

Left–right reversed: Parties and ideology in modern Turkey

Party Politics

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Abstract

Existing analyses of the Turkish party system suggest that it is unique in several respects. Upper-class voters tend to support the Republican People's Party (CHP), the centre-left social democratic party, while poorer voters support the right. Unlike party systems in Western democracies, expert surveys find that a religious–secular divide, and not a socio-economic divide, best explains the general left–right dimension. Qualitative literature stresses Turkey's uniqueness due to the long history of the CHP, its close ties to the bureaucracy and military, and the role of the military in politics. Lastly, existing quantitative measures of policy positions disagree about the placement of major parties. We estimate the principle dimension of Turkish party competition using electoral manifestos as data by applying the Wordfish scaling algorithm. We find that ideology in Turkish politics is reversed, with the nominally centre-left CHP employing more populist rhetoric typically associated with right-wing parties in the West, and vice versa.

Keywords

manifestos, parties, quantitative content analysis, Turkey, Wordfish

Introduction

Party competition resides at the core of politics in the parliamentary democracies. And this competition almost always involves discussions of party positioning on a general left–right ideological scale. However, the content of 'left–right' is not identical everywhere. We explore the principle dimension of Turkish politics over the course of the past decade, specifically since the radical change in the Turkish party system and the rise of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and demonstrate how it differs from the principle dimension of political conflict in West European democracies. Using a computer-based content analysis technique, we find that the left and the right in Turkey are reversed, with the traditional centre-left parties using rhetoric more typically associated with the right, and the right often using rhetoric more typically attributed to the left.

Specifically, we use party manifestos as data to uncover the latent dimension of partisan conflict in Turkey since the 2002 election. By employing the *Wordfish* algorithm to estimate the latent space, we are able to examine not only party placement on this dimension, but also the rhetoric that places the parties in this space (Slapin and Proksch, 2008). We find that the Republican People's Party (CHP), a social democratic party typically associated with centre-left politics, as well as other parties of the left, use language in their

manifestos that stresses concerns typically associated with the right in West European democracies. Traditional 'right-wing' parties, on the other hand, tend to use language often associated with the left in the West.

Our article makes two contributions to the literature. Substantively, by examining both party placement in a latent space and the rhetoric that places parties in this space, we are able to explain discrepancies between the quantitative and qualitative literature on the Turkish party system and place the Turkish party system in comparative perspective. Second, we demonstrate the utility of computer-based content analysis to examine party ideology in a transitional democracy. Computer content analysis programmes such as *Wordfish* and *Wordscores* have been used successfully to examine party ideology in established democracies (e.g. Kluever, 2009; Laver et al., 2003; Klemmensen et al. 2007; Proksch and Slapin 2009, 2010; Proksch et al., 2011), but computer-assisted techniques have been used much less frequently to examine ideology and rhetoric in transitional

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democracies (but see Sullivan and Lowe, 2010). Moreover, the nature of ideology in such countries may be less clear and may not mirror politics in the West, making an examination of the latent party space and corresponding political rhetoric all the more important.

The article begins by describing the conventional views regarding Turkish party politics and the existing methods for estimating party positions in Turkey. We discuss the problems with these approaches and the discrepancies in party placement that they reveal. We then present a series of hypotheses which we test by applying the Wordfish algorithm to manifesto data from three recent elections (2002, 2007 and 2011). While we find our mapping of parties reflects traditional accounts of the party system, an examination of the political rhetoric reveals that left–right politics in Turkey is reversed compared with the traditional understanding of left–right in Western Europe. In doing so, we provide quantitative support for some of the suppositions found in the qualitative literature on Turkish party politics (e.g. Ciddi, 2008, 2009; Küçükömer, 2002).

Turkish left–right politics in comparative perspective

In most West European democracies, economic and social issues form the basis of party systems and are central to political competition (e.g. Bartels, 2010; Dalton, 2006; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Findings from expert surveys, for example, suggest that parties' positions on a socio-economic dimension best explain their positions on a general left–right scale (Benoit and Laver, 2006). However, the same expert surveys find that, in Turkey, general left–right ideology is best explained by the positions of the parties in the religious–secular issue dimension. Moreover, unlike in the West, most of the votes supporting the major centre-left party in Turkey, the CHP, come from the richest segments of the population (Ciddi, 2008). Lastly, while West European leftist parties are generally more pacifist, in Turkey they are not. Instead, the largest leftist party has tended to have the closest ties to the military.¹

Thus, it appears clear that Turkish left–right politics is somewhat different from left–right politics in the West. The roots of political discourse in modern Turkey (and thus its differences with the West) are often traced back to the administration of Union and Progress Committee during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. Members of this committee aimed to abolish the sultanate and the caliphate, and establish a Western-style, secular republic (Ulus, 2010: 10). With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and establishment of a Turkish Republic, members of this committee formed the People's Party, which would be later renamed the Republican People's Party, or CHP (Kalaycıoğlu, 2008; Özbudun, 1976). A CHP administration ruled the country more than two decades as a single party regime. In 1946, however, the CHP government decided to allow multiparty competition – a precondition for NATO

Table 1. Turkish political parties and most salient issues (from Benoit and Laver, 2006).

