) (3 MP)
	BĞMZ: 303.218 (%2,8) (6 MP)
	TBP: 303.218 (%2,8) (6 MP)
	MİLLET PARTİSİ: 62.377 (%0,6) (-)

Source: Supreme Election Council

Before the 1977 election, the forced government of RPP and NSP was failing, and clear ideological differences were making it hard to execute the decision-making process. Though a significant event, the 1974 Cyprus Military Operation took place and occupied public opinion for a very long time. It is not clear for whom the operation brought more votes. Erbakan (Erbakan, 2015) claims in his book that it was his party's determination that made it possible.

Table 8. Results of the 1977 Turkish Elections

1977	
Date of Election: 05/06/1977	CHP: 6.136.171 (%41,4) (213 MP)
Registered Number of Voters:21.207.303	AP: 5.468.202 (%36,9) (189 MP)
Number of Voters that Used Vote:15.358.210	MSP: 1.269.918 (%8,6) (24 MP)
Turnout Ratio:72,4	MHP: 951.544 (%6,4) (16 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 14.827.172	BĞMZ: 370.035 (%2,5) (4 MP)
Number of MP's:450	CGP: 277.713 (%1,9) (3 MP)
	DEMOKRATİK PARTİ: 274.484 (%1,8) (1 MP)
	TBP: 58.540 (%0,4) (-)
	TİP: 20.565 (%0,1) (-)

Source: Supreme Election Council

The 1977 election was a major success for the RPP. The new image Ecevit brought to portray seemed to work. The "Left of Center" saying was a manifestation that RPP left behind elitist and secularist rigid ideology, for a little at least. The recession of JP was due to economic reasons, Ergüder argues and points out that economic instability, oil price fluctuation, and OECD-related issues broke the trust people had for JP and RPP's new image was attractive for undecided or non-partisan people (Ergüder 1991).

Before there emerges a long period of stable democracy, another coup took place and whatever was built in the name of democracy was crippled all over again. The 1981 coup by Kenan Evren opened a new, by no means better, for Turkish politics. The following years will be analyzed in a holistic sense.

Table 9. Results of the 1983 Turkish Elections

1983	
Date of Election: 06/11/1983	ANAP: 7.833.148 (%45,1) (211 MP)
Registered Numbers of Voters: 19.767.366	HP: 5.285.804 (%30,5) (117 MP)
Voters that Used Votes: 18.238.362	MDP: 4.036.970 (%23,3) (71 MP)
Turnout Ratio: 92,3	BĞMZ: 195.588 (%1,1) (-)
Number of Valid Votes: 17.351.510	
Customs Gates Number of Valid Votes: -	
Total Number of Valid Votes: 17.351.510	
Number of MP's: 399	

Source: Supreme Election Council

The 1983 election in Türkiye holds a specific place for it was the first election that took place after the coup in 1980. With almost %52 parliament seats, the victory of the Motherland Party, MP, led by Turgut Özal, started a new phase in Turkish politics. The MP's victory gave a clear message, that Turkish voters demanded democracy and civil politics (Özbudun, 1995). This deduction is supported by Kalaycıoğlu in his study of party preferences. He argues that Turkish voters are quite mobile and volatile, they can easily head towards another political party because they do not have strong connections for one single party. There is no class-based politics, nor is there identification that becomes a decisive factor for voting behavior (Kalaycıoğlu, 1994). His study focuses

on the era up until the 1990s and it is accurate for the inspected period. However, after 2002, till today, JDP's uninterrupted governance and ballot success make it necessary to re-examine voting behavior, especially among right-wing citizens. There must be factors that unite and hold votes together to create a solid and major political group. We will try to root it out in the following chapters.

As it is explained so far, Turkish democracy was trapped in a loop where every ten-year military intervenes in politics, resets any cumulative democratic gains and demolishes the voter bases of parties. At least that was the aim. Voters, however, seemed to somehow follow a consistent behavior. Between the military fear, the face of the single party regime RPP, and whoever represents them, right-wing voters' emotional attachment and sense of revenge lead them to vote for right-wing parties, or we can call them descendants of the Democrat Party. When ideological events that shook the voter bases took place, it had the same effect on all party voters. There is no example in Turkish politics where it only affected right-wing voters. In other words, right-wing voting behavior shows consistency in an ideological sense. In the economy, however, right-wing voters seemed to be fragmented, yet still within their ideology. Except for Ecevit's "left of the center" saying, and it did not have a major effect either, conservative voters did not shift their tendency to ideologically different parties.

The fragmentation in right-wing voters is displayed in almost every election after the 80s and it was due to multiple reasons. The military banned pre-coup parties to open a new page. Old politicians, except those who were banned by name, formed new parties and entered the elections with the permission of the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurumu, MGK). Three parties were let to compete in elections, and the winner was the Motherland Party with %45,1 of votes, which is regarded as a product of the people, unlike the other two parties that were formed by the military (Ergüder 1991, p.162-163).

Even though the Turgut Özal's Motherland Party managed to shine with neo-political openings, in the 1987 elections right-wing votes were once again fragmented. It was due to the lifting of political bans from old politicians and the unendly rise of inflation. With the return of strong politicians like Erbakan, the votes were dispersed, with the same amount in total (Çınar 2010, p.87)

Table 10. Results of the 1991 Turkish Elections

1991	
Date of Election: 20/10/1991	DYP: 6.600.726 (%27) (178 MP)
Registered Numbers of Voters 29.979.123	ANAP: 5.862.623 (%24) (115 MP)
Voters that Used Votes 25.157.089	SHP: 5.066.571 (%20,8) (88 MP)
Turnout Ratio: 83,9	RP: 4.121.355 (%16,9) (62 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 24.371.474	DSP: 2.624.301 (%10,8) (7 MP)
Custom Gates Number of Valid Votes: 45.192	
Total Number of Valid Votes: 24.416.666	
Number of MP's: 450	

Source: Supreme Election Council

The 1991 elections were a stage for return too. The coalitions. The True Path Party, TPP, and Social Democrat People Party, SDP, formed the government and brought ideas together once again. This was resembling the previous coalition where Ecevit and Erbakan, leaders from two different ideologies, came together and formed the government. Erbakan was hardly criticized for forming a coalition with RPP. Especially by the influential writer and thinker Necip Fazıl Kısakürek. As a defender of Islamism, Kısakürek almost called it anathema to side with RPP. Erbakan defended himself with practices and the necessity of obtaining political power, even if it means sharing it with an archrival.

Table 11. Results of the 1995 Turkish Elections

1995	
Date of Election: 24/12/1995	RP: 6.012.450 (%21,4) (158 MP)
Registered Numbers of Voters 34.155.981	ANAP: 5.527.288 (%19,6) (132 MP)
Voters that Used Votes 29.101.469	DYP: 5.396.009 (%19,2) (135 MP)
Turnout Ratio: 85,2	DSP: 4.118.025 (%14,6) (76 MP)
Number of Valid Votes: 28.040.392	CHP: 3.011.076 (%10,7) (49 MP)
Custom Gates Number of Valid Votes: 86.601	
Total Number of Valid Votes: 28.126.993	
Number of MP's: 550	

Source: Supreme Election Council

The 1995 elections were the rise of political Islam as Erbakan's Welfare Party came out as the winner with %21 of the votes. This was due to the Islamist and anti-Westernism

policies of Erbakan and for public memory, it resembled the Democrat Party (Kalaycıoğlu 1997, p.7 cf: Çınar 2010). As anti-Western sayings include harsh criticism of capitalism, we once again see the factors that carried Erbakan to the first place were economy and ideology. However, this was a temporary victory as the 28 February 1997 incident, more famously known as a post-modern coup, took place and before there emerges a base to discuss and analyze other factors, military oppression, laicism, and identity became once again critical components that made all the agenda about themselves. In other words, the cycle repeats itself and the new-born chance of a long stable time period where voting behavior can be analyzed is destroyed.

The 1999 election was a turning point too. Taking place after the 28th February incident, 1999 elections are crucial to observe how voters reacted to yet another military intervention and to the Susurluk scandal as well that brought underground state affairs to light. The 1999 elections more or less displayed the same conditions. In his study published one year after the election, Çarkoğlu (Çarkoğlu, 2000) concludes four important results. Firstly he deduces that the fragility and volatility of voting behavior had not changed. Especially in the sense of partisanship, it becomes clear that affinity to a single party so far could not manage to play a decisive role in electoral behavior. However, he also concludes that there is a growth in right votes, which makes it more fragile, too.

Up to this point, we observed the general tendencies of right voters. The leading factors for voting seem to be ideology and the economy. Sometimes they take place together, sometimes voters need to choose between them. Either way, right-wing voters have these two factors to justify their voting behavior to themselves and their environment. Accordingly, knowing ideology alone will bring no vote, politicians usually offer it together with economic promises. The thing is, they are already naturally intertwined. Erbakan was always offering anti-western ideas that also opposed the harsh grip of capitalism and the big capital itself. Özal was promoting neo-capitalist ideas, contradicting Erbakan, but he was still appealing to right-wing voters because he was the body of opposing coup and military. This needs to be underlined one more time. Single party regime was also a military regime since all the founding fathers of the Republic had military backgrounds which affected their policies as well. Feeling left out, peripheral voters always prioritized standing against military intervention, and for

every almost ten years that democracy was crippled, following elections is dominated by anger and displeasure toward the coup and those who are identified with it. RPP was one. Then Ecevit painted the party with a new face, which more or less worked.

Right ideology does not necessarily mean Islamism, conservatism, or fundamentalism. As these notions are highly intertwined, not even voters know the exact difference if there is one. Yet abolishing the religion and those who follow it is already a phenomenon in Turkish politics, and it usually includes the periphery conserves. Clothing, speaking education, and any kind of value that carries Islamic colors.

The overall conclusion of Turkish voters' behavior studies is that nationalist and Islamist ideologies have the strongest effects on Turkish voters' behaviors (Bilecen, 2016). Supporting this conclusion, Toros also concludes that Islamism does not have much power over parties thus it does not explain voting behavior, as Islamism is not even considered as an ideology (Toros, 2014).

What, then, does? To this date, strong factors interchangeably lead people to certain parties. Following chapters will try to illustrate the voting behavior of right-wing voters through interviews and find any resemblance or contradiction of what was told so far.

CHAPTER 2) CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Major Theories Explaining Voting Behavior

Analyzing voter behavior is an extremely long and complicated issue. After World War 2, researchers began to ponder the behavior of individuals and how it is actually forged. It turned into a trend in the whole world, starting from the USA, as psychology attracted the interest of many academics. It includes political psychology as well. As democratic regimes flourished across the world, researchers showed great interest in the voting behavior of the citizens (Ünal 2016, p.96)

Scholars so far tried to approach this topic by using different methods and trends. While there is not a grand theory to embrace all fields of voting behavior, there are singular

studies trying to explain different pillars of voting behavior. Once again, none of them is a grand theory, rather they can be one side of voting behavior. Most of the time, in fact, they intertwine with each other.

Voting behavior refers to the actions and decisions made by citizens of a state when they participate in an election. It includes not only the mere action of stamping a paper, but a vast range of factors that influence how people cast their votes, such as their political beliefs, values, personal interests, social and economic status, education level, age, gender, and other demographic characteristics.

Voting behavior can also be influenced by a variety of external factors such as political campaigns, media coverage, political advertisements, and other forms of political messaging. These elements are considered exceptionally important for voting behavior because how voters perceive individual candidates or political parties and their positions on key issues can also play a significant role in voting behavior (Gerber 2009, p.35).

Many different theories and models attempt to explain how and why people vote the way they do, including rational choice theory, sociological models, psychological models, and more. Some of the key factors that are often considered in these models include a person's political ideology, social identity, education level, income, age, gender, and other demographic variables. Voters may also be motivated by specific issues or causes that align with their personal values, such as economic growth, social justice, or environmental protection. Last but not least, voters may be influenced by social and historical narratives they have heard or personally witnessed.

Sociological Model

The sociological model of voting behavior argues that the decisive influence for casting a vote is the social groups the voters belong to. Social classes or cleavages, like capital/labor and center/periphery, are fundamental cleavages that shape voting behavior. This is a double-level structure. Aside from voting together with a group, they vote for the benefit and betterment of the group (Antunes 2010, p.146), this shared benefit is what makes the class, as well as what separates people from the rest of the

voters thus creating a cleavage. The model was first developed by Lazarsfeld, who was trying to root out the power of the media and propaganda on voting behavior. Yet the approach and results were groundbreaking and it created a new trend in the field (Ünal 2016, p.97). Later, the approach was deepened with additional research. Any factor that may create a group, it turns out, was able to influence voters' behavior. It may be the place of accommodation, gender, or age.

Continuity of social class and/or cleavage is as critical as the emergence of the group. Sharlamanov and Jovanoski argue that the progression of political socialization (class, cleavage) happens through a transfer of political norms and values that usually takes place in the childhood era of future members of a group. Family, friends, and media play a crucial role in passing down ideas that are the root values of that social group (Sharlamanov & Jovanoski 2014, p.2).

A cleavage is also a group identity and it can form on many events or ideas. A remarkable and accurate example of the emergence of large group identity is chosen trauma. Chosen trauma is a component to build and protect identity where people unite around a common, usually painful, past. Just like the sociological model asserts, chosen trauma also has a mechanism to transfer and pass on the core experiences through telling, living, or simply expressing. Transgenerational transmission, the name of the mechanism, is where a child receives the legacy of chosen trauma from his/her parents, which is the root of the identity (Volkan 2001 p.5).

