THE FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOUR IN LOCAL ELECTIONS KOCAELİ SAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse, by taking into consideration the social values and needs, the factors affecting the voters' voting behaviours in the local elections. In the process of evaluating the voters' choices related to the candidate's positive and negative aspects, the impacts of the media messages, the election campaign, the candidate's ethnic origin, and the perceptions developed about the candidate's political party have been analysed; the influences of age, gender, education level, political identity, and socio-demographic effects have also been questioned. Using the sample from Kocaeli comprising 8594 individuals (2009 ANAR survey data collection), the singular characteristics of the candidate and the sentiments developed about the candidate's political party have been detected to have more dominant effects in the voters' choices. Meanwhile, the level of education has been discovered to be strengthening the voters' rational choices, leading them to make more insightful examinations of the candidate. Turkish voters are generally of conservative character, and in their political party preferences, a vast majority of voters' side with the rightist/conservative parties. The party which consolidates conservative/islamist/nationalist center-right naturally gets ahead and takes the lead. Atatürkism keeps its position notably, yet liberalism, Kemalism, and ethnic nationalism find less support among the voters. The data shows that the candidate's reliability/honesty (85 %), his/her having close contact with the public (81 %), his/her experience (80 %), his/her projects and promises (80 %), his/her party (80 %), the campaign (53 %), media (40 %), origin (24 %), and the desire to punish the disliked (15%) are effective on the voters' preferences.

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STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the factors that influence voters' preferences in local elections. The more the factors affecting voters' preferences are revealed, the better it is for us to understand their behavior codes.

A *silent cultural transformation* was taking place, and while under the pressure of *industrialization*, there emerged *urbanization/ secularization/ rationalization*, namely *modernization*. Nevertheless, tradition did not disappear. It has re-produced itself in and through modern technological means. Described as an exact model of *non-western modernity*, Turkey, in fact, is becoming modernized very differently from the West.

When we compare the voters' political views with their party preferences, we see that the people who vote for the AK party describe themselves as *Conservative* (29,2%), *Islamist* (21,9%), *Democrat* (15,9%), *Turkish Nationalist* (13,0%) and *Atatürkist/Kemali*st (12,1%). Although the dominant identity of AK party voters is conservatism and Islamism, the party is also supported by the other political views of the right wing.

On the other hand, the people who vote for the CHP describe themselves in the first place as *Atatürkist/Kemalist* (41.3%), secondly as social democrat (31%), and thirdly as democrat (13.4%). The CHP voters are also the most entrenched ones. A vast majority of the MHP voters define themselves as Turkish Nationalists (63.4%), and 11.4 % as *Atatürkists/Kemalists*. Similarly, the people who support the independent candidates of DTP mostly name themselves as Kurdish Nationalists (55.1%). Within the voters of DTP, those who describe themselves as Democrats (15.4%) occupy the second place, Islamists (11.5%) the third place, and Social Democrats (%9) are the last in the list.

The data reveals that Turkish voters fairly keep *liberalism* at bay. It seems that the effectiveness of these groups is limited only with the people describing their political view as liberal in the narrow public opinion. In Turkey, the conservative/communitarian characteristics of the culture and the voters' search for safety limit the interest towards the liberal ideology.

In this sample, *Ataturkist/Kemalist political identity* (17.8%) comes in the first place among women, and "No idea/I do not know" (15.7%) is the second. The third and the fourth ranks are subsequently Islamism (14.3%) and conservatism (14.1%). Among men, however, *conservatism* (17%) is in the first place, Turkish Nationalism (15,0%) is the second, and these are successively followed by *Democrats* (13,6%), *Ataturkists* (12,4%) and *Islamists* (12,4%).

Education is one of the essential factors in the formation of political identity, and any increase in the level of education influences people's mental capacity. As the education level rises, instead of traditional values, there emerges the tendency for modern/secular and democratic preferences. In our research, it was discovered that with the rise in education level, the importance attached to the positive characteristics of the candidates also rises.

Those who stated their political views as Islamist, Turkish, or Kurdish Nationalist attached less importance to individual characteristics of the candidate, and especially Kurdish nationalists gave more importance the candidate's party. The majority of the voters are interested in their own welfare.

More than half of the voters stated that the propaganda/marketing activities carried out during the electoral period, 40.3 % of the voters pointed out the effect of the news in the media on their choices. One out of every four people stated that the candidate having the same origin with himself/herself included his/her preference. Although in AK Party and CHP the effectiveness of media/campaign and origin factors is relatively higher, the consequences partly differentiate in those defining their political views as Turkish or Kurdish Nationalists. 82.2 % of those who answered the survey said, "Supporting the party and its candidate I side with influenced my preference", and 76.2 % said, "The candidate's party was effective in my choice".

Supporting the party rather than the candidate is much higher in the preferences of *women*. Specifically, since they are less interested in politics and since they are having difficulty in learning about the candidates and their projects, determining their political preferences over the party can be seen as a short cut in determining their preferences. Besides that, loyalty to the party is far more in the age group of 25-34 and notably in 20-24 years of age.