Policy dimension	DEHAP (BDP)	CHP	DSP	AKP	MHP
(Vote-share in 2002)	(6.2%)	(19.4)	(1.2)	(34.3)	(8.3)
Left–right	5.2%	7.5	9.3	14.3	18.4
Secularism	14.0%	18.7	17.2	4.7	9.6
EU joining	17.2%	15.0	11.9	17.4	4.8
Nationalism	2.3%	11.0	14.9	11.2	19.8

membership. The newly founded Democrat Party (DP) won the first and second free and fair elections in the multiparty regime and ruled the country for 10 years until the military coup of 1960, the first of several military interventions in the history of the Turkish Republic. Since this coup, Turkey has witnessed an explicit military intervention in politics in each decade: 1971, 1980, 1997 and 2007.² This pattern has led some scholars to argue that military elites assume themselves to be the guardians of the secular Turkish Republic (e.g. Heper, 2005). Indeed, with the rise of the pro-Islamist AKP in the past decade, questions regarding secularism in the Turkish state, and role of the military in protecting it, are increasingly important in Turkish politics (Tepe, 2005).

From the founding of the modern Turkish Republic onwards, there have been three salient political issue areas: secularization, Westernization (taking the form of EU membership over the past several decades) and nationalism (particularly with respect to the Kurdish minority issue and Cyprus). Table 1 illustrates the positions of major Turkish political parties in 2002 on these three issues areas, plus a general left–right scale, according to expert survey analysis conducted by Benoit and Laver (2006) (it also represents party size by showing the parties' vote-share in the 2002 election). It shows that the centre-right AKP and the centre-left CHP represent the extremes on the secular–religious issue dimension. Moreover, the centre-right AKP and extreme-right MHP represent the two extremes on the question of EU membership, with the AKP being the most favourable towards membership. Finally, the centre-left DSP is more nationalist than centre-right AKP and the centre-left CHP, while, quite predictably, the Kurdish party DEHAP (BDP) possesses an extreme leftist ideology on the nationalism dimension.

Qualitative literature on Turkish parties

Because Turkish parties cannot easily be classified using the language developed to study Western European party systems (e.g. class divisions do not seem to clearly distinguish the left from the right), the existing qualitative literature has tended to describe Turkey as unique and different from the West (Ayata and Ayata, 2007; Küçükömer, 2002). Nevertheless, as the accounts above suggest, these qualitative studies still use the language of left–right ideology

to discuss the Turkish party system. Combing through the literature, we can uncover three primary ways in which the Turkish 'left' and 'right' are different from left and right in the West: the relationship between the left and the military, the relationship between income and votes for the left, and the relationship between social policies and the left.

In Western Europe, to the extent that military affairs are a partisan issue, the military is more closely linked with the right. Charles De Gaulle, the former French war hero, military general and first President of the French 5th Republic, for example, established the primary party of the French right. In instances of European states transitioning from right-wing military dictatorships to democracies, e.g. Greece and Spain, the right clearly had a closer affinity to the military, while the left has attempted to limit the military influence (e.g. Maravall, 1992; Petras, 1977). In more recent times, the German right has been more willing to send German troops abroad than the German left, and the Christian Democrats have even advocated changing the constitution to allow the deployment of military troops on German soil to help in the fight against terror, something which the Social Democrats claim would be a misuse of the military.³

In contrast, in Turkey the left has much closer alliances to the military. The only war fought in the history of the Turkish Republic against a neighbouring country – the 1974 military operation in Northern Cyprus – took place under prime minister Ecevit, the leader of the centre-left party CHP, and the left has used this conflict to its political advantage (Ciddi, 2008).⁴ Uslu (2008: 79) argues that the Cyprus operation was particularly important for Turkish nationalism because it was the first military victory after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire: 'Because of the Cyprus operation of the Turkish military, Turkish society was able to get rid of the ashamed feeling of collapsed empire. With this operation, the Turkish military for the first time faced its enemy and defeated it.' More importantly, the CHP's use of military rhetoric did not end with the 1974 conflict. There are several examples in which the major leftist party, the CHP, explicitly supported military influence on politics, particularly over the past 10 years (Öktem, 2007). On 27 April 2007, for example, military generals uploaded a manifesto to the official website of the Turkish Armed Forces (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*) indicating their discomfort at the way the country was being ruled. The most important sentence in the manifesto emphasized that, 'if necessary, the Turkish Armed Forces will not hesitate to make their position and stance abundantly clear as the absolute defenders of secularism' (Taşpınar, 2007). The next day, the opposition CHP, instead of condemning the military's interventionist language, declared that the 'Turkish government should seriously consider these words'.⁵ The centre-right AKP government, however, opposed any involvement of the military in politics, stating that 'the Turkish Republic is a social, democratic, secular and

constitutional state. Within this framework, the army is only a body which must follow the orders of the prime ministry, and it has no right or authority to possess or express any ideology or thought other than those of the prime ministry' (Eligür, 2007). Such support by the left for military influence would be unlikely in an established democracy, both because left parties tend to be more pacifist and because militaries stay out of politics (Budge et al., 2001: 47). Indeed, the most often used coding scheme for manifesto in European democracies, the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), considers positive mentions of the military to correspond to rightist positions, while negative mentions to correspond to leftist positions (Budge, 2001, Klingemann et al., 2006). The CMP data also reveal that right-wing parties in other transitional democracies in Europe, such as Greece and Spain, tend to mention the military in a more positive light than leftist parties.⁶