In either case, the sociological model argues that a voter, belonging to a specific community, votes to reflect the ideas and interests of the group but that group can be anything. In fact, as Lazarsfeld found, the community was even powerful enough to determine the number of parties that would emerge from the region (Ünal 2016, p.99)

Rational Choice Model

The third model is the theory of rational choice also known as the economic theory of voting. Developed by Anthony Downs, this model regards democracy as a free-market area where political parties are suppliers and voters are demanders. This implication has several consequences. First, as companies fork for profit maximization,

political parties work for vote maximization. Naturally, it leads political parties to formulate policies to win elections, rather than win elections to formulate policies (Downs, 1957). As the name implies, this model argues economic betterment brings votes and voters cast their votes based on their own economic calculations. So when a voter chooses who to vote for, economic standards are decisive factors. In other words, election results are directly linked with the economic performance of the government (Çınar 2010, p.99)

That is not accurate. When a voter rationally makes a choice, any factor may be regarded as a gain. While many factors are not as concrete as an increase in purchasing power, the voter may regard the triumph of his/her ideology as a gain also. The voter's choice may contradict economic gains, which means ideological or any other factor is simply more valuable than monetary gains.

This side of voting behavior can be extended. Though the name gives itself as a completely political issue, the behavior itself can be based on completely different factors. With little or zero regard for politics, people may vote just to take part in a social activity and they may have no political idea, factor, or motivation. Having no political awareness, that is to say, this type of voting behavior be left out of political behavior, yet be part of voting behavior since in the end, it is still voting.

Since voting can be seen as one side of a trade, clientalist voting behavior can be explained under rational choice mode. A phenomenon known as clientelist voting behavior occurs when voters back a certain politician or political party in the hopes of gaining personal perks or favors in return. Politicians and voters engage in a transactional relationship that is characterized by the provision of tangible benefits or favors, such as employment, access to public resources, or financial support, in exchange for political support (Kitschelt 200, p.854)

Psychological Model

The second major model of voting behavior is the psychological model. Founded by Campbell in his famous work "The American Voter", this model assumes that citizens in democratic governance rarely spend time or effort to analyze parties and

their policies. Instead, voters have an emotional or psychological affinity, which is acquired through the socialization process, to some degree for some certain political party or side and they cast their vote in this manner (Antunes 2008, p.153). Nevertheless, this does not mean they have no rationality at all. As it becomes a decisive factor for voting, strong affinity, and emotional link also offers a rational window, a point of view, for partisans to read and elaborate on politics. In other words, voters' emotional attachments lead to their reasoning in politics (Sharlamanov & Jovanoski 2012, p.4). For example, education in the mother tongue of minor communities would be unacceptable for those who have a strong affinity with nationalist parties (Ünal 2016, p.101). It does not matter if the voter has any information or idea about the minority or education in their mother tongue. The voter perceives events from the window of the affiliated party and that party becomes the truth-maker for the voter.

The biggest disadvantage of the psychological model is that it contains so many values and variables that are affecting one another, therefore making it hard to trace back and portray the process of gaining affinity being the decisive factor of voting. To overcome this ambiguity, Campbell came up with the term funnel of causality. He argues that behavior itself is made of many prior factors and it is not clear how and to what degree these factors affect the outcome. The bottom of the funnel is full of factors, constantly interacting with each other all the way up to the top, then we have an outcome, the behavior. Campbell argues that by elimination method, connections between factors can be rooted out, therefore the link between the factor and the behavior can be found (Campbell 1980, p.9). In other words, the funnel of causality basically means a chain of causes (Miller&Shanks, 1996).

Heuristic Model

The heuristic model analysis is created through deficits of rational choice theory. For the rational choice theory to work, voters have to have access to information, and it should be for a low cost. However, naturally, voters barely have enough tools and economic means to obtain information. In such cases, voters have to use their heuristical senses, looking for signs to overcome issues and any possible

blaming towards the party. In other words, voters' behavior will be shaped by inner emotions and senses (Brady and Freeder 2018, p.604).

This model can be applied to other scenarios as well. We should keep in mind that not all voters have the motivation to learn about the policies of the party they support. Some may not have the capacity to comprehend long and complex policy papers. In either case, voters will not simply change their voting behavior, rather they will benefit from ambiguity and believe in their senses to justify their behavior.

2.2. The Review of the Conceptual Literature on the Voting Behavior in Türkiye

Political psychologists often agree on the complexity of voting behavior. Behavior itself is a chaotic and vague concept. The political view of an individual can come from an equally vague and complex background. The combination of these two compels us to be always open-ended. No certainty, no direct conclusions, but only possibilities and possible connections between different components of an individual's mindset can be traced for analyzing voting behavior. That hindering is not limited to researchers alone. Voters themselves may not always know how and why they vote even though they have a strong claim on their preferences.

Despite all this, scholars adopted different methods to approach the issue. Research on voting behavior in Türkiye mostly focuses on the action-reaction model (Eminoğlu, 2021; Bilecen, 2016; Canöz & Bakan, 2016; Turan, E. & Temizel, M. 2015). Following a social crisis or natural disaster, researchers conduct surveys, directly asking voters how and why they vote. These data usually are used in articles and research papers. In the conceptual framework, Turkish voters are usually regarded in three main aspects; religion, ethnicity, and economy. This approach is useful since the widest cleavages, polarizations, and ideological formations in Turkish society are based on these. Other social issues such as the distribution of wealth, human rights, liberties, women and gender matters, democratic advancement, and minority rights are all under these three headlines. Not just for scholars, but also for voters, the stance regarding these issues is shaped by three main aspects. So it is only natural for researchers to follow the thread.

Another main point is the heritage of political parties. Türkiye has a comparatively short experience of democracy. Furthermore, this short democracy is interrupted by military coups most of which, if not all, ended up shutting down or banning political parties (Eminoğlu 2016, p.471) This social phenomenon led to a one-sided self-claiming contest where parties allege to be successor or inheritor of the closed down parties to gain the sympathy of its voter base (Akgün 2006, p.26-27). The JDP for example, unified the fragmented right-wing parties under the same umbrella, presenting itself as the new castle of rights. In its narratives, in headmaster's speeches, and in its policy-making, JDP shouldered almost all of the strong right parties (Kumarcıbaşı 2019, p.384) Research about voting behavior on these parties becomes almost nullified because when the preferred party is gone, the behavior of voting becomes absent as well since voting behavior is losing its target. Therefore, taking the right-wing voters as a whole, as we did in this research, without dividing it into parties is more practical. Surely to observe how the behavior is executed, party names are needed. However, it should be the lesser concern, especially compared to the main motivations.

2.2.1 Voting Behaviour between 2002-2022

In this chapter, we will illustrate voting behavior in general between 2002 and 2022, with emphasis on the behavior of the Justice and Development Party, JDP, (Adalet Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) voters. Similar to the previous literature review, we will take general elections only to examine. The reason for doing so is that 20 years of the almost interrupted reign of JDP finally created a solid voter base. A base that can offer democratically healthy waves about their voting behavior, which is shaped by natural notions of democracy. Economy, ideology, national defense, or something else, yet not military interventions. We will, of course, mention the military attempts that took place in this era. Yet as they did not, or could not, force the government to resign, we did not see an election with a heavy impact of fear of the military.

Though there was not a direct military intervention, the JDP reign witnessed so many unique and chaotic events that turn the tables upside-down. Fortunately, the importance of these events can be observed in the elections and voters' tendencies can be traced in sequent forms for twenty years. This alone makes the JDP era worth examining because no other party or time gap has witnessed this much long rule of a party.

Naturally, it is necessary to know the ideological roots of JDP to analyze its driving motives, along with the legacy and mission it employs. The generally accepted view is that the rise of Islamism in Türkiye goes back to post-80 where state-dictated Islamism is used as a counter tool to combat the spread of leftist ideologies. It is also used as a tool for resistance to globalization that took over the world (Turunç 2007, p. 86-87) Conflict between cultural norms and the obligation to follow global developments compelled parties to get into an adaptation, or maybe evolution, process. JDP was the most successful party that carried out this process. It supported the mentioned evolution and the adaptation without losing itself. Eventually, it turned into what we call a conservative democracy While doing that, the JDP relied on three sources for its core identity. International norms, traditional values, and official institutions, particularly secularism were built during the Republican regime (Turunç 2007, p.88).

The evolutionary process cannot be considered without the economy. As a matter of fact, the evolution that Islamism went under is triggered by economic mechanisms. In a comparison between Egypt and Türkiye, Gümüşçü states that the devout bourgeoisie adapting liberalism and democracy led to change in Islamism. The adaptation was successful in Türkiye and it ended with the JDP, where in Egypt it failed and Muslim Brotherhood emerged. In Türkiye's case, she points to the political learning thesis which argues that political experience at the individual level changes the perception of democracy, and makes it more attractive. She argues this theory is insufficient for it did not change the attitude of Islamists in Türkiye until the 1990s (Gümüşçü 2010, p.836-837). Ironically, all the debate about a fusion of Islamism and democracy is about how it happened and why it did not happen better or worse. However, we should question if there was a fusion there in the first place. Islamist voters, and right-wing voters in general, had the right to not trust democracy since almost every elected right-wing party was taken down by a coup. In other words, democracy could not grant legally and rightfully owned political power and freedom to right-wing voters so there was not much to learn from them.

Another explanation from Gümüşçü, claims that liberal economic policies empowered the middle class. Then the middle class got the means to display its lifestyle and changed its course within Islamism. The change in lifestyle led to a change in ideology

and it ended up with moderate Islamism. In other words, economic growth influenced consumerist behavior, then, in return, it influenced the priorities and world-view of consumers (Gümüşçü 2010, p.835-840).

There is clearly an evolution, partly economic as explained above, that changed the structure of multiple layers of society. Islamism is not what it was used to be, or what it was intended to be. External and internal factors compelled Islamists to take a softer stance on other values and the political reality of the world. This new stance is now known as post-Islamism.

Post-Islamism is a highly debated issue, ranging from the Middle East to Southeast Asia, it has different versions and adventures changing according to contextual changes of the regions. In Türkiye's case, all the terms and values are getting intertwined, heading to, we argue, nowhere. Opposed to general understanding, Islam is a melting pot to integrate ethnic groups which also serves as a source for modernization (Yavuz 2012, p.30). Combining modernization and Islamism, Türkiye has become more Islamic since it is boosted by support for modernizing the country, however, the support for Sharia which was the original purpose of Islamism is now ironically less. In other words, Islamism does not head towards an Islamic state or restoration of sharia, which is why it is called post-Islamism and for Türkiye's case, an ethical rather than Islamic understanding became dominant in public opinion (Yavuz 2012, p.33), and that is valid for both public and civil sphere. People from the right wing, who would once be labeled as pursuers of the rule of Islamic law Sharia, became liberal citizens, liberated from secular state oppression.

It should be defined clearly that Islam and Islamism are not the same things. Islam is a religion with multiple perspectives, sects, and affairs. Islamism is an ideological, state-oriented, and action-based movement, civil Islam, on the contrary, is a spiritual development of individuals and promotion of human rights, freedom, and justice (Kömeçoğlu 2014, p.16-20). The rise of political Islam can be traced back all the way to the last decades of the Ottoman Empire where Islam was seen as the salvation of the state. However, Islamism is way too different from what we understand today. Within the republican history of Türkiye, Islamism is a counteract against the secularization of the nation along with the state. However, due to the obligation of gaining public trust

and voting, there were times when the most secular parties or politicians had to execute religious policies which served Islamism. In brief, the rise of Islamism can be linked to several reasons; policies of center-right parties toward religion, state-sponsored religious activities, the impact of sufi cults (tarikats), and the growing ideological appeal and electoral base of the Welfare Party (Ayata 1996, p.40).

Therefore, we can speak of two layers for Islamism to go through, the state layer and the civil layer. Post-Islamism is about both, but more about the state layer, it is about dropping the state-related dimensions of Islamism. In other words, post-Islamism is the failure of rigid Islamism; exhaustion and social pressure compelled a transformation process that ended up with post-Islamism (Kömeçoğlu 2014, p.18).

As postmodernism flourished all around the world, pluralism and likewise terms spread through the political agendas of countries. It affected Türkiye as well and Islamists began to defend their stance and ideology based on a postmodernist perspective. That is also another development that helped the birth of post-Islamism and another perspective it can be read through. The term post-Islamism is excessively important for understanding the JDP; its policies, appeal, voter base, and the negative reaction it attracts. The early years of the JDP were highly secular and the defense of religious freedoms was done through postmodernism, not the coercive and obligatory power of God or being a believer. That narrative is a legacy of years where Islam was praised as a power against the communist threat. The makers of the coup adopted neoliberalism, set the economy free, and lose the grip over Islamism to benefit from it. Islam was once the core of the national identity due to the cultural elements it inevitably carries. That was the 80s, then, the next decade, when Islamism got a hold of itself, it became a threat to Kemalism.

In civil society, it was not much different. Mobilization power of Islamism seemed to be replaced by economic development and welfare and that replacement is due to the political environment of the post-coup 80's that nurtured a new Islamism. The election results of these mentioned years are briefly analyzed above. Here we will make connections between events and phenomena resulting from complex relations of political norms that led to the formation of the JDP.

2.3 Ideology vs Pragmatism as the Main Causal Theory that Explains Voting Behaviour of Right-Wing Voters in the JDP period

There are two competing influences for JDP voters according to Çarkoğlu, ideology as a long-term factor where the JDP is seen as the successor of the Welfare Party in specific, as well as right-wing in general, and short-term pragmatism which is heavily influenced by the economic performance of the party (Çarkoğlu 2012 p.513). According to him, the 2002 elections were purely ideological, which is a strong argument considering the 2002 elections are the first political event after the 28 February incident took place. Voters, especially religious and conservative voters were still angry about yet another intervention of the military and it was reflected in the 2002 election. Right-wing parties strive to portray themselves as the successor of previous incumbent political parties whose reign is offset by the military. They also support their image through economic promises and accomplishments, if there are any. From this perspective, the JDP did nothing new.