Unlike the western countries, the so-called *leftist parties take votes mostly from the middle classes*, whereas the r*ightist/conservative parties receive votes from relatively undereducated, or lower middle class people*. In a semi-developed country where class consciousness, as known in the West, has not been established, most of the voters' behaviours, to a large extent, are motivated, and hence, shaped in accordance with the basic needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

In the study, two factors became prominent. The first one is that in the *voting behaviour the candidate and the party are of prime importance for the voters*. Since the study was conducted in accordance with the local election scale, the party factor, despite the candidate's characteristics, can be viewed as the most dominant factor in such elections, influencing the voters' preferences. The second one is that the *rate of those who state that the media and the campaign carried out are effective on their preferences* are between the ranges of % 40-50.

Keywords: Voter behavior, election campaigns, political communication, local election

YEREL SEÇİMLERDE SEÇMEN DAVRANIŞINA ETKİ EDEN FAKTÖRLER: KOCAELİ ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZET

Bu makalenin amacı, yerel seçimlerde oy verme davranışını etkileyen faktörleri toplumsal değer ve ihtiyaçlar zeminini temel alarak incelemektir. Seçmenlerin yerel seçimlerdeki tercihleri üzerinden, adayların olumlu özelliklerinin, beğenmediklerini cezalandırmak istemesinin, medya mesajlarının, seçim kampanyasının ve etnik kökenin, adayın partisine yönelik algılamaların etki analizi yapılmış, yaş, cinsiyet, eğitim, politik kimlik sosyo-demografik etkenlerin tesirleri sorgulanmıştır. Kocaeli örnekleminde 8594 kişiyi kapsayan bir örneklem kullanılarak yapılan çalışmada adayın bireysel özellikleri ve ait olduğu siyasi partiye yönelik algılamaların tercihler üzerinde daha başat etkiler ürettiği tespit edilmiş, eğitim düzeyinin rasyonel sebeplerle oy verme tercihini güçlendirdiği, aday faktörüne dair daha derinlikli irdelemeleri ortaya çıkardığı tespit edilmiştir. Türk seçmeni muhafazakâr bir seçmen olup, siyasal parti tercihinde de ağırlık sağ/muhafazakâr partilerden yanadır. Muhafazakar/ İslamcı/ milliyetçi merkez sağı konsolide eden parti doğal olarak öne geçmektedir. Atatürkçülük dikkate değer bir düzeyde etkisini korumakla birlikte liberalizm, demokrasi ve ulusalcılık seçmende daha sınırlı bir destek bulmaktadır. Data, seçmen tercihleri üzerinde adayın dürüst/güvenilir olmasının (%85), halka yakın olmasının (%81), deneyiminin (%80), proje ve vaatlerinin (%80), partisinin (%80), kampanyanın (%53), medyanın (%40), köken faktörünün (% 24) ve beğenmediğini cezalandırma (% 15) arzusunun etkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Seçmen davranışı, seçim kampanyaları, siyasal iletişim, yerel seçimler

Introduction

What factors are effective on the voters' choices in local elections? For instance, what is the influence of the candidate's party, his/her projects, personality traits, experience, ethnic origin, and the election campaign carried out? To what extent does the tendency to punish the disliked party influence the voters' inclinations? Moreover, to what extent do such factors as education, age, gender, and identity influence the voters' preferences? All these factors are of general interest and curiosity, and keep continuing to be a field of study due to the useful nature of the results gained.

The more the factors affecting voters' preferences are revealed, the better it is for us to understand their behavior codes as it is not possible to dissociate voters' behaviors from the social norms and from the behaviors which are closely associated with the culture of a society (its values), and with the level of socio-economic development.

At present, Turkey is an industrial country that has moderately developed. While the country's desire to maintain traditional life can be explained through the value scale of Inglehart (1997), the founder of World Values Survey (WVS), it is also witnessed that the values affecting social behavior go through a change in line with the modernizing/industrializing society's needs.

When looked from Western Europe, Turkey is one of the most conservative countries in the world. According to the WVS's findings, 85 % of the people in Turkey regard themselves as conservatives (Esmer, 2012). The rate of the people regarding themselves as religionist in Western European countries is less than half of those in Turkey. On the other hand, when looked from the other Islamic countries, Turkey is a highly enlightened, secular country in which the position of woman has greatly improved. Particularly the rapid economic developments in recent years brought about an improvement in the education level of girls especially, covering steadily the large masses, and the increase in industrialization has come to affect all sections of society including the conservatives. However, as this silent cultural transformation was taking place, and while under the pressure of industrialization, there emerged urbanization/secularization/rationalization, namely modernization. Nevertheless, tradition did not disappear. It has re-produced itself in and through modern technological means. Described as an exact model of non-western modernity, Turkey, in fact, is becoming modernized very differently from the West. That is to say, while the country is modernizing, it is preserving a significant part of its traditional values in a way different from the experience of Western Europe.