The 2010 constitutional referendum is a second example of CHP support for the military. One of the amendments voted on in the referendum abolished the article that prohibited the prosecution of 1980 military coup leaders. Another amendment limited the power of the military courts by allowing crimes against state security and the constitutional order committed by military personnel to be tried in civilian courts rather than by military tribunals.⁷ The CHP opposed to both of these amendments; they wished to preserve the immunity of military coup leaders and uphold the jurisdiction of military courts.⁸

In addition to the left's close ties to the military, the voter profile of the major leftist parties in Turkey also makes them different from left parties in Western Europe. In Western countries, leftist parties continue to receive significant support from the poorer, working-class segments of the population, and fewer votes from wealthy voters (Bartels, 2010; Elff, 2007). However, in Turkish politics, the CHP receives most of its votes from the richest districts in Turkey. In examining the vote-shares of the Turkish political parties in different electoral districts, Ciddi (2008) finds that in most poor districts the centre-right party received significantly larger voter support than the total vote-share of two centre-left parties, the CHP and DSP. Ayata and Ayata (2007) also discuss the voter profile of the centre-left CHP. They argue that, particularly in recent elections, the working class has supported rightist parties instead of the centre-left CHP. Specifically, they write that 'the CHP is the party of the new middle class, mainly of its professional, bureaucratic and managerial members. Its urban working-class vote peaked in 1970s, but since then the poor and the unprivileged have voted mainly for the religious and nationalist right' (Ayata and Ayata, 2007: 214). They not only highlight the gap between the poor and the CHP, they also propose an explanation for this gap. According to them, the radical CHP reforms enacted during the single-party regime created alienation of the masses on the periphery from the CHP.

Lastly, the social policy agenda of the centre-left in Turkey is significantly different from the agenda of parties in Western democracies. Ayata and Ayata (2007) state that ‘the center-left political parties in Turkey are far from being perceived in public opinion as determined advocates of strong social policies and the welfare state, which in West European countries has been the main source of legitimacy and strength of the social democratic parties’ (p. 230). They argue that while West European leftist parties have mostly succeeded in devising new social and economic policies as a response to the changing circumstances in recent decades, the centre-left parties in Turkey, particularly the CHP, have failed to create new economic and social policy agendas. They further argue that in recent decades the working class has significantly grown in size, while trade unions have steadily weakened. Meanwhile new areas of polarization emerged among the members of the working class along economic, religious, and ethnic lines. Ayata and Ayata (2007) claim that CHP’s reaction to these changes was to ‘abandon its commitment to social policy, the expansion of the welfare state, and income redistribution’ (p. 216).

The qualitative literature attempts to address the sources of Turkey’s uniqueness by taking an historical approach to explain the structure of the party system. Ciddi (2008), for example, argues that the CHP fails to attract support from the poor because it is a ‘state-founding’ party – it formed the government in a single-party regime from 1923 to 1950 – and therefore attracts the support of the elite. Ciddi (2009) also suggests that the party’s historical roots are a major obstacle to reforms aimed at pursuing a more liberal political agenda. He writes: ‘The party is perhaps failing to internalize ideological ‘change’ and ‘revisionism’ because such traits are not embedded within its ‘genetic composition’. A party founded on a discourse of elite-led modernization continues to stress and thrive on what it believes to be in the people’s and nation’s interest rather than adapt itself to accommodate what voter niches believe to be in their interests’ (Ciddi, 2008: 444).

Küçükömer (2002) takes the discussion one step further and places the Turkish political parties in the reverse order on the general left–right ideological spectrum, challenging the traditional wisdom. According to him, the CHP emerged from bureaucratic-statist roots, which can be traced all the way back to the 1807 *Yeniçeri Ayaklanması* (Janissary Revolt).⁹ He argues that the Janissaries were against any reforms to the existing military system. He then traces the history of the Janissaries to the *Jön Türkler* (Young Turks) and the *İttihat ve Terakki Komitesi* (Union and Progress Committee), which ruled the country during the last decade before the Ottoman Empire collapsed. He argues that although the Union and Progress Committee was formed with the aim of revising the existing political regime, the members of the Committee, who later formed the CHP and ruled the country for 27 years in a single-party system, preserved the regime that they had created. According to

Küçükömer, they did not allow any bottom-up reforms during their administration between 1923 and 1950.

Because of this unwillingness to reform, Küçükömer argues that what the Turkish politics literature claims as centre-left (because of the Young Turks’ association with the international socialist movement) is actually the conservative right when we consider the issue from a Western perspective. According to Küçükömer, centre-right parties such as the DP, which was the winner of the first free and fair multiparty elections, and the ones coming from the same tradition, were challenging the status quo and advocating revision and reformation. In this respect these parties are leftist parties, although the literature and the parties themselves argue that they are centre-right. In short, the qualitative literature points to ways in which Turkey differs from the West, and also suggests that the relationship between left and right may actually be reversed.