The post-Islamist understanding is another way of resistance against the secular military, it is a neoliberal version of old Islamism which was portrayed as a resistance against top-down secularization projects (Yavuz & Öztürk 2019, p.2). If their mission is compared, Islamism and post-Islamism are more or less the same. The difference is their resources. As Erbakan fearlessly stated many times, Islamism draws power from the will of God. Followers of Islamism are trying to accomplish their heavenly mission and Islamism is a way for politics and bureaucracy for them to command good deeds and detain bad deeds. Post-Islamism draws its power from postmodernism. It defends that religion in society shall be free because it creates a plural and colorful society, which is what postmodernism wishes.

The JDP rose on these exact motivations. It successfully harmonized the agony of Islamist voters who were full of anger and despise the secular military and a new wave of post-Islamist voters who were happy to live their religion on a civil level and pursue no divine aim. It should be mentioned that Erdoğan, father of the JDP, was in the group of people who left the Welfare Party ranks to create a more moderate and postmodernist party but it did not stop him from appealing to core Islamist voters through revanchist policies and sayings.

As mentioned before, constant interruptions to democracy crippled it to a point where a graphic showing voting percentages of parties can be portrayed. Political parties are usually shut down or banned from participation. However, a comparative analysis for long years can be done for JDP since for more than twenty years the democracy functioned properly. Also, for more than twenty years JDP ruled the country as an incumbent party, therefore it created a space for researchers to observe fluctuating vote percentages and voting behaviors. Utilizing this space, rather than one by one, an overall comparison will be done by going through academic research and a literature review.

A cumulative stack of distrust was effective in the 2002 elections. Ideological separation was effective too. The 1999 incident, economic crises, and overall atmosphere hinted that the previous government will not last much longer. Çarkoğlu noted a remarkable point for the 2002 elections, arguing that the victory of a pro-Islamist party is proof of the collapse of centrist parties and policies. This will be something we observe in the following elections and in the interviews (Çarkoğlu 2002, p.134).

The incompetence and clumsiness of the previous government may have made people believe that trying to grab everything at once leads to failure, so they gave up on coalitions and wanted to give power to one side so that the political power would not face an obstacle. This approach of voters will echo in the following elections. Correspondingly, JDP will insist on its image of being the only potent party to rule alone and on the negative image of coalition parties. Furthermore, the negative image of coalition parties was also mentioned in the constitutional referendum in 2017 to justify and legitimize the shift from the parliamentary system to the presidential system.

The shift from the parliamentary system to the presidential system had its own effects on voting behavior due to systematical changes, therefor special attention must be paid. First of all, the elections started to be carried out every five years, increasing the length of the rule. The number of deputies increased to 600, and the minimum age to be voted is decreased to 18. Parties with a 5% vote are granted to raise a president candidate. The new law on alliances has been passed which states that parties that meet the eligibility

requirements can participate in elections by forming alliances. Political parties forming alliances submit their own candidate lists (Özhan 2021, p.20-21) While these are fundamental changes for the voting system, there is no concrete evidence to support how exactly voters changed their voting behavior along with the shift to the presidential system.

Çarkoğlu's marks on the collapse of centrist policies are opposed by Coşar and Özman who argue that the JDP was after all a centrist party because they have received votes from almost all of the other parties' voters. (Coşar & Özman 2010, p.58). While discussing the position of the JDP, they adopted a dual approach. Portraying the JDP as a party with rightist colors but also a willingness to establish consensus with Kemalists (Coşar & Özman 2010, p.70), they insist that the JDP is a centrist party. Regarding the overall situation, it is better to portray JDP as a party that tries to stay in the center.

How does the voter react to these changes? Scholars argue that voter mobility is not as high as it used to be. Though there happened lots of chaotic and heavy events, like the pandemic and high inflation, voters do not seem to swing their vote due to three reasons; Identity politics, the structure of alliances, and having no alternative (Ete 2021). This conclusion can be put in other words, voters are getting polarized which gives them to stay consistent with their vote and ignore other events.

2.4 Conceptual Framework: Beyond Ideology Vs. Pragmatism

We suggest that we must go beyond ideology vs pragmatism causal models that explains right-wing voters but try to understand their complex mental maps. For, human mental processes cannot be understand as shortcuts or reflexes without paying attention long pondering process beforehand. Secondly, what voters understand from economy and religion is variant and complicated. However, we can still identify economic, religious or other factors and classify them according to the effect they have on voting behavior. Unlike quantitative surveys, our concern is not identify connections between factors and choices of voters. The vote has already happened or happened many times. We want to investigate the mental world of those who already voted for a right-wing

party and their changing political attitudes before the election happened or between elections. When voters explain how and why they cast their votes in a certain direction, they portray their *subjective political field*. It is a term used by Antunes to describe the overall mind map of a voter. Here, any factor voters speak of can be considered as a part of a subjective political field (Antunes 2010).

2.4.1 Factors Solidifying Political Attitude for Voting for the Same Right-wing Party

This research is conducted among right-wing voters, a pre-chosen group, therefore most of the factors the interviewed people speak about are solidifying factors. These factors explain the legitimacy, necessity and rightfulness of voting for certain parties for voters. In other words, when asked about their ideas on certain issues, voters tend to explain what they think about the issue and how their voting behavior was correct and coherent. Among all the factors, we have 13 sublines that consistently come up and are repeated by voters.

Across the interviews we have conducted, religion seems to be the most influential factor in terms of having an effect on voting behavior, regardless of the direction it leads. Religious or non-religious, people seem to have an opinion on religion and its place in society. What is interesting here is that religion does not always solidify the voter's behavior. Older generations who have more devotion to religion place it at the center and it shapes almost all of their voting behavior. More or less, they seemed to regard their vote as a means to reach a more Islamic society, that Islamic society as a solution for social problems they face. Younger generations also take Islam into account but not as a tool to reach the perfect society, rather, they see it as a social value to be preserved.

When voters think they have something to preserve, there emerge concerns about how to do it. These concerns are usually social, religious, and national concerns where voters explain that the urge to choose the right person to preserve is the main reason for voting. In other words, Concerns constitute excellent solidifying factors for voting. These concerns include religious, social, security and national patriotic concerns.

However, in this research, we used it to explain how voters see politics, and how they classify parties, ideologies and such. For example, even though they are selected

specifically to be right-wing voters, it vastly varies what voters understand from right-wing and they place themselves on the right wing for multiple reasons. Sometimes overlapping, sometimes totally separate, subjective political fields of voters show the maximum reach of a voter's mind and how it expands on political issues.

The rest of the solidifying factors are general factors. Ideology and heritage are similar factors that almost always empower and legitimize the vote. The leader effect has some interesting outcomes for different parties that will be elaborated on in the following part. Prestige and patriotism are also linked and they trigger similar emotions in voters where they care for the betterness and the image of the country.

Last but not least, the sense of civic duty of voters is observed to be a recurring factor that can co-effect with other factors. Voters usually assign themselves with responsibility to vote and when they do that, they attribute a greater good or mission to their vote. Therefore, the civic duty factor usually serves the other factors, it creates the meta structure and the means for voters to take place in elections.

2.4.2. Fluctuating of Votes as Party's Expression of Voter's Political Attitudes Weakens

Fluctuating factors are the ones that weaken the impulse or willingness to vote for the party that the voter previously voted for or sided with. Some of the fluctuating factors are also present in solidifying factor pools, meaning the same factor may have different outcomes for different voters. Moreover, sometimes one factor can be both fluctuating and solidifying for the same voter. In these situations, voters usually do not directly tell in what direction the factors affect them, rather, they ponder about the possible outcome of the factor. For example, voters may complain about inflation and rising prices as a fluctuating factor under the "economy" headline. While doing that, they also see the economic worsening as a doing of outer enemies and they assign themselves the duty of supporting the party they criticized in the first place.

Solidifying factors are explanatory of the behavior of voters. On the other hand, fluctuating factors are usually vague, they do not have concrete outcomes, and they solely rely on political attitude.

2.4.3. Alienation of Voters

When voters are heavily influenced by factors, they tend to act in two certain manners. They either change their voting behavior to a completely opposite direction, or they alienate themselves from politics to avoid the burden of deciding and voting. What causes a voter alienate is usually when the party they previously supported lacks enough charm or charisma to have the voters believe that they have the capacity to govern. Similarly, disbelief in a possibly better future causes Disassociation for voters and degrades the importance of the vote. In these cases, voters tend to not vote at all.

Considering the harsh and bloody history of political fights and the prevalence of label politics, it is understandable that voters alienate themselves to avoid any kind of political conflict. Voters that have no strong political, religious, or any kind of sense of belonging do not see involvement in politics as worthy of bearing the burden it brings.

Alienation of a voter is one of the possible outcomes of an over-fluctuating vote. When a voter does not consider parties other than those he previously voted for or sided with competent, They simply do not participate in elections. The key point here is that voters do not regard this as a means for punishing the party. Rather, they completely ignore politics and do not follow narratives or debates on critical issues.

2.4.4. Red Lines in Voting Behavior

Certain topics trigger voters to such a degree that they show a willingness to ignore all other factors and change their voting behavior. For most of the voters, the red line is an affinity with terrorism and the People's Democratic Party (HDP).

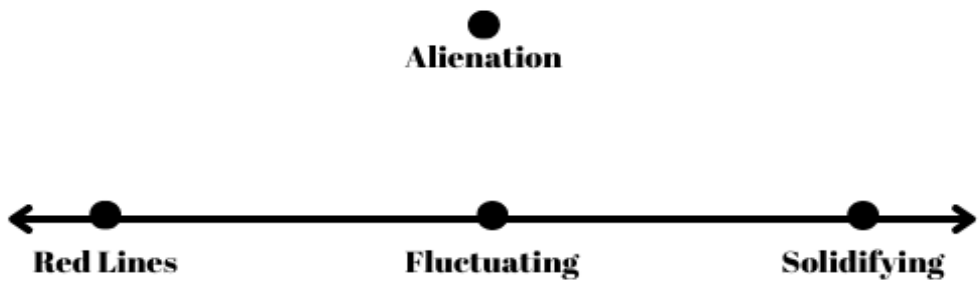
Tolerance for LGBT is also a red line for right-wing voters as they see it as a threat to the social order and security of the next generations. Religious or non-religious, a portion of voters express that they will change their vote in the exact opposite direction if the party they voted for shows sympathy for LGBT.

Last but not least, the involvement of religion in politics is considered as a red line for some voters. Fearing religion will capture all of the politics and a religious government based on Sharia will be established, voters strictly avoid the intervention of religion and religious institutions through politics. This may sound contradictory, but it will be explained in the respective chapter.

2.4.5. A Model of Right- Wing Voting Behaviour

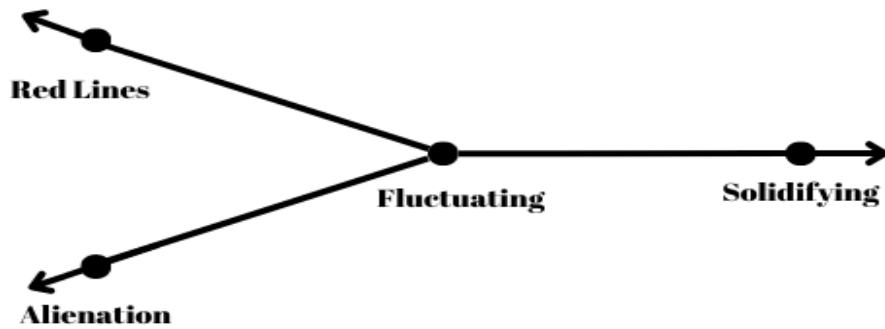
Voting behavior factors can be placed on a spectrum based on the effect they cause on voters. If voting and not voting are to be at each end, there can be devised two models that show where factors stand. In the first model, one end of the spectrum is Solidifying where voters show a tendency to keep voting for a right-wing party. In the middle of the spectrum, there stands Fluctuating where voters show unwillingness or hesitation to vote for the party they voted for before. The other end of the spectrum is the reason we should devise two different models. While it is no surprise that red lines, not voting, stand at the opposite of Solidifying, the Alienation point may have two different places. In the first model, Alienation is separated from the spectrum. It is seen as a complete break out from politics and has no affinity or relation to other factors.

Table 12. Model 1



Alternatively, Alienation can be seen as the opposite of Solidifying. If a voter is not voting anymore, if the voter does not feel belonged or is obliged to vote, it can be the exact opposite of Solidifying. Then, it can be seen as a radical form of fluctuating, or one step further fluctuating. If so, the model can be drawn as below.

Table 13. Model 2



When factors are to be placed on these models, there emerges duality, and even trinity, for some factors as they fit more than one theme. The economy, for instance, has a place in three themes. That is why it is more appropriate to use names of categories on the spectrum, rather than categories.

Factors and reactions constitute the subjective political field of a voter. While this happens, voters subconsciously establish mental schema with no major contradiction. When there emerges a contradiction, voters try to compensate for or degrade the problem to stay consistent within their subjective political field. This tendency is best explained by cognitive dissonance theory. This theory simply implies that the actions and ideas cannot contradict. If they do, one adjusts the other (Eysenck 1963, p.66) The logic works perfectly when it comes to voting behavior. However, since the only behavior within voting behavior is voting, the adjustment happens between different ideas in voter's mind if one degrades the other. Throughout the research, this will be the main mechanism to analyze voting behavior.

