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Party system polarization in developing democracies: the case of Turkey, 1950–2018

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines party system polarization over 19 general elections in Turkey from 1950 to 2018. Using data on party policies from the *Comparative Manifesto Project* (CMP), we show that, contrary to the common view, party system polarization is not a persistent feature of Turkish politics. We also find that party system polarization on the left-right continuum reflects party differences primarily on social rather than economic or European integration issues. Finally, our results demonstrate that the military interventions in 1960 and 1980 reduced party system polarization in subsequent elections, even when controlling for other determinants of polarization. These findings have important implications for debates on party politics, military rule, and the prospects of democratic governance in developing democracies.

KEYWORDS Party polarization; elite polarization; military; repression; issue dimensions; Turkish politics

Introduction

How polarized on policy issues are political parties in Turkey? How much has this polarization changed over time? What accounts for these changes? Although scholars of Turkish politics have long been tackling these questions, we still have only partial answers.¹ This is mainly because most studies have relied on qualitative methodologies² that enable us to identify periods of polarization but that are less useful in determining the precise degree of polarization at any given moment and its change over time. Consequently, we know less about polarization than about other aspects of the Turkish party system, such as fragmentation and electoral volatility.³

To fill in this gap in existing research, we employ party policy positions from the *Comparative Manifesto Project* (CMP)⁴ to construct a measure of party system polarization and analyze it over 19 general elections in Turkey from 1950 to 2018. In assessing changes in polarization over time, we are particularly interested in the role of military coups. Our results show that military rule following the 1960 and 1980 interventions had a powerful negative effect on

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polarization that is statistically significant even after we account for other determinants of polarization, such as the number of parties, electoral system, and economic conditions. Finally, we find that party system polarization on the general left-right scale reflects party differences primarily on the social (authoritarian/libertarian) rather than economic or European integration issues.

Political polarization has long attracted scholarly attention due to its consequences for the quality and stability of democratic governance.⁵ Elite polarization may inhibit policy making and representation by reducing opportunities for compromise, cooperation, and coalition building⁶ as well as by undermining government stability.⁷ In developing democracies, elite polarization may also hinder political and economic reforms, reduce economic growth,⁸ and result in democratic backsliding.⁹ At the same time, polarization may have positive consequences for democracy as well. Specifically, by clarifying policy choices to ordinary people, party system polarization may increase citizen ideological voting,¹⁰ strengthen their party attachments,¹¹ reduce split-ticket and invalid ballots,¹² and motivate political engagement.¹³ Moreover, elite polarization has been positively linked to democratic accountability¹⁴ and higher levels of democracy.¹⁵ In short, while the effects of polarization on democracy may be mixed, polarization clearly plays a role in its key processes.¹⁶ A comprehensive account of a country's politics is therefore incomplete without assessing its polarization.

This study contributes to existing research in several ways. It is the first study that measures party system polarization in Turkey and systematically analyzes its changes over time. While Esmer's¹⁷ paper compares party system polarization in Turkey at two points in time, we do so for the period of almost 70 years. Furthermore, since our measure of polarization is based on party electoral manifestos, we contribute to existing research by differentiating party polarization from citizen polarization. Previous studies on Turkish politics often describe party profiles by analyzing policy preferences of people who voted for those parties.¹⁸ However, conflating party polarization with voter polarization is problematic because the two phenomena do not always coincide.¹⁹ In addition, we account for the multi-party nature of the Turkish system. Earlier efforts to measure party polarization in Turkey focused on ideological distance between the two largest parties.²⁰ While this approach works well in two-party systems, it is less applicable to countries with multiparty systems, such as Turkey. Specifically, this approach fails to capture the distribution of parties along a policy dimension and each party's relevance in a system. Building on recent innovations in measuring party system polarization,²¹ we provide a more accurate picture of the patterns and determinants of party polarization in Turkey than previous research. And lastly, we go beyond existing scholarship by measuring polarization not only on the left-right ideological continuum but also with respect to economic, social, and European integration issues.