Quantitative literature on Turkish politics

The quantitative literature tends not to address the question of whether left and right are reversed in Turkey. However, the two most prominent measures of Turkish parties in comparative perspective – expert surveys conducted by Benoit and Laver (2006) and coding of party manifestos from the CMP (Budge et al., 2001; Klingemann et al., 2006) – disagree about the placement of the parties on the left–right scale. The Benoit and Laver survey places the parties from left to right as follows: CHP–DSP–ANAP–DYP,¹⁰ while the CMP places them thus: CHP–DYP–DSP–ANAP.¹¹ While they agree on the placement of the CHP on the left, they disagree about the positions of the other three parties. In particular, Benoit and Laver place the DYP on the centre-left closest to the CHP, while the CMP places them on the far right. The qualitative literature would tend to agree with the Benoit and Laver placement, but the shifts found when examining manifesto data again raise questions about the nature of left–right politics.

In addition to placing parties on a general left–right scale, Benoit and Laver (2006) examine the specific issue dimensions that best explain these left–right positions. They asked their country specialist respondents to position the parties, not only on the general left–right dimension, but also on issue specific left–right policy scales such as economic, social, environmental, immigration, foreign and secularism. They found that in most of the Western nations economic and social positions best predict party positions on the general left–right scale. They further claim that the dominance of socio-economic left–right is a unique characteristic of Western political systems. According to their analysis, religion in Turkey, security and Palestinian statehood in Israel and nationalism in Japan are the dimensions that best explain left–right conflict dimensions in these countries.

Budge et al (2001), using their party position data based on hand-codings of manifestos from the CMP, also discuss

the uniqueness of Turkish case. They write that ‘Turkey [. . .] presents a particular case – the only one where the army continues to intervene in the semi-democracy, which indeed was only restored in 1983’ (p. 35). They argue that the military in Turkey constantly monitors the political system and intervenes in the political process whenever it sees threats to the secular norms of the state: ‘The army is unusual in working to uphold a secular modernizing republic against threats from Islamic traditionalists or Kurdish secessionists. It will tolerate political parties and political competition provided they do not transgress State values.’

Where the qualitative literature generally agrees about the nature of the Turkish party system, it tends to point to various sources of Turkey’s uniqueness. The quantitative literature, in contrast, attempts to place Turkey in comparative perspective. However, the two main sources of data on party politics in Turkey disagree on the placement of Turkish parties, and the primary dimensions that this drives left–right placement.

Our approach: Computer-based content analysis

We offer a new approach to estimating party positions in Turkey that allows us not only to examine a unidimensional left–right space, but also the parties’ rhetoric that places them in this space. Thus, we can explore the nature of left–right politics in Turkey and compare our estimated dimension to left–right politics in the West. To estimate the primary latent dimension of political competition we employ Wordfish, a computer-based content analysis technique that uses a parametric scaling model to extract a single dimension from text data (Slapin and Proksch, 2008). We use as data Turkish party manifestos from the 2002, 2007 and 2011 elections – the era following the founding and rise to dominance of the AKP. Wordfish assumes that the content of manifestos reflects a latent political ideology. This manifests itself in the relative word usage of politicians as they craft their policy statements as part of an electoral campaign. Unlike other estimation techniques, such as Wordscores (Laver et al., 2003), Wordfish does not require researchers to anchor the ends of the political space by assigning reference texts.¹² Nor does it require the creation of dictionaries to specify which words represent the extremes of the political space (e.g. Laver and Garry, 2000). The positions of all words, as well as parties, are estimated. Like other scaling techniques that estimate ideology using roll-call votes (Clinton et al., 2004, Martin and Quinn, 2002; Poole and Rosenthal, 1997), the nature of the dimension we extract must be interpreted *ex post*. Precisely because of the inconsistencies and disagreements about the nature of Turkish party politics in the qualitative and quantitative literature, the unsupervised nature of the Wordfish algorithm makes it perfectly suited for our task – we do not wish to impose any *a priori* ‘knowledge’ about

the party system on our data, as this may bias our findings towards one account in the literature over another. Instead, we examine how the words parties use in their manifestos place them on the dimension we estimate. We use this information to interpret the nature of the dimension and compare it with parties in Western Europe.

Wordfish operates by assuming that a Poisson process, the simplest statistical count distribution, generates word frequencies in texts. The systematic component of this process is captured by four set of parameters: document (party) positions, document (party) fixed effects, word weights (discrimination parameters) and word fixed effects.¹³ Word fixed effects capture the fact that some words need to be used much more often than others in a language. Such words (e.g. conjunctions or articles) may serve a grammatical purpose but have no substantive or ideological meaning. The document-fixed-effect parameters control for the possibility that some documents in the analysis may be significantly longer than others. Of greatest interest are the parameters capturing the positions of the party documents in the latent, unidimensional space, and the word discrimination parameters, which tell us which words discriminate between parties on this dimension.¹⁴

Hypotheses

We expect Wordfish to place the traditional left-wing parties, such as the CHP, on one end of the estimated dimension, and traditional right-wing parties, such as the MHP, on the opposite end of the dimension. Because scaling models, such as Wordfish and other IRT methods, are only identified to a polarity (see Clinton et al., 2004; Rivers, 2003), and because the nature of left–right politics in Turkey is unclear, we cannot say which end of this estimated dimension represents the ‘true left’. Instead, we turn to an examination of the word weight parameters to examine the nature of political rhetoric. Based on the qualitative accounts in the literature, we expect words typically associated with the right in the West to discriminate parties in Turkey by placing documents that use these words on the left. Moreover, we expect words typically associated with the left in the West to be associated with the right in Turkey. We can summarize these expectations in two hypotheses:

1. *Party Placement Hypothesis*: The CHP and other traditional left parties will be located at one end of the estimated dimension, while the MHP and traditional right parties will be located at the opposite end of the dimension.
2. *Word Discrimination Hypothesis*: Words associated with the side of the dimension on which the CHP is located will tend to reflect concerns associated with right-wing parties in the West, while words that place documents on the opposite end of the spectrum will reflect concerns of the left in Western democracies.