CHAPTER 3) A CASE STUDY OF RIGHT-WING VOTERS IN THE POST-2022 PERIOD IN TURKEY

This chapter illustrates the interviews carried out with right-wing voters. They are asked a list of questions about their political preferences, their motives, ideas, and voting habits. The sample consists of the JDP, NMP, and Good Party voters. The biggest portion of voters is JDP voters since they are also the biggest portion in Türkiye. Their voting behavior so far shows ups and downs, which means the voter base is sensitive to political events and party policies. Especially the first election of 2015 shows a great decline. Later on, the JDP seems to manage the voters' expectancies and secure their vote.

Table14. JDP Vote Rates In Parliamentary Elections



Source: Supreme Election Council cf: BBC

The NMP vote rates are also arguably consistent. Especially after the alliance with the JDP, nationalist voters kept supporting their party in the parliament and Erdogan for the presidential seat.

Table 15. NMP Vote Rates In Parliamentary Elections



Source: Supreme Election Council cf: BBC

The following subheadlines will go for a deeper analysis to understand how and why voters behaved, and how they react to certain issues and ideas.

3.1 Solidifying Factors

Solidifying factors are the largest group of our case study. Since the sample case consists of voters that are already right-wing voters, solidifying factors explain what is already happening, unlike other factors that have an open discussion window to possibilities.

3.1.1 Religious Concerns

When voters talk about religion as a solidifying factor, it is mostly because they are content with religious narrative and freedom gaining momentum, they regard politics as a means to reach an utopian religious society where Islamic rules are applied. While doing that, voters heavily reference problems of the society they currently live in. Therefore, Islam is regarded as an ultimate solution and destination.

“Since I take religion as the center of life, I want religion to be involved in everything. I want religion to control my life from the top of my head to the tip of my toe. Since my religion teaches me, Qur’an teaches me this, and comments originating from Sunnah and Quran teach me this, I want religion to govern every aspect of our life, in earthly or spiritual matters, or personal or communal.” (56, male, retired)

When voters want religion to deal with every problem they have, their voting behavior is shaped accordingly. They vote for a party that they think can help to establish that utopian society. Similarly, those voters who believe they are already living in a more or less Islamic society want to preserve the values they regard sacred. For them, there is a cumulative heritage that was built up by resisting the secular and oppressive policies of previous governments. To prevent history repeating itself, voters tend to vote for a right-wing party.

Religiousness is high among both the JDP (Uncu 2018, 22/132) and NMP (Özbey 2018, 12/92) voter base so it is no surprise that religious concerns are one of the strongest solidifying factors. Especially with older generations, protective instinct empowers their willingness to vote for a right-wing party. It also lets them ignore other factors that may potentially fluctuate their voting behavior.

“I do not approve of all of their actions. I criticize some of their sides. But the attitudes I spoke of, the religious freedom for us conservatives to live. That is why I support them.” (30, female, state official)

In terms of legitimizing their voting behavior, for themselves or others, religion is quite effective. In other words, when religion is involved, it outweighs other factors and renders them to be ignorable. Among all the factors, only religion and national security are this much effective.

3.1.2 Civic Duty

Though participating in elections is a legal obligation in Türkiye, the punishment is far from being disincentive. Therefore, when a voter goes to vote, they usually have a clear agenda to do it that we call civic duty. Civic duty is the opposite of alienation and indifference, even if a voter does not have strong political ideas to reflect via voting, they vote for the sake of executing a national duty.

“Fundamentally, I do not see it as an obligation but I count it as a duty for myself.”
(30, female, state officer)

“Oh yeah, that. Citizenship, I mean, is a responsibility but responsibility and obligation should not be regarded as one. A conscious man should go and vote, have a political idea, a man should be able to think.” (35, male, state officer)

In our sample, civic duty has always been a solidifying factor. When right-wing voters go to vote with a civic duty, they almost certainly vote for a right-wing party, if they intentionally cast an invalid or empty vote. While voters can see voting as a social event that they do not want to miss, they also think ignoring elections is a sign of incompetence.

Civic duty sometimes contains greater goals that were mentioned under religious concerns. Even if it is legally impossible, even if they do not demand it totally, some voters assign themselves to vote in a certain way to satisfy duties that come from their beliefs or ideology.

3.1.3 No Alternative

Having no alternative to vote for instead of the party they once voted for is a less frequent yet effective factor. When voters want to switch their vote, they do it mostly due to dissatisfaction with the performance of a certain matter, not the party itself as a whole. When they do so, they expect any alternative party to perform as well as the

party they voted for. In other words, if a voter wants to swing, they want to do it with no cost, just benefits.

“I mean, coherence, not much, but rather than linking it to the party, its policies, (it is due to) so much pressure from the surrounding area, from both inside and outside, they do let them work since there is an extreme effect from inner world and outer world, it (the party) has weaknesses. Let me phrase it this way. If I were to vote today again, I would vote for the JDP, but after I vote, I will fatally criticize the JDP. They sometimes conduct policies that backfire but in the current situation, I do not have other alternatives. In any way I do not believe others will be useful, I will cast my vote (for JDP) and I will criticize. It is not like we adopt everything.” (56, male, retired)

“I mean, it is like this, the current government is good at national security, but for example when a left party comes, I do not think they will be able to provide it.” (28, female, state officer)

When voters feel like they have no alternative, it is also due to the image other parties have. These images are usually negative, portraying alternative parties as incompetent, inadequate and unreliable. These images push voters to vote for the same party, therefore solidifying their voting behavior.

Overlapping with issues like national security and such, these negative images are usually linked with the history of parties. For most middle-aged voters, PRP ideologically close parties are totally taboo. For younger generations, left-wing parties are linked with other taboos like terrorism, LGBT and such. Either way, when a voter thinks he has no alternative but has the intention of voting, it becomes a solidifying factor.

3.1.4 Traditionalism

Ideology and political stance are usually passed down from family in Turkish sociology. It is no surprise that some voters explain their voting behavior by simply relying on their elder's ideas. Usually, this reliance comes along with other justifying explanations, yet from time to time, voters do not dwell on deep reasons and ideas about their political stance and just express their consent to follow their heritage.

“Well of course, whoever is able, whoever will govern better. There is no alternative. Also since I have a rightist background that comes from history...” (60, male, shop owner)

“No, now since it is traditional, as well as I like the services he provides, a party we followed, since parties are supported in this county like supporting a football team, we didn’t change our views. You know how a PRP follower, whether he knows better or not, executes a job or not, votes for PRP, we vote for NMP, I mean like a side. I mean everyone will always have a side.” (52, male, shopkeeper)

What people see as their heritage can heavily influence their voting behavior. Sometimes ideological, sometimes religious, people assign themselves as a proud representative of their heritage. In our research, we did not find anyone who displayed heritage as a fluctuating factor. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to claim that those who have an awareness of their heritage have a strong tendency to reflect it via voting.

Those who claim to have a political or religious heritage also express their confidence and satisfaction with their vote. By voting, they are declaring that they are part of a chain and they are fulfilling their duty by voting.

3.1.5 Foreign Policy and International Prestige

Prestige is another factor that always has a solidifying effect on voting behavior. By comparison, prestige is the most powerful and indefeasible factor. When asked, interviewed people expressed their ideas very heartfully and proudly about the prestige of the country. Usually mentioning Erdogan’s personal charisma and process in the defense industry, people were happy about the image of the country in foreign politics. Moreover, right-wing voters think the prestige of the country is not about being on the right or on the left, they usually argue it must be something that unites all citizens.

“...You know they show before/after images there (on social media), think once.... Our grandpas and ancestors saw it at the times of Atatürk. Like, in the presence of a man coming from a foreign place, Atatürk was welcomed with very good clothes. Can I explain well? It influences those in front of you. It happened once at the time of Özal,

that is I know, and once at the time of Erdoğan. Like sitting still, (he puffs up his chest and straightens his sitting). No matter how problematic you are in the house, no matter how bad your economy is, you must seem good to foreign, they say. When you go out, there is the wind (trend) of Erdoğan. I don't mean Türkiye, I mean the world. It must be owned by everyone, right or left. Regardless. This, for example, the leader of another party, Kılıçdaroğlu or leader of another party, if he goes abroad and takes part in a formation for Türkiye, we support it.” (38, male, shopkeeper)

The prestige issue has its root more than one expects. Almost like a chosen trauma, voters present a collective narrative how badly Türkiye was treated by other countries in foreign policy and they seek some kind of compensation. A certain image seems to be remembered by voters especially.

“Well I am not old enough but we see the pictures. We read it from news (social media). We see Ecevit times, in front of him, who is it, George Bush? Bill Clinton or what? He crossed his legs, and ours (Ecevit) bows and scrapes. Now he can be a president elected from a different party but when it is abroad, he is our leader. So I do not want this kind of image. ” (35, female, worker)

“...The third one is how much they own my country. For example abroad, how important they represent us. Okay for now, for inner politics, though I do not support Tayyip Erdoğan, for foreign politics I do. Because he added some charisma to our country. This topic is too important for us. Before this, there was no such thing. Wringing their hands, in front of the USA, there was an Ecevit. Now there is JDP that sits superior, which is very important.” (33, female, worker)

Prestige is also linked with weaponry power in voters' minds. When asked, they showed great enthusiasm about the development of unmanned aerial vehicles, specifically those crafted by Bayar Technologies. They also believe having strong weapons and warfare creates a demand, it increases other countries' interest in Türkiye and decreases Türkiye's need for outer support for national defense.

Erdoğan is usually criticized for being sharp and fierce when it comes to foreign politics. Though this image is mostly criticized by opposition parties, the JDP and NMP voter base are actually okay with Erdoğan's narrative and see it as a sign of power and prestige. The research conducted by KONDA (2018, p.24/92) concludes that 77% of

the JDP voters do not think Erdogan risks future of country by adopting a sharp narrative.

3.1.6 National Security Concerns

National security and security concerns are one of the most volatile and versatile factors. It varies what voters understand from national security. Most of them directly think of terrorism that Türkiye has been combating for years. For them, Türkiye's biggest concern is terrorist organizations and the price the country is paying over the years. Some voters are somehow relieved about the terror threat, they fear a communal chaos may explode and risk Türkiye's national security. In other words, they are aware of the social, racial, and religious cleavages becoming the excuse for a social and bloody divide. Last but not least, some voters have a general distrust for other countries and they believe some certain countries want to stop or hinder Türkiye's development by using means that threaten Türkiye's national security. While it is beyond the scope of this research whether these concerns are conspiracy theories or not, the effect they have on voting behavior is extremely prevalent.

In every category they are listed, they are the ultimate factor, voters voluntarily disregard other factors for the sake of national security. The mentioned other factor is mostly the economic ones. Right-wing voters are aware of the economic condition of Türkiye and those who voted for the incumbent party are aware of the rather poor performance of the government. They are, however, compensating the economy with national security concerns. In other words, they are claiming that national security comes before the economy. This expression is usually followed by the claim that other parties are not trustworthy in terms of security and that the price of national security cannot be measured by the economy.

“Ah, Tomatoes? Are we in economic distress? Yes, we are but it is because of the opposition. There is an inner trade (a secret counsel). The trade of taking Erdoğan down. So close, not back in time, previously from NMP, now in Good Party, I heard someone say Erdogan should go down and PDP may come if it is what it takes. I curse them, nothing more. People should not be this much loathful of Erdoğan. I can't trust these people.” (58, male, retired)

Most of the voters link security issues to racial cleavages Türkiye has. Though the question did not contain names of any ethnicity or religion when asked, interviewed people began to express their willingness to stay connected with minorities and how free they are in Türkiye. Therefore, it is concluded there is a connection between the perception of minorities and security problems. Above all that, voters usually happy with the current condition of Türkiye in terms of security. Military operations, weaponization, equipment purchase and likewise policies are all welcome in the eyes of voters. In a hypothetical change of government, voters believe there will emerge a lack of security, a soft spot, where Türkiye will be drawn into conflict and mass losses.

“I don't trust them in national security. Well, there won't be national security at all, they will deliver to them (our lands). When they get what they need, we will not have fear or security because what we wear will be lost. It will be delivered.” (35, female, worker)

These kinds of fears solidify voting behavior in the sense that voters show a willingness to forget other factors that may fluctuate their vote. When accompanied by patriotism, it is safe to say that if a voter approaches national security by fear, it will almost end up as a solidifying factor.

3.1.7 Societal Concerns

Social concerns contain a vast array of ideas of voters who use voting as a mechanism to cope with fears. They usually overlap with other factors, however, they still should be examined in a separate part. These concerns include rights and freedoms, identity, economics and other issues concerned with the social dimension of human life. Another reason why they should be examined separately is that it differs from voter to voter on what is considered a social concern. Therefore, it is important to see the range of ideas that can be seen as a societal concern, also, those that cannot be seen as one.

Social concerns, just like security concerns, are double-ended. They have rational bases as well as emotional ones. It is understandable since social concerns are about the personal traits and properties of voters. Social status, citizenship rights, conservation of social values, economic welfare, women's rights and likewise points are all under social concerns where voters want to gain what they miss or protect what they already have. Social concerns are versatile factors for they may serve for solidifying or fluctuating

the voting behavior. Additionally, people's social concerns can be completely unique, contradicting or away from each other. Even though they belong to the same voter group, their personal properties shape their social concerns. For example, a woman, especially if she wears a headscarf, is almost certainly expressing her social concerns about her social rights, status and freedom.

“Think, for years we were to choose between two options, you will go to school or not. Since the conditions I needed were not met, I couldn't go to school. We were a group that chose not to go to school. But now, you can go to school if you want, work if you want. There is no imposition and it is a very beautiful thing that there isn't an imposition.” (53, female, expert officer)

Voters also tend to vote for the party that can oppose and stop spreading what they consider as dangerous and unethical within society. These kinds of social concerns are mostly religious or gender-based. Religious concerns have vague borders. For inner politics, voters do not fear people from other religions since they think an uprising centered on another religion is unlikely. They do, however, fear sects or branches of Islam and how they can be the trigger for an inner conflict.