The conservative structure of the Turkish society naturally enhances the impact of religiousness in voters' behaviors. Indeed, in the researches investigating the effects of religiousness on voters', there has emerged a positive correlation between religiosity and voting for the parties of conservative character (Eser: 2012; Bayyigit: 2003; Gencer: 2015; Koktas: 1997). Turkey's conservative/religious cultural character is an advantage for the central-right wing parties, and equally a disadvantage for the secular/left wing parties. Yet culture is not the unique criterion determining political behavior. In addition to culture, the level of socio-economic development and persuasive discourse of the political parties which aims to respond to the basic expectations of voters bear great significance as well.

A. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs shaping people's behaviors consists of: physiological needs related to physical survival such as eating, drinking, sleeping and breathing; safety needs comprising job, health, safety of property; emotional needs like belonging, love, including also the needs corresponding to friendship and family; esteem and self-actualization needs such as creativity and naturalness. Needs like eating, drinking, housing and being safe constitute the basis of this hierarchy and, without satisfying basic physiological and safety needs, the effect of the needs at the upper levels of the pyramid that motivate individuals lessens. On the basis of Maslow's theory, those benefiting more from the socio-economic development can be motivated better by the needs like *self-actualization*, *better life quality* and *living in a better environment* at the upper level of the hierarchy as they have already fulfilled their basic needs (physiological and safety needs). The countries that are late in the process of economic development and modernization, or the relatively poorer people of these countries give primacy not to the quality of life, self-expression, freedom, or a better environment, but, in accordance with the hierarchy of needs related to physiological and safety requirements, attach more importance to economic profit, working conditions, avoiding risk/uncertainty, and achieving material success.

The WVS data set reveals that the major priority of people is after economic development and stability (that is, sustaining and increasing their economic gains). Post-materialistic values such as forming a nicer environment and moving towards a society in which concepts and ideas are more important than money, are approved by only a narrow, educated/wealthy class of people who have already climbed up the social ladder, and who relatively feel safer. In the study conducted on the Kocaeli scale, the individual and social panorama so far revealed has been used to form the basic frame of the research while analyzing to understand the voters' behaviors in local elections.

Data

A data set comprising 8.594 people was used in the Kocaeli sample. The data was taken from the study conducted on November 16-25 2009 in the province of Kocaeli by ANAR Research, one of the noted research companies of Turkey. Other than party choice, identity, and demographic variables, 14 more questions like "To what extent have the feelings that I will express had an impact on your decision to vote for the 29 March 2009 Local Elections Metropolitan Municipality?" and "Would you please state the effect of the provisions that I will express upon your decision while choosing the candidate of the Metropolitan Municipality?" were asked to the voters to be evaluated. The choices have been coded as "1. It had no effect", and "5. It had a great effect." "No idea," or "no answer" and "other choices" were coded as missing data. When looked at the identity/demographic quality of the participants, 47.8% of them are women, and 52.2% men. In terms of age, the distribution is as follows: 10.9%: 20-24, 28.3%: 25-34, 23.9%: 35.44, 19.4%: 45-54 and 17.5% over 55 years old. 5.3% of the participants did not attend any school, 42,4% of them have the primary school degree, 15.7% the secondary school degree; 26.2% the high school degree, 9.9% the university degree, and only 0.6% of them have a graduate degree.

While the majority of the subjects define themselves as conservative (15.6%), they are followed by Ataturkists/Kemalists (15%), Islamists (12,6%), Turkish Nationalists (11,8%), Democrats (11,3%), and Social Democrats (8.6%). The percentage of those stating "No idea/I don't know" is nearly 21%.

Table1. *Demographic Qualities of the Participants*

Identity and Demographic Variables	Dimensions	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	4199	47,8
	Female	4579	52,2
Age	between 20-24	957	10,9
	between 25-34	2474	28,3
	between 35-44	2086	23,9
	between 45-54	1694	19,4
	between 55-64	983	11,2
	65 and over	547	6,3
Education	Did not attend school	456	5,3
	Primary school	3674	42,4
	Middle school	1356	15,7
	High school	2265	26,2
	University	861	9,9
	Graduate	49	,6
How do you identify yourself from the political point of view?	No answer	850	9,7
	Liberal	155	1,8
	Democratic	991	11,3
	Conservative	1370	15,6
	Islamist	1103	12,6
	Social Democratic	756	8,6
	Ataturkist/Kemalist	1318	15,0
	Nationalist	57	,6
	Turkish nationalist	1036	11,8
	Kurdish nationalist	64	,7
	Other	49	,6
	No idea/I do not know	992	11,3

In a similar manner, the three parties (AKP, CHP, and MHP) and the independent candidates who are close to DTP were included in the study. The other marginal parties were excluded.

Political Identity and Party Preferences

When we compare the voters' political views with their party preferences in the 2009 Kocaeli sample, we see that the people who vote for the AK party describe themselves as *Conservative* (29,2%), *Islamist* (21,9%), *Democrat* (15,9%), *Turkish Nationalist* (13,0%) and *Atatürkist/Kemali*st (12,1%). Although the dominant identity of AK party voters is conservatism and Islamism, the party is also supported by the other political views of the right wing.