Party system polarization in developing democracies

Party system polarization is usually understood as a dispersion of party locations along a policy or ideological continuum.²² Parties adopt their policy positions in response to political institutions, such as electoral systems, and the behavior of rival parties.²³ Parties tend to be more dispersed in countries with more proportional electoral systems²⁴ and more numerous competitors.²⁵ Parties also respond to social cleavages²⁶ but play an important role in deciding which cleavages to politicize in their quest for electoral support and public office.²⁷

The patterns of party system polarization and their determinants in developing democracies²⁸ so far have been subjected to little systematic research. Some scholars suggest that developing democracies are more polarized than developed ones,²⁹ and there is some empirical evidence in support of this expectation.³⁰ At the same time, scholars find considerable heterogeneity in the levels of party system polarization in South America³¹ and East Central Europe.³² Moreover, evidence from South America reveals that party system polarization has varied greatly over time, indicating that it is not a fixed feature of political regimes in these countries.³³

Why is party polarization generally greater in developing than developed democracies? One factor that may contribute to centrifugal tendencies of parties in developing democracies is uncertainty.³⁴ While uncertainty related to election outcomes exists in both less and more advanced democracies, the degree of this uncertainty is particularly high in developing democracies.³⁵ Parties in the latter often lack established reputations, including clear policy or ideological profiles.³⁶ Moreover, parties change their positions in developing democracies more frequently than in developed ones.³⁷ In such contexts, the cost of electoral decision-making for voters is high and informational shortcuts, such as partisanship, are limited.

We suggest that high uncertainty which characterizes developing democracies enhances party system polarization. One key function of political parties in a democracy is to present relevant issues in policy bundles that voters could understand and choose from at the time of elections.³⁸ Polarization helps parties fulfill this function by clarifying party policy positions to ordinary citizens.³⁹ More distinct electoral alternatives, in turn, help voters to identify parties closer to their views and decide which party to support electorally. In short, party polarization reduces the cost of electoral decision-making for ordinary individuals, and thus enables parties to mobilize electoral support in their favor.

Military coups and party system polarization

Political uncertainty in developing democracies is not limited to electoral outcomes but involves political institutions and political regimes as well.

While general rules of politics are rarely in question in established democracies, political actors in less advanced democracies face much higher unpredictability about the shape and durability of political institutions, including competitive elections.⁴⁰ Political actors with little commitment to democratic governance may pursue their interests by ignoring, altering, or undermining constitutional constraints.⁴¹ Moreover, institutions themselves may be weak and unpredictable due to limited or inconsistent democratic experience and high electoral fluidity.⁴² In such contexts, regime interventions in the form of military coups have been often used to ‘correct’ the functioning of a political system. Research shows that military coups account for 61 percent of authoritarian reversals world-wide over the last two centuries.⁴³

We expect that military takeover of power reduces party polarization when (and if) democratic elections subsequently resume. We base this expectation on previous research showing that military regimes are more repressive than other political regimes, as they commit more human rights abuses.⁴⁴ Repression may lower party system polarization directly via government sanctions to neutralize, suppress, or eliminate some of the political groups.⁴⁵ Widespread repression decreases polarization also by bringing different opposition actors closer together, creating shared identities and incentives for their sustained interaction and cooperation, and thereby reducing programmatic and affective differences among political parties.⁴⁶

In Turkey, the military coups of 1960 and 1980 led to widespread repression that included parliament and party closures, imprisonment of political elites, and in some cases death penalty for deposed politicians. Specifically, following the 1960 coup, the former governing Democratic Party (DP) was suspended from politics, its members imprisoned, and several politicians, including the ex-Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, executed.⁴⁷ Similarly, following the 1980 coup, all parties were dissolved and their leaders arrested.⁴⁸ Thus, we can expect that the party system that emerged after the military rule of 1960–61 and 1980–83 should exhibit lower levels of polarization than before this rule.

Data and measures

We construct our measure of party system polarization using information on party policies from the *Comparative Manifesto Project* (CMP) dataset.⁴⁹ The CMP data are derived from content analysis of party electoral manifestos using a pre-established classification scheme that requires human coders to assign each ‘quasi-sentence’ in a party’s document to one of the 57 issue categories. Using manifestos to measure party stances has multiple advantages compared to other data sources, such as expert or voter judgments of party policy locations.⁵⁰ First, the CMP data rely on official party

statements made before elections, which constitutes objective indicators of party stances in those elections.⁵¹ Furthermore, the application of a common coding scheme enables researchers to compare party positions across time and space, and these measures have been shown to have high validity.⁵² Finally, the CMP is the only project that offers time-series data: it currently provides information for 19 general elections in Turkey from 1950 to 2018.