Gender is a soft point for voters. Especially new openings on gender roles, same-sex marriages, and similar issues are seen as social threats, they raise social concerns for voters, then, finally, it solidifies their voting behavior for voting for a right-wing party again. If we are to broaden our approach and take liberalism as the issue, we find interesting results. In the early years of its control, the AK Party had a conservative-liberal framework that supported globalization, sought to abide by EU standards, and used the IMF to solve problems. The party set out on a course that was not based on a single formation but rather on a structure that would be accepted by different facets of society, and it worked toward that objective. The current circumstance, however, is very different from the first adopted posture. As a result, despite the fact that a fall in AK Party support was predicted, Altan and Çetin's research findings and the results of the general elections show that AK Party seized power with a higher vote share than predicted (Altan & Çetin 2009, p.38).

Another important and recurring issue under social concerns is the headscarf issue. Voters, regardless of age, seem to remember the discrimination against veiled women.

Especially female voters are concerned about the possible return of the headscarf ban. What is quite interesting here is that female voters explained their concerns from a purely liberal and post-Islamist perspective. When asked, these voters defended their right to wear a headscarf as a matter of personal religious and social freedom, not as an obligation brought by religion. This conclusion supports previous findings on post-Islamism literature about the change of narrative.

When questions were asked, leading voters to a certain issue was intentionally avoided to let people express their ideas freely. By doing so, it is illustrated better what voters have in their mind that is related to the keyword of questions. For example, when asked about woman's place and problems in society, no one mentioned domestic violence, murders or the wage gap. They were, on the contrary, eager to talk about headscarves, education right and likewise religion-related issues. When asked about woman's place in society, one woman even expressed that women are too present in society. She was an undereducated woman, yet her idea on this matter was remarkable.

"I swear to God, women are everywhere. Women are everywhere now. It is a bit too much but...I do not know if it is good or not. Women went way too far, yes women should have rights, but this is too much. Right?" (42, female, housewife.)

3.1.8 Patriotism

Patriotism can be seen as another face of national concerns and prestige, and in most cases, it would be true. Patriotic expressions of voters usually carry nationalistic colors and proud statements about the prestige of the country. One major difference is that patriotism sometimes becomes a fluctuating factor, which will be elaborated on later. For most of the voters, patriotism is a dominant factor. It overrides other factors, especially the economy, providing a free space where voters can defend their stance.

"I am okay with being hungry as long as I have my country. Patriotism is above all."
(33, male, shopkeeper)

Though patriotism has great similarity with previously mentioned factors, we needed to explain it in a separate subheadline for its unique features. Voters who identify as

Turks have another use for patriotism that usually addresses what minorities should do and how they should feel. The same goes for supporters of opposition parties, regardless of ethnicity. In this sense, patriotism is a tool for right-wing voters to portray what an ideal citizen should do, feel, and how he should behave. At some cases it reaches to an ultranationalist, even xenophobic point. The quote below portrays the tolerance level of voters towards minorities. When asked about minority rights, voters have a tendency to understand it as a demand for separation from Türkiye, establishing another country. This tendency triggers fears of voters, then, they reject any kind of minority right.

“For example, there isn’t a thing such as the Kurd issue. They are citizens of the Republic of Türkiye. But of course, they demand freedom because they see themselves as a minority, and that is not a thing.” (35, male, state officer)

In some cases, without asking, voters express that the economy does not bother them as long as patriotism is on the table. This gives us two conclusions. First, voters are aware of the economic downhill and they previously thought about it. Second, they have overcome it by prioritizing the patriotism, as illustrated by the quote below.

“I don’t give up suddenly. I do not leave it easily. I don’t sell my country for potatoes and tomatoes.” (58, male, retired)

3.1.9 Leader Effect

This study is conducted with a sample that consists of right-wing voters, it includes three major right parties; Justice and Development Party, National Movement Party, and Good Party. The leader effect factor recurred for two of them, JDP and NMP. For the JDP, the leader effect factor is a strong solidifying factor with no exceptions. If a JDP voter is influenced by the leader effect, it always solidifies its voting behavior due to the personal charisma of the party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

“Yes, in 2002 we voted for JDP because it was JDP. Then for one more election, we voted for the JDP. For the last two elections, we did not vote for JDP because it was JDP. We vote for the chief, for Erdoğan.” (male, 38, shopkeeper)

For a generation that cast their first vote in the 2002 elections, the leader effect is even more strong. Due to emotional attachment and strong feelings, voters are happy to express that their first vote was for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. For many, Erdogan is face of continuity and progress. In addition to voters who already claimed without asking that they vote for JDP because of Erdoğan, there are also some voters who think that post-Erdoğan JDP will not be successful.

“I mean, I cannot foresee such a possibility that it would last (after Erdogan), a party like that. I think it will witness a collapse.” (female, 35, worker)

In the JDP case, most of the solidifying factors directly or implicitly serve the leader effect factor because voters have a tendency to attribute the success of the party to its leader. This situation creates a self-depleting mechanism for the party as the more successful the party gets, the less favorable they are in voters’ eyes. Eventually, no matter how successful the party is, voters tend to think it is all possible thanks to Erdogan.

“Effect of leaders is magnificent I think because they also affect their environment. People around them act accordingly. So the leader effect is powerful.” (female, 28, state worker)

As the quote above tells, voters are not concerned about the possibility of shifting from democracy to one-man rule. On the contrary, they seem to think it is better if one man rules without interruption. Moreover, trusting one man and voting for the leader is a quite common tendency among the JDP voters. A research conducted by KONDA in 2018 finds that 46% of the JDP voters are voting for the leader, followed by ideology with only 22% (Uncu 2018, p.26/132) Therefore, it is concluded that leader effect is a strong solidifying factor.

3.1.10 Ideology

Ideology is the widest factor among the solidifying factors due to its vast meaning and crowded connections. There are several ideologies right-wing voters are generally involved in. Islamism is a political ideology that aims to make Islamic beliefs and

principles the cornerstone of all social, political, and economic structures. It promotes implementing Sharia, or Islamic law, in both the public and private sectors of life. Nationalism is a political ideology that prioritizes the interests and identity of a particular nation or ethnic group. Nationalism is a political ideology that prioritizes the interests and identity of a particular nation or ethnic group. When that group is Turks, it is called Turkism or Turkish nationalism. Some sub-ideologies unite Islamism and Turkism unites even fewer people. Conservatism is also a common ideology where people believe certain values must be protected and applied.

For voters, anything can be considered ideology. They tend to explain their ideas under the name of ideology even though their ideas do not fit each other to qualify as an ideology, or they do not fit well-known and articulated ideology at all. Surprisingly, parallel to conclusions derived from literature reviews, voters do not see themselves as Islamist nor do they see Islamism as an ideology in the first place. Most of the time they confine themselves to identifying as a right-wing voter, nothing more, and count it as an ideology even though it is clearly not. There are two reasons for that. First, ordinary citizens expectedly do not have enough knowledge of ideologies and their classification. Second, they hesitate to share their ideas under an ideology due to ideological conflicts that turned into brutal street fights in the past, that is to say, they want to avoid getting labeled or triggering another conflict.

A portion of voters stated they are *ülkücü* (idealists) and stated openly that it affects their voting behavior. Within our sample, it is the only example that a voter draws a direct connection between his idea and action. These voters have a strong faith in their ideas and this faith gives them space and courage to express their political views. Moreover, these voters did not show a willingness to debate on other issues such as the economy, refugees, or women's rights. This can be interpreted in two ways. First, they may feel that their current involvement in politics is enough as it is. They believe they are on the right side and they do not think they need to be sophisticatedly familiar and correct about issues. Second, within their mind the ideology is always the heaviest factor, even though it conflicts with economic figures or social conditions, it triumphs. Their belief about the non-existence of another more correct idea renders other factors to an insignificant degree. This strong belief can be seen as compensation, a demand for returning the “good old days” when Türkiye is a leading country in world politics

(Mahcupyan 2023). This demand for a more powerful Türkiye easily outweighs other factors.

“I am an idealist. Yes, first degree, it is influential (on my voting behavior)” (60, male, retired)

“There is not any value that can surpass the values I defend...Of course, it should be that way. There cannot be a state without religion, nor can there be politics without religion. Religion is at the forefront, meaning it should be taken into consideration in everything. However, sometimes political authorities may overlook this.” (52, male, shopkeeper)

The most important question regarding ideology as a factor is whether voters are ideological or not. Considering the points we mentioned above, we argue that as long as what people understand from ideology differs, this question cannot be answered properly. A vague image of ideology paves the way for voters to attribute or relate literally anything to it. Therefore, to draw a line, we decided to rely on what voters see ideology as, then take it as of it, instead of what it actually is and what it could possibly be.

3.2 Fluctuating

Fluctuating factors weaken voters’ willingness to vote for a right-wing party. They, yet, do not change it completely, meaning that though voters explain issues and concerns about their political preferences, they still vote for a right-wing party, but with less enthusiasm.

3.2.1 Economy

The time this research was conducted overlaps with massive inflation. Therefore, what voters complain about the most is, naturally, the economy. The economic downturn brought on the US housing issues had an impact on Türkiye. Turkish household spending declined as a result of rising unemployment and bankruptcy rates, which had a significant impact on other export-oriented industries including the textile and construction sectors. The decline in global commerce caused a rapid increase in

inflation in 2020, which opened the door for the imposition of new, high-interest rates in 2021–2022, which both halted inflation rise and reduced retail sector growth. Due to its international isolation, Türkiye has also experienced connectivity-related problems, such as the termination of a free trade deal with Russia and Europe's rejection of its participation in the construction of large nuclear power facilities, increasing prices and rising uncertainty (Abdullah 2023, p.7)

Almost all of the people we interviewed stated that they see themselves as lower class, a small portion positioned themselves in the middle class and an even smaller portion stated that they are in a more or less better economic condition. The sample does not contain people from high economic class and it was intentionally chosen so. The economy in Türkiye is a huge factor and choosing people from a higher class, a class that is affected by inflation much less, would be misleading.

The economy as a fluctuating factor has two aspects in mind of a voter according to whom they associate the economic downhill with. Voters blame either the government or the party they supported completely, seeing everything bad about the economy as their doing or they blame “outer forces” but accuse the government of not being able to counter it. Most of the time, to legitimize their trust in the party they supported, voters tend to see the economy as a global issue, removing the responsibility from the incumbent party. Following quote from an interview illustrates this effort.

“I mean it is fifty percent. Because as I said right now there is an economic crisis in the world. But since it isn’t just in Türkiye, it is in the whole world. Of course, the state has precautions for it, they say, but the conditions are heavy right now.” (33, male, shopkeeper)

One factor that should be elaborated on precisely. When asked about the economy, all the voters directly talked about the JDP, the government party even though they did not vote for them. This is understandable and natural since the JDP has been in power for more than twenty years and economic policies cannot be pondered on without it. Voters do not seem to think about economy without taking the JDP into consideration.

Those who do not compensate for their economic losses with ideology or national/social concerns directly explain that the economy is the main reason why their voting behavior is fluctuating. In some cases, even those who have strong bonds with

their party complained about the high cost of living. The economy is the only factor that has such an effect, therefore it makes the economy the most powerful factor among all the fluctuating factors. Rising good prices, rents, gas prices, and the general cost of everyday life take their toll on voting behavior.

When conjoined with refugees who are usually blamed for worsening the economy, social concerns seem to empower the economy as a fluctuating factor, yet again, since policy about refugees is the incumbent party's doing, at the end of the discussion voters mention the JDP and blame it. A research report published by TEAM research illustrates that though voters are highly religious and prioritize the religiousness of policies/politicians, the refugee issue stands as an exception. Even the religiously devoted voters do not want refugees to exceed their stay in Türkiye. In other words, Muslim brotherhood and ensar/muhajir (those who immigrated and those who welcomed) mentality are not common among the voters. (TEAM 2021, p.11)

Refugees in Türkiye provide cheap labor for employers, as they do all around the world, and this situation irritates Turkish people. Welcoming the refugees is seen as an obstacle for the economy, which in return, fluctuates the voting behavior of the JDP workers. The situation in Türkiye is a bit different from the situation in the World. In Türkiye, major right parties welcome refugees while left parties oppose them and defend a return policy. In United States, Republican Party opposes refugees while Democrats defend an open-border policy. Refugees in Türkiye are blamed for “stealing jobs”, even though these jobs offer really low wages and hard working conditions. A quote taken from another research reflects the overall reaction towards refugees in Türkiye (Köse 2021, p.120)

“But Syrians find more jobs. Syrians are an obstacle for us to find a job. They cut down on our jobs. They do not need money, as they receive social assistance from the state. They employ for cheaper wages. (İbrahim, 65, Ankara)

Voters from age 25 to 35 seemed to focus on one specific issue in the economy, marriage. Increasing prices make it harder to buy the necessary stuff for establishing a new house and those who are at the doorstep of marriage or newly married usually complain about it. The quote below narrates the displeasure and anger of a voter that goes through a hard time getting married due to the economy.

“Think of it like this, I am someone who acts according to everyday politics. Let me tell you, I will buy white appliances, I will marry. One dollar is 20 Turkish lira. It really shakes me. The state should intervene here. I wanna buy them cheaper. I wanna live by my wage without getting opened (become indebted) and this is my biggest right.” (35, male, stater officier)

Some of the voters expressed their annoyance with compulsory economy policies and criticized the government. Especially in the health sector, voters stated that the economic toll forced upon voters is unjust and it is a mere attempt to tax more money from citizens. The health sector is spoken of as one of the most successful policies of the government, therefore it is remarkable to hear voters complain about it. The following quote mentions one of the obligatory health policies and its reflection on voters.