On the other hand, the people who vote for the CHP describe themselves in the first place as *Atatürkist/Kemalist* (41.3%), secondly as social democrat (31%), and thirdly as democrat (13.4%). According to a survey, http://survey.konda.com.tr/rapor/KONDA_7HaziranSand%C4%B1kveSe%C3%A7menAnaliziRap oru.pdf (Access: 15.06.2016) the CHP voters are also the most entrenched ones. A vast majority of the MHP voters define themselves as Turkish Nationalists (63.4%), and 11.4 % as *Atatürkists/Kemalists*. Similarly, the people who support the independent candidates of DTP mostly name themselves as Kurdish Nationalists (55.1%). Within the voters of DTP, those who describe themselves as Democrats (15.4%) occupy the second place, Islamists (11.5%) the third place, and Social Democrats (%9) are the last in the list.

Table2. Which party did you vote for the Metropolitan Municipality in the *29 March 2009 local elections? Political View*

		AK Parti	CHP	MHP	DTP Indipendants	Total
Identity	Liberal	3,1%	0,9%	0,4%	3,8%	2,3%
	Democrat	15,9%	13,4%	5,8%	15,4%	14,4%
	Conservative	29,2%	3,2%	8,4%	1,3%	19,9%
	Islamist	21,9%	2,9%	6,2%	11,5%	15,1%
	Social Democrat	3,7%	31,0%	3,4%	9,0%	11,4%
	Atatürkist/Kemalist	12,1%	41,3%	11,4%	1,3%	20,0%
	Ethnic Nationalist	0,9%	0,8%	1,0%	2,6%	0,9%
	Turkish Nationalist	13,0%	6,5%	63,4%		15,1%
	Kurdish Nationalist	0,4%	0,1%		55,1%	1,0%
Total		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

The data reveals that Turkish voters fairly keep liberalism at bay. In other words, in the Kocaeli sample, though the intellectuals called as liberals are often on the agenda to mould public opinion, it seems that the effectiveness of these groups is limited only with the people describing their political view as liberal in the narrow public opinion. In Turkey, the conservative/communitarian characteristics of the culture (Çaha et.al. 2008: 133-136) and the voters' search for safety limit the interest towards the liberal ideology. Likewise, ethnic nationalism has not been able to find any response from the society. The Kurdish nationalism is restricted with just one party. Those who describe their political identity as democrat turns out to have close rates within the two parties (except MHP) and among the people voting for the independents of DTP, and the general average is around 15%.

In this sample, Ataturkist/Kemalist political identity (17.8%) comes in the first place among women, and "No idea/I do not know" (15.7%) is the second. The third and the fourth ranks are

subsequently Islamism (14.3%) and conservatism (14.1%). Among men, however, conservatism (17%) is in the first place, Turkish Nationalism (15,0%) is the second, and these are successively followed by Democrats (13,6%), Ataturkists (12,4%) and Islamists (12,4%). Some authors (Çaha, 2008:30) assess Ataturkism as "love, respect, and being on Atatürk's way" rather than "an ideological, referential framework" in voter preferences. Yet, the popularity of Ataturkism in women's preferences caused by the feeling of gratitude and appreciation towards the rights that the Republic (that is, Atatürk) provided for women should not be ignored. This situation is especially true for women supporting CHP and MHP. The major priorities of the women in AK party are Islamism and conservatism. In terms of the rates of all parties, the people who say "No idea" about their political views are mostly the women voters. It is thought that this situation results from the fact that women predominantly appreciate and assume the attributed role to themselves as home makers (men make houses, women make homes), and proportionally take less place in business life http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21570 (access: 20.04.2016). Depending on this, it can be said that they are less a part of the social life, and hence, they are less interested in politics. In the description of traditional gender roles, the public roles that require competition are usually thought of as belonging to males (Bozkurt et.al. 2015).

It was thought that the application of factor analysis would be more beneficial in order to see the loadings on the axis of thirteen questions included in the survey and evaluated as responses to the perception questions in the study and. The loading results of the axis of the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) obtained by using axis algorithm and by the varimax rotation accompanied by Kaiser Normalisation in order to provide conceptual explanation are given below (Johnson et.al.:1992, Sharma: 1996).

Factor Structure of the Questions
Table 3: Factor Analysis Results and Frequencies of the Items Regarding Vote Choice

	Factor Loads				Frequencies
	F1.Positive Qualities of the Candidate	F2. Punishing the Disliked	F3. Supporting the Liked	F4. Candidate's Party	Influential/Very Influential %
Candidates' honesty and reliability	,888				84.6
Candidate's having close contact with public	,883				81.6
Candidate's projects and words	,832				80.3
Candidate's having mayoralty experience	,774				79.7
Supporting the Mayor I regards as Successful	,633				78.7
Punishing the disliked political party leader		**,962**			**14.8**
Punishing the disliked political party		**,952**			**15.5**
Punishing the disliked mayor		**,921**			**15.8**
Positive or negative news about the candidate in the press			,850		40.3
Candidate's having the same origin as I do			,759		23.9
Promotion/propaganda campaign conducted during the election period			,699		53.1

Candidate's party **Supporting the party and its** **candidate I stand up for**				,885 ,871	76.2 82.2
Variance Explained	31,01	21,64	11,77	10,05	74.48
Cronbach's Alpha (,77, for Item 13)	.86	,95	,74	,69	--

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. KMO: .79

The Effect of a Candidate's Positive Characteristics in Voter Preferences

The studies show that the candidate's traits such as mastermind, experience, honesty, industriousness, and the candidate's party being in power influenced the preferences of voters positively. (Canöz: 2010; Güllüpunar: 2013; Çağlar et.al.: 2014, Çakır et.al.: 2014). The results of factor analysis on the voters' decisions while voting for the metropolitan mayoral in the local elections of 29 March 2009 are shown in table 3. The factor analysis made produced four new factors. The first factor (F1) gathers the candidate's positive characteristics such as integrating with people, honesty, his projects / promises, and experience under the one title.