Table 2. Parties' seat-shares according to elections results between 1991 and 2011.

Election year	RP(FP,SP)	ANAP	DYP	DSP	MHP	CHP(SHP)	AKP
1991	62	115	178	7	0	88	0
1995	158	132	135	76	0	49	0
1999	111	86	85	136	129	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0	178	363
2007	0	0	0	0	71	112	341
2011	0	0	0	0	53	135	327

Table 3. WORDFISH output.

Popular vote in 2011 election (%)	Party	Manifesto year	Omega: Simulation mean	Confidence interval
13.01	MHP	2011	2.14	(2.12, 2.17)
13.01	MHP	2007	1.97	(1.95, 2.00)
13.01	MHP	2002	1.74	(1.71, 1.77)
49.83	AKP	2002	0.64	(0.59, 0.69)
0.25	DSP	2011	-0.04	(-0.08, 0.00)
1.27	SP	2011	-0.21	(-0.24, -0.18)
0.77	HAS	2011	-0.33	(-0.36, -0.30)
49.80	AKP	2007	-0.36	(-0.37, -0.34)
0.30	ODP	2007	-0.38	(-0.43, -0.32)
0.25	DSP	2002	-0.40	(-0.42, -0.38)
0.30	ODP	2002	-0.45	(-0.51, -0.39)
49.80	AKP	2011	-0.46	(-0.48, -0.45)
0	IP	2007	-0.55	(-0.59, -0.50)
25.98	CHP	2007	-0.76	(-0.77, -0.74)
25.98	CHP	2011	-0.79	(-0.80, -0.77)
25.98	CHP	2002	-0.82	(-0.84, -0.80)
0.30	HEPAR	2011	-0.95	(-0.98, -0.93)

Data

We estimate positions for 17 election manifestos from 9 distinct parties for the parliamentary elections held in 2002, 2007 and 2011.¹⁵ The 2002 election represents a significant breakpoint in Turkish politics. Before 2000, political competition revolved around four main parties – the Welfare Party (RP/FP), Motherland Party (ANAP), True Path Party (DYP) and Democratic Leftist Party (DSP). In the decade following, the AKP, CHP and MHP came to dominate politics. In fact, the first, third, fourth and fifth largest parties in the 1999 elections all failed to win parliamentary seats in the 2002, 2007 and 2011 elections. Scholars have uncovered both political and economic reasons for the collapse of the existing Turkish party system in the 1990s (Çarkoğlu, 2012; Öniş, 2009). Table 2 displays this important shift in terms of parliamentary seat-shares. The major shift in the structure of the party system means that a longer time series analysis using Wordfish is infeasible. Proksch and Slapin (2009) have found that when analyses are conducted over long time spans containing major changes to the party system, the Wordfish algorithm tends to pick up changes across time, while the differences

between parties within a particular time period are artificially reduced. While a separate analysis focusing on 1990s may be worth conducting, it is beyond the scope of this study.

Here we briefly describe all of the parties found in our current dataset in roughly the order of votes they receive:¹⁶

1. The Justice and Development Party – **AKP** (2002, 2007, 2011): The ruling centre-right party, founded in 2001, generally seen as pro-Western and mildly Islamist.
2. Republican People's Party – **CHP** (2002, 2007, 2011): The largest opposition party, generally seen as centre-left, and the oldest party in Turkey, which ruled the country between 1923 and 1950 in a single party regime.
3. Nationalist Movement Party – **MHP** (2002, 2007, 2011): Ultranationalist right-wing party and third largest party.
4. Democratic Leftist Party – **DSP** (2002, 2011): Small centre-left party that emerged following a split with the CHP in 1985. In 2007, DSP made an electoral coalition with CHP.
5. Workers' Party – **IP** (2007): Small left-wing party with an emphasis on socialism, secularism and nationalism.
6. Rights and Equality Party – **HEPAR** (2011): Minor party founded by former military general in 2008 emphasizing nationalism and social justice.
7. People's Voice Party – **HAS** Party (2011): Small religious conservative party founded in 2010.
8. Freedom and Democracy Party – **ODP** (2002, 2007): Small leftist, anti-capitalist, green, pro-European party.
9. Felicity Party – **SP** (2011): Islamist party, which was founded in 2001.

A term-document matrix was created from all available manifestos using the Jfreq program (Lowe 2011).¹⁷ This software counts the number of unique words across all documents and creates a matrix indicating the frequencies of the words found in each text.¹⁸ The *Wordfish* algorithm then takes this matrix as its input and creates a unidimensional spectrum on the basis of these data.