“Now things done by the government have many mistakes, but they did some good too. But the mistaken ones hurt one. Economy, I don’t know for example compulsory health insurance. It is a problem for the majority of youth, these men, for example, have compulsory health insurance. I have not been informed! They made me indebted. (Opens his arms to sides) Just text me or call me or send me a mail. You (they) know to mail me from everywhere! Why don’t you mail me from there? I did not pay, it is what it is. It just waits there. Let it be, so what? No like, don’t do it, I did not ask for it. Why is it compulsory, the name says it, why? Make it optional. Make it facultative. I think this is unnecessary.” (31, male, shopkeeper)

Obligatory health insurance is kind of a general health insurance that refers to insurance that primarily aims to protect individuals' health and finance the expenses that arise in case of encountering health risks. With general health insurance, all members of society are ensured equal, accessible, and effective access to healthcare services, regardless of their economic power or preference, in the face of potential illness risks. This, however, is a forced policy and citizens pay for it directly, rather than paying as a tax. As mentioned in the quote, this policy seems to backfire, upsetting voters.

3.2.2 Social Status Concerns

Social concerns contain voters' fears, expectancies, and hopes for Türkiye and their effect on voting behavior. These concerns trigger the fear of losing status in society, either as an individual or as a subgroup such as conservatives, Turks, and such. It is a crowded field as people have different and unique concerns about the society they live in. Social concerns also give away how individuals see themselves, their position in society, and who should be considered as a member of society. Social concerns have two subdivisions. Voters either want to improve society or prevent it from getting worse. These two will be explained separately.

The most usual and basic social concern is the betterment of society. Those who speak about their social concerns start doing it by mentioning they solely want a better society. This concern of voters fluctuates their voting behavior and makes them question whether there are better options to make a better society by voting for better politicians. Yet if the option that they want to choose contradicts with their social status concerns, voters get indecisive. The quote below illustrates such a case.

"While I am voting... Uh just be honest. When one person promises, I want them to be faithful. And there is this thing that people regard their (politicians) background. My friend, always the same, always the same. Now I say, concerning Kırıkkale. There is a PRP deputy, I really like him. I say maybe, for the deputy election, maybe I should vote for him. I think he is very honest." (38, male, shopkeeper)

Another major social concern is refugees. Almost all of the voters we interviewed are against refugees and migration. They argue that refugees are not compatible with Turkish society and they threaten social order as well as ethnic unity. Even the most politically devoted voters seem to question immigration policies and their long last effects.

Partly economic, and partly social, the refugee issue has its connection points with multiple categories. For social concerns, besides economic and ethnic ones, the belief that refugees will disrupt social order and harm Turkish culture is extremely strong. Not even the religious brotherhood approach seems to be able to top it. Some part of this fear will be explained in the national security part, but for the things we explained so far, the following quote displays the general and overall ideas of voters on refugees.

“They should go now, they overstayed. They should go to their own country, they have been here too much, it is enough (laughs). Türkiye has done what it’s done. Let them go now.” (42, female, housewife)

Last but not least, LGBT issues are also a social concern for voters. There is no voter in our sample that welcomes or tolerates LGBT, and they usually bring issue to the table before they are asked about it. Moreover, they openly antagonize anything related to it and state that they would change their voting behavior. For them, LGBT is a designed project that targets future generations and it is an open heredity. Some part of the dead seriousness about LGBT will be explained in the Red Lines section, yet for this part, it is accurate to conclude right-wing voters, even those who barely qualify as one, do not accept LGBT.

“It is a minus point for me when a party approaches LGBT issue positively.” (29, male, expert officer)

3.2.3 Security Concerns

The physical well-being of society and country makes up the security concerns. The infamous terror threat Türkiye has faced for years still has a strong effect on voting behavior. When compared to previous decades, the terror threat Türkiye faces now is not as strong as it used to be. Especially with the help of developments in the national defense industry and beyond-border military operations, Türkiye does not suffer losses as much as it used to. This, however, does not change the effect of security concerns on voting behavior. Voters do not forget Türkiye’s previous struggles with terrorism and they are still concerned as much as they were before.

Similarly, voters are concerned about some inner conflicts as well. When they do, and if they blame the party they sided with, it fluctuates their voting behavior. The criticism voters talked about usually covers religious sects, harsh sayings of politicians, political polarization, and likewise policies. The coup attempt Türkiye faced on 15 July 2016 may be the reason why private religious organizations are not trusted by voters. Also, voters have a general belief that those involved in a religious sect practice nepotism to increase the influence of their sect within an official institution. Surprisingly, one extremely religious voter stated her concerns about the unity of religion and politics and how it endangers social order.

"Yes, it should be free and ignore no one. Like, you are Suleimanist, come, you are the JDP, come. Cults should not be there. Sects should abandon politics. Because there cannot be politics in the sect. Do you know the first order of the sects? You must stay away from politics. If there is politics, sects cannot be there. Look, I am saying this for sects, jamaats are already wrong." (33, female, stater worker)

This concern can be expanded towards any ideology if it gets radicalized. Generally, voters think that the state should not adopt any strong ideology and should prevent the spread of dangerous ideas within society for they may trigger inner conflicts that can endanger social security.

"The radicalism of an ideology, I may say, intertwining it may lead to chaos. Because there is politics in religion and there is religion in politics. But for me, executing them together is, I think, impossible and something that should not be." (27, female, state worker)

The terror threat is very alive within voters' minds. For most of the examples, it served as a solidifying factor. For few, however, it serves as a fluctuating factor due to policies implemented during the solution process that aimed to end the physical conflict between the separatist terror organization PKK and Turkish Armed Forces. One voter from Kilis, a southeast district city, told us about his own experience, the government's incompetence to react timely, protect its citizens, and general social order. This quite interesting profile is the only example that mentions security concerns as a fluctuating factor.

"Türkiye has both external and internal threats. National defense is changing with government administration. During the solution process, the state turned a blind eye to many machines. President Erdogan was stoned, the bodyguards did nothing. It was that free. It took a year. They did it in trench operations. Syria policy went bad, Kilis was bombed every day. Like, in every situation where the state could not give a sudden reflex, the citizen paid with his life. So national security is very important for my voter behavior. I vote with consideration." (29, male, expert officer)

During the time the voter mentions, there used to be lots of bomb attacks coming from beyond the boundaries. Terrorist organizations were targeting local folk in cities to discourage the Turkish military. Kilis and the nearby cities suffered heavy losses in

these attacks committed by terrorist organizations YPG and PYD, and it left a huge mark on people's minds. It is only natural it also affects people's voting behavior.

3.2.4 Religious Concerns

As much as most of the right-wing voters have a strong religious background, which is effective on their voting behavior as well, a remarkable portion of voters complained about how religion and politics are intertwined. They demand a more religious life and society yet, contradictingly, they do not trust politics to carry out this duty. Those who think this way state that politics is way too dangerous and vague, which may serve religion to get helplessly abused. Voters are aware of the power religion holds over themselves and other people.

“Religion is a tool for instruments, for power. It may get corrupted and for someone who is in power for too long, the risk is higher. I think they should not be intertwined. For example in France, if I were a Muslim leader and I began my speech with bismillah, it would be socially unacceptable because society is not Muslim. So there should be a separation.” (28, female, state worker)

Voters seem to see a moral collapse in society and in the political system. When they express their dissatisfaction, they tend to blame politicians for being a bad example and not preventing the spread of immorality. Religiously more devoted people also have a sense of duty where their vote should serve their beliefs. Since they blame the politicians for the moral collapse, they utilize their votes as a means of punishment. We are not sure why people connect social morality with politicians, but this connection fluctuates with their voting behavior on remarkable levels.

“Yes. Voting is very hard. To what, vote for what. No, you say, you will vote for the good side against the bad. For the sake of opposing the other side, men who sit at the table with PDP, you will vote for these (JDP)? If you vote for these, then won't God bring you to account for that? Because, on this side, the headscarf is trivialized, religion is being used. Here there is this handicap. On the right side, Islam is heavily used. As I told my superior yesterday, whirling dervishes in Kızılay now whirl for show and they

collect money. So this is the point Islam fell to. I mean whirling dervish. Come on!"
(34, female, stater worker)

Another reason why religious concerns fluctuate the voting behavior is the representation issue. Politicians who use religious images and sayings to gain the trust of communities are harshly criticized by voters when they do something unethical. Voters state that these kinds of things are a bad representation of religion and it harms it.

In addition to the representation issue is the visibility of religion and religious elements within society. Though we did not encounter such a case within our sample, public opinion reports on voters reveals an interesting case where religious people express their concerns about the excessive visibility of headscarf and likewise religious items in public sphere (Özbey 2018, p.64/92).

"Our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers used to wear the headscarf too, but they had a certain style, a refinement. I am against an intimidating form of hijab; let me describe it that way. I am against an intimidating form of hijab, both for men and women. However, it has been taken to such an extreme that those who do not wear the headscarf are starting to be excluded in our country, and that is a very hurtful situation. How can I explain myself to you? I am modern, traditional, and religious..."
(Woman, 59, Retired Teacher, Kütahya/Kütahya)

All these conclusions, including religious concerns as a solidifying factor, end up with a strange political profile. The average political figure drawn by our sample is a religious politician who must be Muslim, but should not mention it. Politicians should take care of the needs of conservatives and protect them from secularism, but it must be done without referencing religion. The politician should perform religious duties in his/her personal life, but should not do it publicly. This image connotes a post-Islamist figure, at first, but then the same voters who explained the best politician in this way also demand specially executed policies for Islam and its protection.

The Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) is a key factor for voters to describe their ideal religion-politics relation. On the one hand, voters demand DRA to be loyal to Islam, tolerance no modesty. On the other hand, however, they demand DRA to follow politics and modern reality. This is a huge confusion, a blank space, in voters' minds.

“If we make up the majority of this society, on the beliefs of Muslim.... (stares at a wall for a couple of seconds) Though it is not built like that.... Nah, it shouldn't be.” (53, female, expert officer)

“Yes, let the DRA speak, why are you (Erdoğan) involved? And I do not want DRA to agree with the man at the top of government. I do not want them to go the same way (agree with each other)” (31, male, shopkeeper)

“There is no morality beyond religion. but from the moment people started life, religion actually came from behind a tradition, so I think that way. Didn't religion come to us to organize life anyway? It's like that....Huh, I speak generally, this is what it has always been in Türkiye. It should be like this, Because, why was DRA built in the first place? To execute religious affairs. The state should have no religion.” (35, male, state worker)

How voters approach religion in a political sense should be investigated as a sole research field. For this research, the conclusions we mentioned above are enough to draw a map on highly debated religion-politics issues.

3.2.5 Corruption

Voters usually explain in detail what they do not like about the party they sided with. In terms of corruption, however, they state vague expressions and mention the overall situation of parties and morality. Similarly, complaints about corruption are not directed towards parties, but to general execution policies in Türkiye. The vaguity of corruption also includes its scope. Interestingly enough, most of the voters did not mention economic corruption. They were usually more concerned about social and ethical corruption and complained about what they see in society as a degradation.

In almost an excusing manner, some voters point out the commonness of corruption within all parties.

“Oh yes, there is corruption. It's happening, bro, it's happening eventually. Unfortunately, there is the thought that whoever touches Honey licks his finger. Now, what happens after the AK Party, ideology turns directly into money. Am I clear? Now let me tell you, in the simplest way, people who have nothing to do with the idea he

brought with the AK Party can come to the administration through Kırıkkale, why is there a profit in the business? This is not just for the AK Party but for all parties.” (38, male, shopkeeper)

When asked about degeneration, one voter gave a long speech about the loss of values, misleading faith, and the current mindset of the youth, yet not the economic corruption. On the contrary, he blamed the economy for it.

“Yes, I find it wrong. In the past, wait let me rephrase that. Every human is born with an instinct to believe. I cannot dream of a person that does not believe. Those who claim to be faithless actually believe in their non-faith. Back in the day wooden or food icons, and idols were put in front of us. You can see it in the movies, people kneel in front of idols, begging for mercy, money, and such. Now, it is different. Those wooden or stone idols are not important because science and technology are put in front now. And science and technology advice benefits the economy. So all the generations. Not just Gen Z but we, the nurturer of gen z, begin to prioritize money. We take it as core so we face degeneration. Technology mostly causes it. I see a 70-year-old grandpa in the mosque, they watch TikTok on their telephone. I mean, ideology is something like that. Though of course, it is not coverable with three or five mere questions.”(56, male, retired)

The same voter, when asked about economic corruption specifically, stated it is not important when ethical degeneration is this powerful and one should fight for ethical degeneration first. This was quite remarkable since it portrays the relationship between concrete and abstract values.

“A human cannot sell its future for a couple of tomatoes and onions.” (56, male, retired)

3.2.6 Leader Effect

Leader effect has different outcomes for different parties within the right-wing parties. Leader effect as a solidifying factor is mentioned in previous chapters. Leader effect as a fluctuating factor in this chapter mainly refers to NMP voters and their discontent with Devlet Bahçeli, current head of the party in 2023. Consolidating the idea that Turkish politics is heavily affected by leaders, for right-wing voters it can be a fluctuating factor as well. Devlet Bahçeli is an old and mostly unpopular politician.

Those with nationalistic ideas think that Bahçeli is not a competent figure to lead the National Movement Party. His decades-long leadership of the party discourages voters to think that there will be an improvement, followingly, they change their voting behavior to yet another right-wing party.