The data has revealed that the reliability and honesty of the candidate are the most important factors in the preferences of voters (85%). However, 82% of the participants in the survey also stated that integration with the public is important. Likewise, the experience of the candidate and his/her projects and promises were considered to be important by about 80% of the voters.

Education is one of the essential factors in the formation of political identity, and any increase in the level of education influences people's mental capacity: they acquire the ability to reach information which naturally affects their values. As the education level rises, instead of traditional values, there emerges the tendency for modern/secular and democratic preferences (Welzel: 2007, Pettersson: 2007, Schwartz: 2007). In our research, it was discovered that with the rise in education level, the importance attached to the positive characteristics of the candidates also rises.

Considering the assumptions that the total of the load point factors will be quantitative, and because n=8594, it has been assumed that these values will be normally distributed according to Central Limit Theorem. Hence, in order to put forward whether the voters' demographic or biographic attributes are of any importance in their voting preferences, one way analysis of variance was made use of. (Hair et.al.: 1998, Sharma: 1996). As a result of the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), it was discovered that there is a significant statistical difference between the two components ($F=18,22; sd:5$ ve $8589\sim$;$p < .01$).
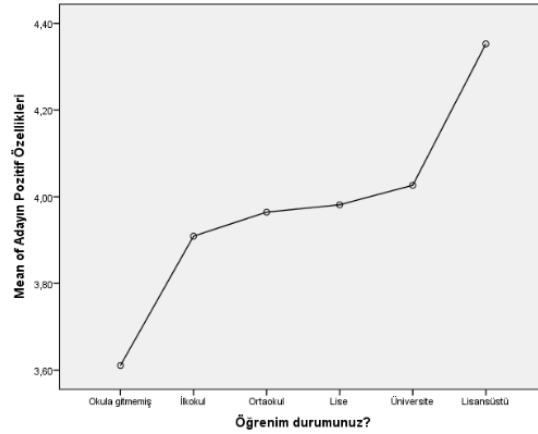
Figure 1. **The candidates' positive characteristics according to their educational background**

Here again, a significant correlation between the candidate's positive characteristics and the political view has been discovered (F=11,463;df:8;p < .05). Those who stated their political views as Islamist, Turkish, or Kurdish Nationalist attached less importance to individual characteristics of the candidate, and especially Kurdish nationalists gave more importance the candidate's party. However, a significant connection between age/sex factors and the candidate's positive characteristics could not be discerned on the voters while voting.

Protest Votes

The economists, especially, emphasize the connection between voter preference and financial performance. According to those who favour rational choice theory, voters evaluate the performance of the parties, and they vote for the party/candidate that will provide them with the greatest benefit (Çinko: 2006, Temizel: 2012). In other words, the majority of the voters are interested in their own welfare (Turan et.al..: 2015). After the fluctuations in macroeconomic variables (Bakırtaş et.al.: 2005) and political and economic turmoil, a part of the voters suffering from the crises can choose to use protest votes. The economic crisis which started in US and spread to the whole world a short time ago also influenced Turkey, and formed a social basis for protest votes.

It has also been taken into consideration that there might be other reasons for the voters (not meeting the individual expectations, disturbance about the political performance, etc.) using protest votes, and in the second factor, the scrutinizing questions related to punishing the political party, its leader, and the disliked mayor have been gathered together. F2 measures the reactive tendencies arrayed against the disliked political party leader, the political party itself, and the mayor. In this sampling, 15 % of the voters stated that they used protest votes to punish the ones they disliked. The protest votes used to punish the disliked came mostly, as expected, from the Atatürkists/Kemalists, from the groups called as social democrats (F=15,440; df:8; p < .05), from the CHP voters who name themselves as "nervous moderns", and from another opposition party, MHP (F=111,48;df:3;p < .05).

Furthermore, in order to specify whether the variables of gender, age, and education statuses produce any important effects on the points on four axes given in table 3, Spearman correlation coefficients between the points and the characteristics on the axis are given in the Matrix table below.