Although the CMP is based on the *salience theory* of party competition, it has been widely used to measure party policy and ideological positions. According to the salience theory, parties do not confront each other on every issue, but selectively emphasize issues that are likely to benefit them electorally.⁵³ Party positions on the left-right scale are derived by grouping issues emphasized by parties into ‘right’ and ‘left’ categories and then subtracting the overall share of left-wing statements from the share of right-wing statements, as shown in Table 1.⁵⁴ This means that party positions on the left-right scale are assessed using information of the extent to which parties emphasize left-wing or right-wing issues. The idea is that the more a party’s manifesto stresses left-wing issues, the more left-wing the party is. The CMP measure of party left-right positions has been shown to be interpretable in the same way across countries and over time.⁵⁵ Moreover, measuring party left-right positions using the CMP data reveals very similar results as using other data sources.⁵⁶

We employ the CMP data to measure party system polarization on the general left-right scale along with several more specific issue dimensions – economic left-right, social, and European integration – that shape electoral competition in contemporary democracies.⁵⁷ The left-right continuum has been commonly used as a *summary* indicator of the major issues and cleavages that structure political contestation in each country.⁵⁸ The left-right scale provides a valuable framework or heuristic to political actors and citizens to organize their political beliefs and policy choices in established and

Table 1. The Manifesto Project right-left (RILE) scale.

Right Emphases (sum of % for)		Left Emphases (sum of % for)	
Military: positive (104)	Minus	Anti-imperialism (103)	
Freedom & human rights (201)		Military: negative (105)	
Constitutionalism: positive (203)		Peace (106)	
Political authority (305)		Internationalism: positive (107)	
Free market economy (401)		Democracy (202)	
Economic incentives (402)		Market regulation (403)	
Protectionism (407)		Economic planning (404)	
Economic orthodoxy (414)		Protectionism: positive (406)	
Welfare state limitation (505)		Controlled economy (412)	
National way of life: positive (601)		Nationalization (413)	
Traditional morality: positive (603)		Welfare state expansion (504)	
Law & order (605)		Education expansion (506)	
Civic mindedness: positive (606)		Labor groups: positive (701)	

developing democracies alike.⁵⁹ In Turkey, too, the left-right continuum has been found to be a convenient tool for parties and voters to orient themselves politically.⁶⁰

To measure party positions on the economic and social dimensions, we follow Bakker and Hobolt and employ the CMP issue categories listed in Tables 2a and 2b.⁶¹ Party scores on the economic left-right scale (Table 2a) are computed by subtracting the share of left-wing from the share of right-wing statements on economic issues. Similarly, party positions on the social (libertarian-authoritarian or GAL-TAN) dimension⁶² (Table 2b) reflect the difference between the percentages of libertarian and authoritarian statements. Finally, our measure of party stances on European integration is calculated by subtracting the share of anti-integration from the share of pro-integration statements in each party's manifesto.

Party positions on these issue dimensions are then employed to compute party system polarization in each election. Following existing research,⁶³ we rely on a widely used polarization index developed by Dalton:⁶⁴

$$Polarization = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n \text{party vote share}_i \times \left(\frac{\text{party score}_i - \text{party system mean score}}{5} \right)^2}$$

where *i* stands for individual parties. Since this formula measures polarization on a scale from 0 to 10 (with 5 indicating a mid-point of the scale), we rescaled party positions from the CMP data before computing polarization.⁶⁵ The index weights party positions by their vote shares to ensure that larger parties contribute more to the measure than smaller parties, so that the measure accurately reflects party distribution along a policy or ideological scale in a system. The resulting indicator ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating that all parties occupy the same position, and 10 – a maximum level of polarization when all parties are divided between the two opposite ends of the scale.

Table 2a. Economic left-right scale.

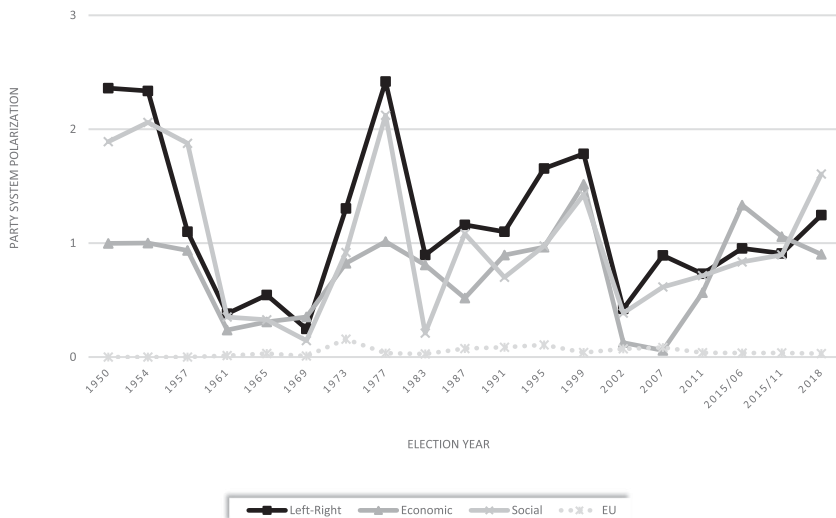
Right Emphases (sum of % for)		Left Emphases (sum of % for)	
Free enterprise (401)		Regulate capitalism (403)	
Economic incentives (402)		Economic planning (404)	
Anti-protectionism (407)		Corporatism: positive (405)	
Productivity: positive (410)		Pro-protectionism (406)	
Economic orthodoxy: positive (414)		Keynesian demand management: positive (409)	
Social services limitation (505)		Controlled economy (412)	
Education limitation (507)	Minus	Nationalization (413)	
Labor groups: negative (702)		Marxist analysis: positive (415)	
		Social justice (503)	
		Social services expansion (504)	
		Education expansion (506)	
		Labor groups: positive (701)	