Table 4. Words associated with rightist parties in Turkish politics.

abusing	debenture bond	identity	poverty	service
actor	deficiencies	illnesses	powers	size
agreement	definition	innovations	precaution	solution
ally	degeneration	judge	presenter	space
altogether	deterrent	jurisprudence	prestige	sportsmen
analyses	development	imbalance	priorities	stability
assets	disaster	import	privatization	stock
authorization	donation	ineffective	procurement	stock market
ballot box	down	information	profit	strategy
believer	dynamics	justice	progressive	subjects
bloody	education	land	proportion	success
brotherhood	employment	language	psychologist	supreme
business administration	enterprise	limitation	public prosecutor	sustainability
cargo	essence	loss	rate	taxation
cartel	evidence	manager	reciprocity	tendency
central Asia	experience	market	recognition	terror
chain	fashion	methods	regime	test prep centres
clash	financing	MHP	rehabilitation	TIR
class	fleet	mission	repetitive	topics
classification	fluctuations	mistakes	report	trafficking
climate	freedom	modern	research	transportation
communities	genetics	modern	researcher	Turkish
compensation	geologic	morals, ethics	responsibility	Turkish Language
competence	gift	nation	revenue	unity
components	goals	nationalism	risk	urban
composition	guarantee	nationalist	rules	valuable
conditions	guilty	norm	sale	value
conscious	harmony	offices	satisfaction	veteran
contribution	head	opinion	season	virtue
corruption	historical	opportunities	security	voice
cost	housing	opportunel cadre	seedling	vulnerability
council	idea	pieces	selective	wastage
cultures	ideal	planning	separatism	

Note: This list was obtained from the top 300 words that have the highest word weight. Since the verbs have no ideological meaning, they were dropped. Also some words appeared multiple times with different suffixes. We preserved only the root words in those instances. Words in **boldface** would reflect a right-wing ideology in Western democracies.

Results

Tables 3–5 and Figure 1 present the results of the *Wordfish* analysis. Table 3 presents the document parameters, ω and α . The ω parameters capture positions of the documents, and the α parameters are document fixed effects. The document positions, ω , are the parameters of greatest interest to us. Figure 1 presents these positions in a unidimensional space across time. In accordance with our first hypothesis, we see that the traditional left-wing parties – the CHP, IP, DSP and ODP – are mostly aligned on one side of the space, while the traditional right-wing parties – HAS, AKP and MHP – lie mostly on the opposite side. Two exceptions are the positions for the manifestos of AKP and DSP in 2011. In this election, AKP did not use a rhetoric which is in line with the traditional right-wing parties, and DSP did not use rhetoric which is in line with the traditional left-wing parties in Turkey. We also notice that documents written by the CHP and MHP in different elections always lie next to one another. These parties do

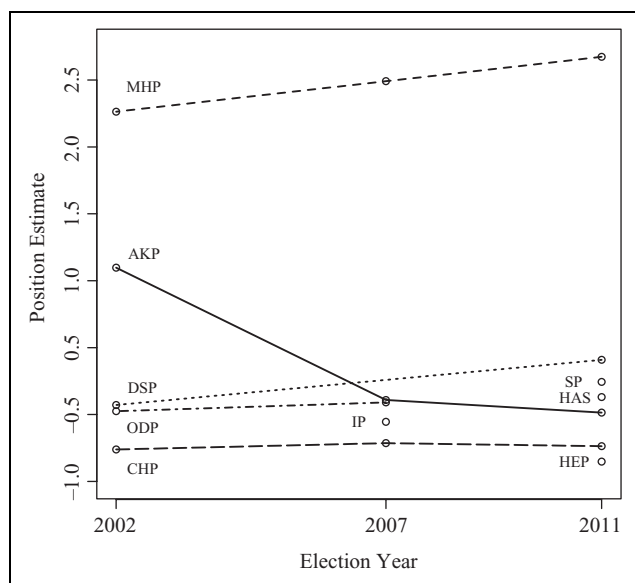
not leapfrog each other one election to the next. Lastly, for the three parliamentary parties common to both our analysis and the Benoit and Laver (2006) survey, the rank order is the same – from left to right we have the CHP, AKP and MHP.

We do, however, notice some inconsistencies with respect to the traditional view of Turkish politics. First, the nominally more radical leftist parties, including the socialist, anti-capitalist green ODP party, are located closer to the centre than the centre-left CHP. Second, HEPAR, the newly formed party run by a former military general who uses nationalist and militarist rhetoric, lies closest the CHP at the far end of the spectrum. A closer look at the results, though, reveals that the last three parties on this side of our estimated dimension take a Kemalist stance to varying degrees. Kemalism is a secular, statist, nationalist movement closely adhering to the ideology of Atatürk. To further examine the nature of the estimated dimension, and to explore the inconsistencies with traditional accounts of Turkish politics and Western notions of

Table 5. Words associated with leftist parties in Turkish politics.

access	need	health	work force	small-business person
activities	new	housing	year	socio-economic
administration	opportunity	improvement	youth	solidarity
adult	day	increase	packet	sovereignty
agreements	death penalty	independent	participation	street
agriculture	denomination	inequalities	people	student
annual	deprivation	injury	plan	subsidy
art	donation	institution	plurality	supply
artist	dormitories	international	pre-school	system
artistic	employee	judge	price	tea
bank	an exam (like SAT)	judiciary	protocol	theft
birth	examination	labour	quota	today
boarding school	expenditures	law	requirement	tourism
centres	expense	liberal	resources	tranquillity
chambers	facility	life	retiree	transportation
child	faith	livestock breeding	return	Turks
CHP	farmer	making	rights	unattended
citizen	father	medium	scope	vacation
condition	fellow citizen	minister	sector	veteran
councils	foreigner	ministry	shape	village
county	freedom	mobile	shelter	vital
cover	girl	money	shipyard	vocational-technical
culture	guarantee	TUBITAK	sided	war casualty
Cypriote	headman	nature	situation	women

Note: This list was obtained from the top 300 words that have the lowest word weight. Since the verbs have no ideological meaning, they were dropped. Also some words appeared multiple times with different suffixes. We preserved only the root words in those instances. Words in **boldface** would reflect a right-wing ideology in Western democracies.