Table 4. Correlations

Correlations

			Cinsiyet	Kaç yaşındasınız?	Öğrenim durumunuz?	Beğenmediği ni Cezalandırma	Adayın Pozitif Özellikleri	Medya/Kamp anya/Köken	Adayın Partisi
Spearman's rho	Cinsiyet	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,099**	,204**	,071**	-,003	-,012	-,033**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,000	,000	,763	,261	,002
		N	8778	8741	8661	8248	8495	8287	8594
	Kaç yaşındasınız?	Correlation Coefficient	,099**	1,000	-,366**	-,036**	,014	-,001	-,032**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.	,000	,001	,189	,942	,003
		N	8741	8741	8632	8215	8461	8253	8559
	Öğrenim durumunuz?	Correlation Coefficient	,204**	-,366**	1,000	,090**	,065**	,021	-,053**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	.	,000	,000	,052	,000
		N	8661	8632	8661	8138	8379	8174	8479
	Beğenmediğini Cezalandırma	Correlation Coefficient	,071**	-,036**	,090**	1,000	-,093**	,201**	-,134**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,001	,000	.	,000	,000	,000
		N	8248	8215	8138	8248	8148	8012	8232
	Adayın Pozitif Özellikleri	Correlation Coefficient	-,003	,014	,065**	-,093**	1,000	,327**	,220**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,763	,189	,000	,000	.	,000	,000
		N	8495	8461	8379	8148	8495	8276	8462
	Medya/Kampanya/Köken	Correlation Coefficient	-,012	-,001	,021	,201**	,327**	1,000	-,015
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,261	,942	,052	,000	,000	.	,177
		N	8287	8253	8174	8012	8276	8287	8262
	Adayın Partisi	Correlation Coefficient	-,033**	-,032**	-,053**	-,134**	,220**	-,015	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,003	,000	,000	,000	,177	.
		N	8594	8559	8479	8232	8462	8262	8594

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A positive correlation was found between the education level and the tendency to punish the disliked. Though the obtained value seems not so important, it is significant in a sampling of 8594 subjects (r=,090; p < ,000). ANOVA was used again in order to determine whether the tendency to punish the disliked shows difference in terms of age groups. As a result, it was discovered that the tendency to punish the disliked in youth between 20-24 years of age is higher than the other age groups (F=5,425; sd:5 and p< .01). This result can be commented as age factor triggering reactivity.
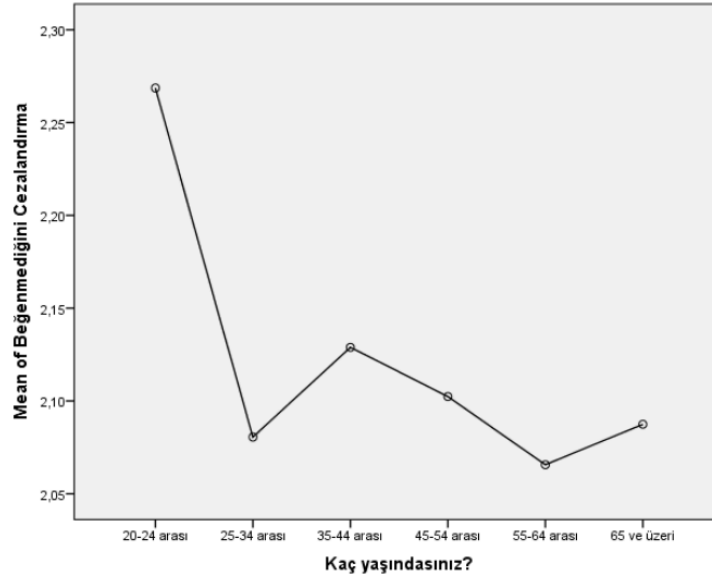

Figure 2. **Age – punishing the disliked**

Media/Campaign and Origin Factors

In a study prepared by Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu http://ipc.sabanciuniv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/T%C3%BCrkiyede-ve-Dunyada-Vatandaslik-2014-1.pdf (Access date: 05.07.2016), 78% of the voters regularly watch TV, and the rates are: 36 % for newspapers, 23 % for radio, and 34% for the internet, so we see that in Turkey, television still continues to be the basic political news source. In the course of the studies about the effects of media campaigns, it was observed that positive or negative news and effective campaigns are influential on the voters, notably on the undecided voters (Baltacı et.al.: 2012, Çavuşoğlu et.al.: 2015, Doğan et.al.: 2010, Kalender: 2000, Üste et.al.: 2007).

In a voter profile formed through media and persuasive election campaign, the third factor in our study is based on the positive or negative news about the candidate in the media, his/her propaganda activities while moulding the public opinion, and the candidate's origin the voters can associate themselves with. More than half of the voters (53 %) stated that the propaganda/marketing activities carried out during the electoral period, 40.3 % of the voters pointed out the effect of the news in the media on their choices. Among the preferences of those with post-graduate education, the negative/positive effect of the news in the media (F=2.538; sd:5 and ∞; p< .05) and the effect of propaganda/marketing activities the candidate carried out during the electoral period (F=6,843; sd:5 and ∞; p< .01) increased significantly. This determination makes us think that there is, in fact, the need to define the political preferences of the groups with high level of education by using more precise measuring sets, and by scrutinizing the responders more.

One out of every four people (23.9 %) stated that the candidate having the same origin with himself/herself included his/her preference. However, a meaningful relation between the demographic factors like age and sex could not be discerned. There is a significant difference only between education and origin (χ2=34,658, df:20; p<0.05). As the education level increased, the rate of those saying that the candidate's origin was not effective on their preferences increased. In fact, with the higher education offering people new relations and opportunities, the identity of individuals varies accordingly. Therefore, the need for ethnic or regional devotion (regionalism) decreases. However, among the people of lower education and income levels, the solidarity with the candidate of the same origin is of vital importance.