“Absolutely. The problem is the leader. In fact both my mind and heart, it is the same party. It has never changed.” (27, female, state worker)

This is a recurring and important conclusion. A wide range of right-wing parties offers voters to swing their vote within the same ideology. If right-wing voters are not satisfied with their favorite party, may it be due to a lack of representation of the ideology or the economy or something else, they can easily find another party to vote for. This enrichment of parties empowers their urge to fluctuate or completely change their voting behavior and they do not feel like betraying their higher cause. A follow-up conclusion is that when they swing their vote, they still cling to the leader effect, rather than the party as a whole. This is again a recurring event within the nationalist parties as NMP witnessed many inner divisions and parting of roads in party politics. It usually happens when members of the party begin to develop different ideas about ways of nurturing nationalism than each other (Bora & Can 2011, p.45). Considering that the Good Party is a break out of the NMP, and the person who stated the quote above voted for the Good Party, it is concluded that nationalism is following a familiar thread today.

“As a nationalist, now, look, whoever is concerned about the motherland is nationalist. May it be rightist or leftist. I'm thinking of voting for Meral Akşener. If there was an election tomorrow, I would vote for her. Why? Because Devlet Bahçeli is old, he cannot think straight. He displays bizarre actions.” (31, male, shopkeeper)

One of the voters took its criticism one step further and even questioned the ideology of Devlet Bahçeli, which eventually led her to question the stance of the whole party since she also thinks of parties by regarding their leader. Though we cannot say if this bad image of Devlet Bahçeli caused the NMP to lose votes, it is certainly causing unrest within voters' minds.

The overall conclusion can be summarized with a short sentence. Right-wing voters care about leaders, not parties. This conclusion proved itself in the chapter where we

examined the leader effect as a solidifying factor. In this chapter, the conclusions match up with each other and give us the overall picture.

3.3 Alienation

Indecisiveness of a voter is a fast-paced process. A voter may be triggered and consolidated one day before the election and vote for a party even though they broke their ties with it. Sometimes long-lost emotional attachments rise again, sometimes forthcoming of parties the voters dislike create an alarming situation. Sometimes none of these things happen and voters ignore the elections completely even though they have strong ideas that they are not hesitant to express. The alienation chapter will go over frequently mentioned factors that cause voters to get alienated from politics.

3.3.1 Economy

A typical behavior of right-wing voters when it comes to the economy is simply just ignoring the issue, that is of course they have relatively enough wealth to do so. Even though they are in the middle class, some voters tend to lower their expectations about politics, in doing so they trivialize the economy, and show no interest. As the nature of alienation implies it, when voters chose to alienate the economy, they honestly state that they have no understanding of the economy, nor are they willing to change it. When they make a statement on the economy, it is rather vague, they have no target and they contain sincerity about their lack of knowledge of the economy. Their unwillingness may be an attempt to legitimize the bad economic condition. By alienating themselves from the economy, a major fluctuating factor, voters clear their self-doubts on the rightfulness of their own voting behavior. In other words, voters just simply ignore economy. The following quotes are typical examples of how voters alienate from political economics to avoid cognitive dissonance.

“Well I accept our country is economically in bad condition but as a whole, there is no problem.” (57, male, retired)

“There is no disadvantage, I have no problem. I am not giving up, I mean.” (52, male, shopkeeper)

“I swear to God I do not know. I do not follow regularly, I do not know which minister is good and which one is bad. I am not on the tail of things.” (42, female, housewife)

These three people, despite being from different age, gender, and economic classes, have the same reaction towards the economy. Even though they are heavily affected by it, they do not care about the economy. They choose to endure the bad economy until other issues are resolved. Instead of taking matters into their own hands, they exhibit a passive attitude and wait for the economy to improve.

Alienation can also be detected when voters heavily complain about the economy but do not link it to politics or do not blame politicians for the worsening economy. In their mind, the economy is an independent phenomenon that politicians do not have much control over. Alternatively, voters sometimes choose to alienate from the economic side of politics for the greater good in their stance. Religion is once more a strong factor that causes such alienation.

“I do not find the economic policies of the party I sided with true. But religious causes are heavy so I vote for them.” (30, female, state worker)

3.3.2 Disassociation

Turkish politics is harsh and difficult to keep track of. This stiff atmosphere discourages voters to find a party that may suit their beliefs and ideas. When a voter says he/she has no interest in politics, it is hard to examine underlying reasons because they do not express strong political statements that one can search deeply. In other words, Dissociation can be simply just Dissociation, not revulsion, revanchism, or protest.

“I did not vote because I did not want to. Because it requires too much informal affinity and political research. I cast my vote once. In the 2018 elections, I think. I voted for Erdogan. But currently, I do not have any affinity with any party. I am a conservative Muslim. But I do not understand politics. I do not research, not because I am incapable

but because I have no interest. And I know as a Muslim I must vote. But I don't. It is something I lack I am aware of.” (28, female, state worker)

Sometimes, disassociation is the outcome of the overall dissatisfaction with political parties. This is what we can name as a protest. Regardless of the amount of familiarity with political events or political leaders, voters repine the politics as a whole and do not cast their vote. This has been visibly obvious during the interviews as well. When asked about their previous votes, dissociated voters cannot express why they voted for some certain party, or why they did not vote in the first place.

“I cast my vote once, haven’t voted since then. There is no party that aligns with my head (ideas). But I voted because it is a citizenship duty, also obligatory. But voluntarily. (stares in confusion).” (28, female, state worker)

Another remarkable reason why voters get dissociated is a lack of hope for a better future. Parallel to dissatisfaction with political parties currently on the run, voters have a tendency to give up on politics to set things right for them. This pessimist mentality affects their voting behavior heavily and voters, even though they have strong political ideas, choose not to vote.

“JDP may breathe easy for a while, I don’t think it will be permanent. There has always been reciprocation in this country, I do not think it will be stabilized. It will always be like that. None of the parties gives me hope. It will be good for a while, then it will be ruined. That is what has happened so far.” (40, male, private sector)

Disassociation from politics eventually reshapes and resizes voters' subjective political field. Dissociated voters may express they are right-wing voters, they may even do it proudly and in a defensive manner, yet they do not seem to have information about basic political issues, let alone deep analyses. This portion of voters is an important target for political parties. Politicians usually arrange specific narratives and policies to mobilize dissociated voters, yet so far they do not seem to be successful, regarding the number of dissociated messages voters state.

Mobilizing the indecisive and alienated voters are a trending area where private companies are investing at a concerning rate. The commodification of voters and their data renders citizens into playthings of many psychological and manipulative action

strategies. While Cambridge Analytica is an infamous example, there are other and more successful companies that offer their work to politicians. In a bio-political sense, voters are now seen as subject to influence by exploiting their weaknesses coming from their humane nature. Especially people with lower education, lack of political education and social media awareness are easy targets for the market. For parties who have more excessive reach to social media, like the JDP (Esen & Gümüşçü 2016, this manipulation may even lead to undemocratic practices.

3.3.3 Indifference

Indifference factors can be seen as disassociation factors that cannot be traced back to their underlying reasons. While it is the duty of researchers to examine messages voters give, sometimes voters share vague and short ideas about why they do not care about politics, these messages make up the indifference factor. It would be invalid to attribute these kinds of messages to possible factors without strong evidence to support it, evidence that is collected from their other sayings. An example should illustrate it better.

“Well, I come across politics, one way or another. But I do not have this kind of demand within me. Like, uh I should look up the Türkiye Workers Party or let me research a newly founded party, I am not that kind of a person.” (28, female, state worker)

The quote is taken from a politically alienated woman who has voted just once in her lifetime. Like her, voters sometimes have a natural distance to politics, coming from their characteristics, their cumulative experience, and subconscious conditions. When asked about political communication, advertisement, and campaigns, these types of voters no-surprisingly shared no idea or did not have an idea to share in the first place.

At first glance, indifference factors may seem like they do not have research value. They are, on the contrary, stronger than one may think and it affects voter behavior. When a voter is indifferent, political messages become useless. Election campaigns become unnecessary and other strong factors such as economy and ideology are left powerless. The reason we gave indifference a part of our research is to show that being indifferent to politics is an alienation factor that is more common and more powerful than one thinks.

Social conditions and the overall flow of voters' lives sometimes render them to political indifference. Housewives, immigrants, diasporas, and likewise communities usually create indifferent voter groups that cannot keep up with fast pacing political progress. This inability ends up with indifference, and sometimes indifference ends up with highly rare and questionable beliefs that replace what an average citizen relies on to form his/her political views.

"I do not follow anything. Well I am a housewife, that is why." (42, female, housewife)

The person that stated the quote above is a widow by death who still has strong ties to her dead husband's family. She raises two children while at the same voluntarily taking care of her step-father who battles cancer. Her extremely busy life renders her indifferent, yet it is noteworthy that she is so eager to vote and even mobilizes her household to vote. Below, there is another example of indifferent voter that talks about a whole new perspective.

"Well, first of all, maybe this is a controversial saying but I think the issue with national defense is all about God's will. I do not have any moving point other than that but this is what I think about national defense. I know it is not a well-accepted approach for everyone, but still." (28, female, state worker who is in one year stay in motherland)

She is a Franco-Turk who witnessed many Islamophobic sayings and policies. Instead of getting polarized by these, she chooses to be indifferent to politics which can be seen as a coping mechanism.

3.3.4 No Alternative Option

Previously, we examined no alternative factor under the solidifying factors. When a voter sees other parties as untrustable or incapable, it solidifies their voting behavior to vote for the party they voted for once more. As it serves this purpose, it may also lead to alienation of the voter based on dissatisfaction level with the main party they consider to support. For most voters, opposition parties are not even an option to trust in cases of national security and social concerns. If the main party is also equally untrustable in other cases like the economy and social justice, voters deliberately alienate themselves.

“No, I mean, for example, for the upcoming election, it makes me.... of course, I do not want a left party to win but in this process, I do not want the JDP to win either. Because for one turn, for a five-year period, I want them to have a hard time, but no, (laughs) unfortunately.... (28, female, state worker)

Not voting, or completely ignoring the politics is an open act of revanchism. By doing so, voters punish the parties, protesting the elections altogether. However, this does not put them in a place where any appealing party can convince them. Even the most alienated voter leaves an open door for returning back to politics within the right wing. When voters criticize parties and demand change, they do it from the party they previously sided with or the ideologically closest one. Therefore, once again, we can conclude that right-wing voters do not swing their votes to the left, but to another party within the left. No voter within our sample stated that they may regard left parties as favorable under some conditions.

What causes such devotion is the perception of left parties' affiliation with PDP and terrorist organizations. We do not state whether this causation is truth-based or not, but there is a perception that takes place in voters' minds. If the fear of terrorism triumphing via left parties is on low levels, voters compensate for it by finding other reasons to not vote for their more or less favorite party, ending up not voting at all. If the fear is high, it serves as a solidifying factor and voters vote for their favorite party.

3.4 Red Lines

Red line factors consist of issues that voters rejected with a certain tone and stated that they would completely change their voting behavior if their favorite party would employ a policy of such kind. In one case, the voters stated that he did change his behavior. Red line factors are the exact opposite of solidifying factors and one end of the spectrum. They are strong and obvious statements that overpower all the other factors. In other words, red line factors are the strongest factors that leave no space for other factors.

3.4.1 Affinity With Terrorism/PDP

Parallel to national security concerns, affinity with terrorism or its political apparatuses is a direct and clean red line for voters. Even the most devoted voters stated clearly that if their favorite party gets into any kind of relationship with these two, not only would they change their vote but also actively antagonize them, working for the opposite party. These kinds of messages portray how serious voters are about the terror problem.

“Yes of course! Position towards PDP (HDP) is important. Do they sit at the same table as PDP? This is a very important matter. It is also important whether they sit at the same table with Putin but PDP is way too critical. Or maybe their attitude towards Öcalan. You know in my time there was Öcalan. Attitude towards Öcalan is also important for me.” (33, female, state worker)

“Yeah, for example, if Erdogan says he will work with the PDP, I would not vote for him.” (35, female, state worker)

“I would not vote, I would try to take them down even.” (57, male, retired)

For a country that sacrificed so many things to combat terrorism, these open and strong statements are no surprise. Voters still fear that terror will rise again. They also believe that political support from the inside is possible and combating political parties that support the PKK is as important as a military operation with actual armed terrorist forces. PDP (HDP) is regarded as an extension of PKK, therefore voters have no tolerance for it or anyone siding with it. This is parallel to security concerns that are explained in solidifying factors. Other parties that do not openly antagonize and criticize PKK and PDP are seen as their allies and raise the security concerns of voters. There were no voters in our sample who openly blamed any opposition party with affinity with terrorism, yet there were vague tracks on why opposition parties are not to be trusted. Having no alternative as a solidifying factor also supports this conclusion.

3.4.2 Social/Religious Concerns

Single examples given by voters that show their personal experiences and ideas can also be counted as red lines. They are not frequent enough to be a single subtitle, yet

they are by no means less important. Therefore, in this last chapter, we will examine unique instances that drew red lines within voters' subjective political field.

Most of the voters within our sample argued that separation of religion and politics is a must and it would not harm religion. For some, any hypothetical unity would end up with the annihilation of either religion or politics and something that should be avoided. This rejection is fueled by fear of any possible rise of religious rule, Sharia.

"We cannot do it. In our contemporary world, it is not applicable. If you mean Sharia, it is not applicable. Not because they (religion and politics) are contradicting. Well, they do sometimes. They would not go together. Practically." (40, male, private sector)

LGBT issue is also a red line for some of the voters. Relatively moderate voters argue that LGBT should be an indoor issue, they must be respected with their life choices. For a portion of voters, however, it is an absolute taboo and should be abolished, and removed from society completely, let alone respect it.

"God created us as man and woman. Religion is heavy on this matter. You cannot respect something that God openly forbids. It has nothing to respect." (35, female, state worker)

Another example of this case is a voter that was harshly affected by the tone of Erdogan in the 2018 elections. Coming from an ethnic minority, this voter was upset about the polarizing language and openly piercing narrative of Erdogan. His background made him more sympathetic towards the minorities that Erdogan targeted, followingly, his sympathy affected his voting behavior completely.