**Figure 1.** Estimated political party positions based on manifestos in Turkey (2002–2011).

left–right politics, we now turn to an examination of the word weights that place documents in the latent space.

Table 4 presents the words that place documents on the right of our estimated dimension. These are the words

associated with the election manifestos of the MHP, HAS, SP and AKP (to a certain extent), and which discriminate these parties from the other parties in the dataset. While we can imagine rightist parties in the West emphasizing some of the words found in the table (e.g. morals/ethics, privatization, nationalism and Turkish language), many other words would not generally be associated with rightist politics. The words in boldface are words we feel are more typically associated with leftist jargon in the West. These include poverty, compensation, climate, abusing, etc. In Laver et al.'s (2003) examination of UK election manifestos using Wordscores, they find, for example, that poverty is clearly a left-wing term more often used by the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats than by the Conservatives. Likewise, Slapin and Proksch (2008) find that talk of climate and climate change is clearly associated with the left in Germany. In addition, the vast majority of the remaining terms are non-ideological in nature, which tends to be less true in Western democracies like Germany (Slapin and Proksch, 2008).

In Table 5 we present the words associated with the parties on the other end of the spectrum. These words discriminate between the documents, placing the documents that use them, e.g. the manifestos of the CHP, on the left. Here, again, some words typically associated with left, such as 'liberal', 'death penalty', 'women' and 'inequality', but many others that seem to stress more nationalist, populist and conservative concerns. These include 'Cypriote', referring to the Turkish population

on Cyprus, an issue of particular importance to nationalists. Because the invasion of Cyprus occurred under a CHP government, leftist parties have frequently used the Cyprus issue as a means to attract votes. Likewise, the Turkish word ‘şehit’, which we translate as ‘war casualty’, also tends to have the connotation of war hero or even martyr. While leftist parties in the West may lament battle deaths, they are less likely to venerate war deaths in this manner. These Turkish left parties also stress ‘sovereignty’, highlighting nationalist rhetoric not usually associated with left-wing parties in the West. Similarly, they talk of ‘foreigners’ rather than minorities. Slapin and Proksh (2008) find ‘foreign’ to be a word associated with the right in Germany, while Laver et al. (2003) find that left parties tend to talk of ‘minorities’ in the UK. Finally, these parties use rural, populist language, such as ‘village’, ‘farmer’, ‘agriculture’ and ‘livestock breeding’ that would be atypical for leftist socialist workers’ parties in Europe. Again, we see a high proportion of non-ideological words.

While the parties generally align in a unidimensional space as we would expect, the rhetoric of left–right in Turkey is clearly different from the rhetoric in the West. Nominally left-wing parties in Turkey, perhaps due to their Kemalist roots, tend to highlight concerns typically belonging to the right in the West. Likewise, the right has capitalized on some issues more commonly associated with the left in European politics.

Conclusion

This article sheds light on the nature of left–right politics in Turkey, and highlights how the primary dimension of electoral competition in Turkey is different from left–right competition in the West. Using the *Wordfish* algorithm, we scaled party election manifestos in a unidimensional space and identified the words that discriminate between parties, placing them on the left and the right. Finally, we compared the left–right rhetoric in Turkey with the rhetoric in the West. We found that the algorithm did a remarkably good job scaling the relatively older parties in Turkish politics in a manner consistent with the existing expert survey results. However, we also reveal some interesting new findings. We are able to place newer and smaller parties not covered by the expert surveys and the CMP – HEPAR, HAS, SP, ODP and IP – and find that some of them are less extreme than we might expect.

Importantly, our analysis of the word weights from the *Wordfish* algorithm links the quantitative and qualitative literature on Turkish party competition. The extant literature on Turkish parties discusses how the CHP violates the traditional understanding of leftist politics in the West, particularly with regard to military issues. This literature argues that the source of this difference can be traced to the historical roots of the CHP. Both Ciddi (2009) and Küçükömer (2002), for example, claim that the similarity between the political ideologies of CHP leaders with the bureaucratic elites (particularly the military generals) of Turkey explains why we observe a significant difference between left in Turkey and left in the West.

The results of this study confirm this difference; the analysis places all parties espousing Kemalist ideology on one side of the estimated dimension, and it highlights the set of words associated with them, in particular those words highlighting military success and nationalism. Although this study focuses on the Turkish case, it demonstrates that computer-based content analysis can be used to examine the unique characteristics of non-Western polities. Particularly, the ability of *Wordfish* to estimate the words that place documents in the political space allows the researcher to examine the nature of the differences between political competition in non-Western polities and elsewhere.