Although in AK Party and CHP the effectiveness of media/campaign and origin factors is relatively higher, the consequences partly differentiate in those defining their political views as Turkish or Kurdish Nationalists (F=2.975; sd:3 and ∞; p< ,05). In particular, Kurdish Nationalists stated that they cared less about marketing/campaign activities carried out during electoral periods and the news in the media. As observed in other factors, in determining the preferences of this group, ideology, identity and belonging outstrip the other rational factors.
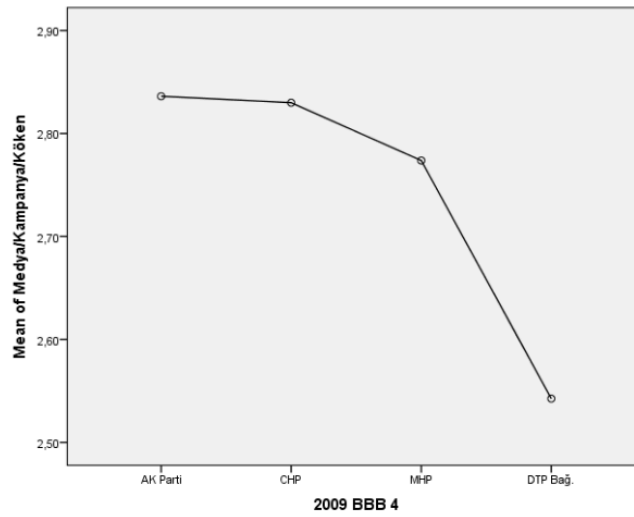
Figure 3. Media/campaign/origin factor according to the party preferences

The Effect of the Candidate's Party on Voters

Another factor as effective as the candidate's characteristics on voter preferences in local elections is the party the candidate is connected to. As a matter of fact, according to some studies, a good proportion of voters in Turkey use party-based votes (Güllüpınar et.al.: 2013, Turan et.al.: 2015). The factor of the candidate's party (F4) consists of two articles: 'the candidate's party' and 'supporting the party and the candidate the voter takes side with'. 82.2 % of those who answered the survey said, "Supporting the party and its candidate I side with influenced my preference", and 76.2 % said, "The candidate's party was effective in my choice".
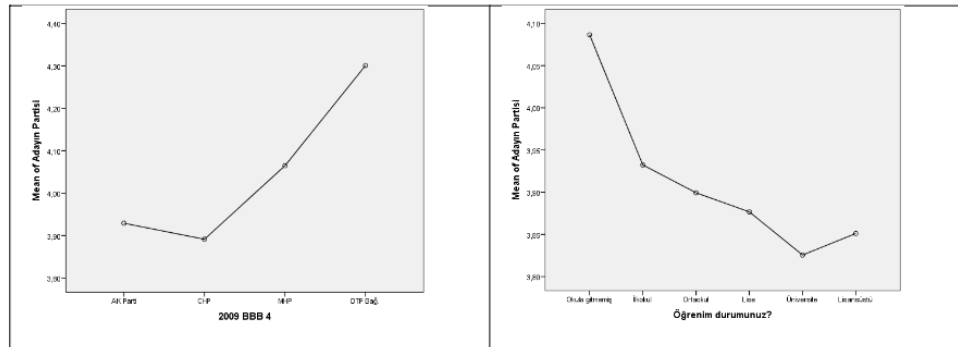
Figure 4. The distribution of those prioritising the candidate's party according to preference/education levels

In general, supporting the party and the candidate is important for all voters. However, for the voters of MHP and DTP, this factor is far more effective (F=9,797; sd: 3 and ∞ ; p< ,01). On the other hand, as the education level increases, the importance attached to the candidate's party decreases (F=5,197; sd:6 and ∞ ; p< ,01), and the importance attached to the candidate's positive characteristics increases. Although education is one of the most complained issues in terms of quality etc., it brings about significant differentiations in the individuals' attitudes.

Supporting the party rather than the candidate is much higher in the preferences of women (t:3,712; sd:8592; p< .01). Specifically, since they are less interested in politics and since they are having difficulty in learning about the candidates and their projects, determining their political preferences over the party can be seen as a short cut in determining their preferences.
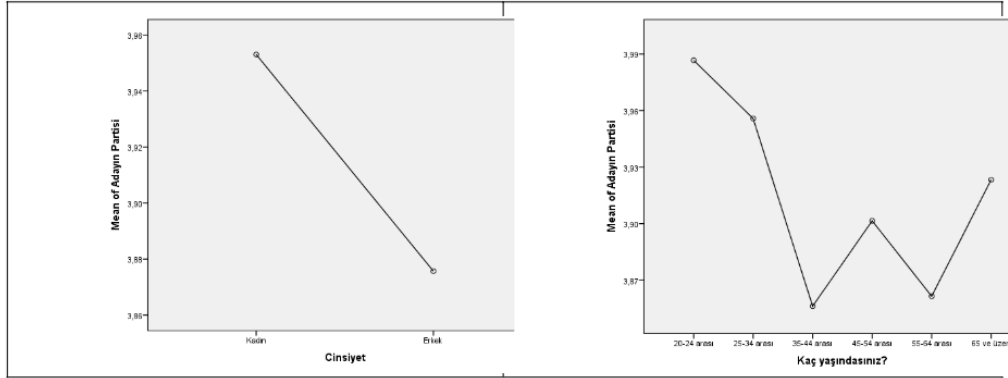