"Well, normally the RPP is not very suitable for my world of ideas. But in the last election, if I remember correctly, in the 2018 election, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Muharrem İnce, and Demirtaş were candidates. There, a word of the president did a lot to me, it hurt me. I don't even remember that word now. I think he had a harsh rhetoric against Alawism, a rhetoric that would injure Kılıçdaroğlu. In the last corner of the election, this sentence was formed. This hurt me, and he described everyone who opposed him as terrorists... As a reaction, I voted for PRP." (28, male, expert officer)

As it seems, a polarizing language that targets people, as a whole or selectively, backfires. Erdogan's narrative changed in the following years. Especially with the new presidential system, Erdoğan adopted a more embrative and uniting language that he needs to win the next election. The same mistake, if we take it as a mistake, was made by some opposition party members who unwillingly created trauma and drew a red line for voters, as the next quote illustrates.

“There was this man Önder Sağ, in the government of PRP . He was an effective man. A Muslim citizen asked him a question at a meeting at Elmadağ. He mocked him with “Go ask it to Mohammad who will save you at Mecca(!). I really took it to heart. I can never forget it, it is always on my mind. If others in a government like this cannot upspeak, it means they are what they are.” (57, male, retired)

Regardless of the side it comes from, fear of getting excluded proves itself to be a major red line factor that lives on voters' minds for many years. Voters believe that respect for their beliefs and values is a matter of dignity and dignity forecomes the rest.

4. Conclusion

Navigating through a voter's mind via semi-structured interviews opened the door to a rich and contentful conclusions. Some of these connections were obvious,

even for the voter himself; some of the connections, on the other hand, displayed how uniquely and unexpectedly a voter can absorb and react to a factor, which shows there is a limit to political propaganda and advertisement. This is also why private companies focusing on voting behavior cannot come up with grand theories either.

Before going further a critical point must be mentioned once again. As stated in the limitations part, this research was done right before the critical 2023 general elections. Not only voters were influenced by the upcoming elections, the political propaganda, advertisement and narrative were excessively active and strong. Therefore, all the answers given by volunteers are also influenced by agenda-setting of political leaders.

Turkish politics is usually led by leaders and their narratives. Erdoğan's political speeches are especially strong for influencing the voters. Since the sample of this study consists of mostly JDP voters, they likely follow their leader and form their ideas on politics based on mostly what Erdogan says. While it is not a surprise that leaders are shaping their followers' subjective political field, Erdoğan is an especially strong figure due to his charisma and strong narrative. Possibilities for comparison between a leader-oriented atmosphere and a more unbound political one should be investigated in future research as it does not fall in the scope of this paper.

As a follow-up to external factors, it should also be noted that conclusions drawn from this research do not up to a massive generalization, rather they ends up with a limited one. One limitation is that interviews in this research can be too simplistic. They may not take into account the diversity of right-wing voters' experiences or the complexity of the social reality they live in. Another limitation is that the generalization can be misleading. They may create the impression that there is a single, monolithic explanation for a complex phenomenon. For example explaining the leader effect on Erdoğan, Bahçeli and Akşener may make it seem like right-wing voters do not have an idea of leaders apart from these three. Lastly, grand generalizations can be harmful. They can be used to justify discrimination or oppression in a political revanchism. Considering these crucial points, there are still remarkable conclusions.

When voters react to different factors, they try to reach a harmony between their beliefs and ideas. The pursued harmony is best explained by cognitive dissonance theory. To avoid cognitive dissonance, voters attribute importance to some elements

they value and find excuses to degrade those they do not. By doing so, they reach the optimal state of mind where factors affecting voting behavior finds their temporal place. This research examined the current place of factors in right-wing voters' subjective political field and how they react to key issues and hypothetical scenarios.

There is a positive correlation between religious devotion and its political influence. If someone is devoted, religion is the supreme factor in their voting behavior. While this is not a brand new information, the lack of demand for an Islamic rule is. Unlike the general narrative, right-wing voters do not demand a shift to a religious rule, Sharia that is, and combine religion and politics. On the contrary, most of the voters think it is harmful to both religion and politics. This demand, however, does not hold voters back from wanting a religiously devoted leader who will secure respect for their religious identity and lifestyle, and this demand opens a new field of research. The portrayal of the leader drawn by voters is extremely unexpected in that regard. Voters demand to live their religion freely, under the rule of a believer who also acts according to his/her belief, but does rule by relying on religious power or law. Religion in this equation serves as a qualification banner where the voter and the voted one prove themselves to establish a political bond, which is the vote itself.

There can be two different conclusions drawn from a lack of demand from a religious rule. Either voters do not think religion has rules to be applied to society or they do believe it has but politics is not an adequate tool. In either case, as mentioned above, voters take religion as a criterion for the reliability of politicians. This conclusion raises yet another question. How come, then, can voters demand the execution of some policies to reshape society in an Islamic way? Opposing the LGBT, for instance, is a typical demand of right-wing voters who base this demand on religion. Yet the same voters also argue the separation of religion and politics. There is not enough data to claim that Islamic voters are turning into conservative voters, as in Europe, but the tendency is moving to that point so far. The final conclusion, then, is that there is a selective approach to religion and politics that need further research.

The last remarkable connection between religion and politics is how voters tend to perceive it when it is combined with different things. When voters are asked about politics and religion in a broader and theoretical sense, religion becomes a fluctuating factor where voters express their hesitation to combine these two. Interestingly, when

religion is combined with political parties, it becomes a solidifying factor and voters show a willingness to support parties with religious elements. This conclusion supports the argument that right-wing voters have a vague and undecided idea of role of religion.

Economy and ideology are seen as rival forces that drive voters to behave in some certain way. In this study, we have seen that economy and ideology can play different roles for each other depending on the position. When voters are not economically satisfied, they begin to prioritize abstract values such as ideology and avoid cognitive dissonance as mentioned in a related chapter. However, it can also be the exact opposite. People may give up on ideology for economic gains, or they may defend both the economy and ideology at the same time if their economic condition is not bright. As illustrated in the literature review, voters are usually portrayed in a dilemma between pragmatism, a.k.a economy, and values, a.k.a. ideology. Yet, this is a highly superficial portrayal. The reason why right-wing voters cling to their ideology so heartfully is that they think their ideology is providing the ultimate profit, security of the country. Moreover, the main ideologies of right-wing voters include a dystopian future where the country is fallen into foreign hands and will face even worse economic problems. Therefore, voters believe that staying loyal to their ideology will bring the ultimate benefit and security of the country that outweighs any economic profit. This conclusion makes it an obligation to rethink the whole pragmatism versus ideology approach, which is beyond the scope of this research.

A critical portion of right-wing voters is formed by left parties. Most of the right-wing voters do not trust opposition parties, not even for insignificant issues. This is the reason they stick with their parties despite all these criticisms and unpleasantness. If we ignore the loyal base portion of voters who have no doubt about their political preferences, the rest of the voters are formed by center-periphery. Fear of returning to the periphery after more than 20 years in the center lets people tolerate bigger and bigger mistakes made by their favorite party.

The establishment of a voter's subjective political field contains multiple elements. Gender, ethnicity, socio-economic condition, educational background, and likewise factors offer some certain stereotypical sets of political ideas. Most of the voting behavior literature focuses on the establishment of a subjective political field. This research highlighted what happens when voters face political factors that force them to

assess their voting preferences. To avoid cognitive dissonance, voters organize and re-structures their priorities, in some cases even their beliefs. This is why voters with the same qualities produce different outcomes when they face a political factor. Similarly, depending on the phase of life a voter goes through, one factor may rapidly gain significant importance. The example we mention in chapter three was how the economy gets to be the number one concern, and then subsequently voting behavior factor, before the marriage. This change can be used to explain multiple shifts within collective voting behavior. Older generations may start to prioritize religion and the religiousness of the parties as they feel they are closer to death and the religious consequences of their life. Terrorist attacks with death casualties may sharply increase people's security concerns and force them to change their voting preferences.

Managing voters' preferences is an old strategy that political parties apply, especially when elections are close. It is debatable if it is ethical to manipulate voters' subjective political field or not. Previously, we have seen specifically executed election campaigns that carry the aim of altering, manipulating, and in some cases misleading voters to have them vote for a party. The infamous Cambridge Analytica case is the most well-known example which triggered major debates on this issue. To this day, it is still vague where a fair election campaign ends and where unethical intervention in a voter's subjective political field starts. Regardless of the answer to that dilemma, we predict that this vagueness will be utilized unless strict and effective laws are applied to protect voters.

Throughout the interviews, we tried to avoid using specific names of politicians to avoid manipulating voters' answers and have them focus on more political figures. Yet, as the sole governor of the last 21 years, chairman of the JDP Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was frequently mentioned by voters. Their different and repeated description of Erdoğan made it necessary to draw some conclusions from it. Firstly, Erdoğan has become a singled-out political leader in the eyes of voters. When voters mention him, they do not bring other elements to the table. Other leaders, however, are regarded by their backgrounds. Especially leaders from opposition parties are assessed by the party they come from rather than their personal characteristics and traits. It may be cutting corners for voters to avoid cognitive dissonance when they criticize opposition leaders. Perhaps, it may be due to the belief that Erdoğan is the architect of every good thing

that has happened, and whatever went bad was because of an external intervener. Regardless, Erdoğan has a separate place that gives him advantages to affect voters' subjective political field, an advantage his opponents or allies do not have. The place of Erdoğan may be read in a different manner. Considering people who voted for NMP in deputy elections and for Erdoğan in presidential elections, Erdoğan's image may be detached from the JDP, evolving into a single political figure much more like a president in the parliamentary system.

A major issue with studying the voting behavior of Turkish voters in the last decade is the shift from the parliamentary system to the presidential system. The parliamentary system relies on unity of power where the assembly uses executive and legislative power. The presidential system relies on the separation of power where the assembly controls the legislative and the president controls executive power. The shift from the parliamentary system to the presidential system surely reformed all the political structures and parties. However, it did not affect voting behavior as much as it affected political structure, especially for this study. First of all, this study focuses on three major right parties, JDP, NMP and Good Party. Two of them are already in alliance, the JDP and NMP. Even before the alliance, ideologically they were close and their voter base resembled each other. The Good Party may stand as an exception for it as its voter base is more secular.

The image of Erdoğan is strengthened by the presidential system. However, even before the presidential system, Erdoğan was a strong political figure that voters regard when they vote. Turkish politics generally is run by strong leaders, rather than parties, so a shift to the presidential system can be seen as stating the obvious. For even the most politically uneducated or uninterested voters talk about politics concerning leaders, not parties.

Newly founded right-wing parties offer undecided voters options to swing their vote, making it even less likely to swing from right to left. Keeping in mind that right-wing voters already do not have the tendency to switch sides, having multiple options within the right-wing offers voters a safe place to decide about their vote without giving up on their primary preferences. Parallel to the emergence of new rightist parties, between people from different age groups, there also emerged different approaches to main political notions and voting behavior factors. Patriotism, for example, has different

definitions from voter to voter. It is a well-accepted statement that religious devotion is declining among younger generations. This decline alters the meaning of notions people hold dear. This shift in meaning also affects their voting behavior. For instance, older generations see patriotism as partly religious. Younger generations however see it as sole love and tender for the motherland that has nothing to do with religion.

In conclusion, this research embarked on a journey to shed light on the intricate relationship between political factors and the voting behavior of right-wing voters. Through a comprehensive historical literature review on voting behavior and the application of grand theories, the research sought to identify resemblances and the appropriateness of these theories in explaining voting behavior. While numerous studies have focused on macro-level research using data to uncover the most influential values and preferences for Turkish voters, they have largely neglected to evaluate the extent to which these values shape the subjective political field of Turkish voters.

The main goal of this study was to determine the genuine significance of these values for the voters under investigation and to measure the extent to which they are followed. This study was able to uncover surprising and previously unresearched correlations between numerous characteristics and voting outcomes by interviewing right-wing voters in-depth. These interviews contributed to a better understanding of the voting behavior of right-wing voters by offering insightful information about the complex factors that affect their decision-making process.

It has become clear that political factors alone cannot fully explain how right-wing voters cast their votes. These elements surely have an impact, but it's also important to take into account the voters' unique viewpoints and the subjective political field. The results of this study demonstrate the necessity for a more thorough analysis of voting behavior, taking into account the complex interplay between objective political factors and the individualized subjective interpretations of these elements by voters. In the end, this study adds to our understanding of voting behavior on a more in-depth level and provides a basis for future political science research.

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6) Appendix

A) Participants List

Name	Age	Location	Education	Economy
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Şaban	56	Erzurum	Graduate	Middle
Esila	28	France	Post-graduate	Middle
Meryem	34	Ankara	Graduate	Middle
Sertap	28	Ankara	Post-graduate	Low
Misem	30	Malatya/Ankara	Graduate	Middle
Hasan	40	Kırıkkale	Graduate	Middle
İhsan	33	Kırıkkale	Highschool	Middle
Kadir	60	Kırıkkale	Highschool	Middle
Mert	52	Kırıkkale	Primary school	High
Arif	58	Kırıkkale	Highschool	Middle
Aslı	53	Ankara	Graduate	High
Mustafa	35	Kırıkkale	Highschool	Low
Asım	38	Kırıkkale	Post-graduate	High
Kerim	31	Kırıkkale	Highschool	Middle
Meliha	35	Ankara	Highschool	High
Melahat	28	Ankara	Post-graduate	Middle
Necdet	57	Kırıkkale	Middle School	Middle
Yüstra	42	Kırıkkale	Primary school	Low
Serdar	29	Kilis/Ankara	Graduate	Middle