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Notes

1. Other smaller left-wing parties like the pro-Kurdish BDP or socialist green ODP are not as close to the military.
2. Note that we distinguish between military coups and military interventions. For a detailed discussion of the definition of a military coup, see Powell and Thyne (2011). The concept of intervention includes memorandums, postmodern coups and e-memorandums – in short any attempt by the military to influence daily politics and decision-making.
3. See http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/innere-sicherheit-friedrich-fuer-einsatz-der-bundeswehr-im-innern_aid_629596.html.
4. The leader of the CHP later became known as Kıbrıs Fatih (Conqueror of Cyprus) and this moniker was used in political campaigns thereafter. Right after the Cyprus operation, the leader of the CHP, who was prime minister at the time, called for early elections in order to increase his vote-share. See, for example, <http://dosyalar.hurriyet.com.tr/ecevit/karaoglan.asp>.
5. For more declarations from the CHP leaders, see <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-278832-april-27-memorandum-and-the-chp.html>.
6. For example, according to the CMP data, in the Spanish 2008 election manifestos the rightist Partido Popular mentions the military positively 47 times and never negatively. In the same year, the leftist Partido Socialista Obrero Español mentions the military positively 13 times and negatively 24 times. This pattern has held consistently over time in Spain since the transition from military rule. Greek parties show a similar pattern.

7. For more information on the content of amendments see <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/09/12/us-turkey-referendum-articles-idUSTRE68B28B20100912>
8. These amendments were two of numerous amendments, all part of the same referendum proposed by the AKP. The CHP opposed most of the proposed amendments, including these two. However, these amendments, in particular, highlight the CHP's relative closeness to the military.
9. In 1807 the group of soldiers (Janissaries) revolted against the Sultan in order to prevent the political and military reforms.
10. CHP: Republican People's Party, DSP: Democratic Leftist Party, DYP: True Path Party, ANAP: Motherland Party.
11. The CMP placement is based on election manifestos from 1995.
12. Of course, one could also have used Wordscores for this task. As a robustness check, we have run the analysis in Wordscores as well, selecting the MHP and CHP in 2011 as the reference documents. The resulting party positions correlate very highly with the Wordfish results – $r = 0.9$ for the untransformed Wordscores positions and $r = 0.84$ for the rescaled. Spearman rank correlations are also reasonably high – 0.66 and 0.73. This confirms other findings regarding Wordscores and Wordfish. Proksch and Slapin (2009) find that Wordscores and Wordfish provide similar results when estimating manifestos, while Lowe (2008) has argued that Wordfish is essentially a fully parameterized version of the Wordscores algorithm. For more recent comparisons of various methods for ideal point estimation from text, including a discussion of both Wordscores and Wordfish, see Grimmer and Stewart (forthcoming).
13. Formally, $y_{ijt} \sim \text{Poisson}(\lambda_{ijt})$, where y_{ijt} is the count of word j in party i 's manifesto at time t . The lambda parameter has the systematic component $\lambda_{ijt} = e^{\alpha_{it} + \psi_j + \beta_j * \omega_{it}}$, with α as a set of document (party-election year) fixed effects, ψ as a set of word fixed effects, β as estimates of word specific weights capturing the importance of word j in discriminating between manifestos, and ω as the estimate of party i 's position in election year t (therefore it indexes one document). See Slapin and Proksch (2008) for a more detailed discussion.
14. The actual estimation procedure employed by Wordfish is an iterative process called an E-M algorithm. First party parameters are held fixed at a certain value while word parameters are estimated. Then word parameters are held fixed at their new values while the party positions are estimated. This process is repeated until the parameter estimates reach an acceptable level of convergence.
15. Although most of the manifestos are in a machine-readable format, some required the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. The manifestos that were not in a machine-readable format were the following: CHP-2007, MHP-2007, AKP-2011. Hence, OCR software used in order to transform the documents into machine-readable format. Owing to the many diacritical marks in the Turkish language (e.g. Ü, Ğ, İ, Ş, Ç, Ö, ü, ğ, ı, ş, ç, ö), the OCR software did not perform well; many letters were improperly transformed. Hence all documents were corrected by hand using a Turkish language spell check program. The dataset represents both the major parties in the parliament and several minor parties not represented in the parliament. There is no official manifesto for the BDP, which has an organized group in parliament but does not compete as a party at election time. Candidates for this party fight the election as independents and then form a group under their original party label once in parliament to circumvent the 10 percent electoral threshold that applies to parties. They currently hold 29 seats.
16. The years in parentheses represent the elections in which the party published a manifesto. The descriptions of the parties are based on the existing literature on party politics. For more detailed discussion, see Benoit and Laver (2006), Baslevant et al. (2004), Kocabiyik et al. (2010), Ozbudun (2006), Tezcur (2011). For small parties formed recently, such as HEPAR and HAS, authors solely relied upon their own knowledge.
17. Available at <http://www.williamlowe.net/software/>.
18. At this stage we could make a number of different research design decisions; for example, words could be stemmed to their roots and stopwords could be dropped. At the moment, we do not stem words as we are unaware of any available stemming algorithm for the Turkish language. Proksch and Slapin (2009) have demonstrated that removing stopwords tends not to have a significant impact on the results produced by *Wordfish*. Likewise, they find that stemming improves estimation efficiency, but does not affect results. After obtaining the word-document matrix we dropped words that were mentioned less than six times in order to speed up the process.

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