Figure 5. The distribution of those prioritising the candidate's party according to sex/age groups

Besides that, loyalty to the party is far more in the age group of 25-34 and notably in 20-24 years of age (F=4,067; df:5; p<.01). With the increase in the age (over 35 years), it was observed that loyalty to the party partly decreases. Especially for the people who are over 50, the importance attached to the candidate's characteristics rather than the party increases. This is supposed to be stemming from the fact that, in time, individuals gain experience and insight about the political processes and they thereby develop positive or negative perceptions towards politics.

Conclusion and Assessment

As emphasized before, Turkish voters are generally of conservative character, and in their political party preferences, a vast majority of voters side with the rightist/conservative parties. The party which consolidates conservative/islamist/nationalist center-right naturally gets ahead and takes the lead. Atatürkism keeps its position notably, yet liberalism, Kemalism, and ethnic nationalism find less support among voters.

Although the city of Kocaeli, where the survey was made, is considered to be the center of Turkish economy with its so called "class structure", it can be deduced from the survey that it is difficult to talk about the attitude of voting with class consciousness in Turkey when the country is compared with the newly industrializing countries. As opposed to the western example where class consciousness has lasted for centuries on account of the conflict between labour and capital, there is almost no class consciousness in Turkey. For instance, unlike the western countries, the so-called leftist parties take votes mostly from the middle classes, whereas the rightist/conservative parties

receive votes from relatively undereducated, or lower middle class people. If we are to clarify the matter with the scheme followed by the West, in Turkey the parties that are supposed to be on the left are, in fact, on the right; and the ones assumed to be on the right, have convened on the left. Hence, this issue was summarized by Küçükömer (2007) as "In Turkey, the right is the left, and the left is the right."

There is of course not just one type of modernity. Unlike the western type of modernity, Turkish modernism has been progressing on its own route. In a semi-developed country where class consciousness, as known in the West, has not been established, most of the voters' behaviours, to a large extent, are motivated, and hence, shaped in accordance with the basic needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

According to the data set of WVS, though post-materialism turns out to be high in Turkey, this phenomenon results from the fact that some articles in Inglehart scale do not work for Turkey (Esmer: 2014, Abranson et.al.: 1995). The material values for large masses in Turkey propound a more dominant view than the post-material values. Indeed, the other articles of the same data set support this. Thereby, the voters in Turkey tend towards the parties which they feel close to themselves in terms of representing their culture and identity, and on account of the belief that they would provide them with more economic success and richness.

In the study, two factors became prominent. The first one is that in the voting behaviour the candidate and the party are of prime importance for the voters. Since the study was conducted in accordance with the local election scale, the party factor, despite the candidate's characteristics, can be viewed as the most dominant factor in such elections, influencing the voters' preferences. In other words, determining the preferences mostly depends on the ideological/emotional factors such as belonging and political identity. Ultimately, the data shows that the candidate's reliability/honesty (85 %), his/her having close contact with the public (81 %), his/her experience (80 %), his/her projects and promises (80 %), his/her party (80 %), the campaign (53 %), media (40 %), origin (24 %) and the desire to punish the disliked (15%) are effective on the voters' preferences.

There is of course a mass of people who are not satisfied with their lives, who complain about the administrators for not meeting their expectations, and who, as a result, use protest votes to punish those they dislike. However, the rate of protest votes is around 15 % level within the general sample.

The second one is that the rate of those who state that the media and the campaign carried out are effective on their preferences are between the ranges of % 40-50. When different studies are analysed, it is observed that the effect of the media and the campaign is determined to be a significant factor for the undecided voters (Karahan Uslu: 2010, Polat et.al.: 2004). It can be stated that through the data of the study, the party and the candidates who design their campaigns in accordance with social expectations and values by using the mass media make positive contributions to their election success. Besides, nearly one out of every four people in the study points out that the ethnic identity factor will be effective on their preferences in the local elections. However, as can be determined by the vote rates in the local elections of the parties/candidates shaping their political thought by underlying this cultural behaviour, ethnic differences do not form a dominant factor determining political preferences on a social level. In addition to these findings, education is clearly the most effective demographic factor on the voters' preferences. As the education level increases, unlike the usual attitudes, more punishing preferences towards political figures are observed, and voting in the direction of loyalty for the parties decreases accordingly. Nevertheless, the process of political decision making is connected with various factors, and more studies on the Turkey-scale are required in order to make the social portrait clearer, and find out which factors are dominant in the country.

Our study with the analysis made through the data obtained from Kocaeli sample is expected to contribute to that need in this field of study.

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