Table 2b. Social (libertarian-authoritarian) scale.

Authoritarian Emphases (sum of % for)	Libertarian Emphases (sum of % for)
Political authority (305)	Freedom & human rights (201)
National way of life: positive (601)	Democracy (202)
Traditional morality: positive (603)	Anti-growth (416)
Law & order (605)	Environmental protection (501)
Social harmony (606) <i>Minus</i>	Culture (502)
Multiculturalism: negative (608)	National way of life: negative (602)
	Traditional morality: negative (604)
	Multiculturalism: positive (607)
	Underprivileged minority groups (705)
	Non-econ. demographic groups: positive (706)

Descriptive results

Figure 1 plots party system polarization on the general left-right continuum (shown in black) along with polarization on the economic, social, and European integration dimensions (in grey) in Turkey from 1950 to 2018. The figure reveals a considerable fluctuation in the levels of polarization over time. Consistent with previous research, party left-right polarization was at its highest (2.42 on a scale from 0 to 10) in the 1977 elections. However, it was also high in the early 1950s (2.36 and 2.34 in 1950 and 1954, respectively), and to a lesser extent in the late 1990s, when polarization peaked in the 1999 elections with a score of 1.78. Polarization levels were particularly low in the 1960s, ranging between .25 in 1969 and .54 in 1965. Interestingly, the 2002 elections mark another low point (.42), although polarization has grown steadily since then, and its score in the 2018 elections (1.25) was close to the mean (1.18) of the 1950–2018 period. Additionally, we find

**Figure 1.** Party ideological polarization in 19 general elections in Turkey, 1950–2018.

that, on average, parties have been polarized more on social (1.01) than economic issues (.76) and almost not at all on European integration (.05).⁶⁶

Looking at policy positions of individual parties (see Figures A1-3 in the Appendix⁶⁷) reveals that both the ruling Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and its main opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) have contributed to the growing party polarization in recent years. Specifically, the AKP has been moving to the right of the ideological continuum since 2011, and this move has been particularly pronounced since the 2015 November elections. However, we also see a consistent shift to the left by the CHP since 2007, and this shift has been even larger than the move to the right by the AKP over the last two decades. With respect to more specific issues, both the AKP and CHP have contributed to polarization on social issues that includes the secularist-Islamist divide. However, polarization on economic issues is largely an outcome of the left-ward shift by the CHP, as the AKP's economic orientation has changed little and to the left, thereby reducing rather than enhancing party system polarization.

Going back to Figure 1 further reveals a significant reduction in polarization following the military takeover of power in 1960 and 1980. Specifically, the left-right polarization dropped from 1.10 to .38 when we compare the 1957 and 1961 elections, and from 2.42 to .90 when looking at the 1977 and 1983 elections. In short, our results suggest that party system polarization is not a fixed feature of Turkish politics, as it has varied greatly over time. Moreover, parties have been more polarized on social issues than on economic issues or European integration. Finally, polarization declined sharply following the 1960 and 1980 military coups, in line with our expectations that repression associated with military rule reduces elite polarization.

Multiple regression analyses

To assess the causes of party system polarization more systematically, below we report the results of multiple regression analyses. Since our dependent variable – party system polarization – is continuous, we use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and estimate a first-differences model.⁶⁸ Standard OLS models assess whether the levels of independent variables are correlated with the level of the dependent variable, whereas the first-differences model looks at whether *changes* in the independent variables are associated with *changes* in the dependent variable. The first-differences model helps us obtain unbiased estimates by eliminating serial correlation in time-series data.⁶⁹ Our main independent variable is a dummy variable measuring whether an election was preceded by military rule or not. The relevant elections in our data took place in 1961 and 1983 following the military coups of 1960 and 1980, respectively.⁷⁰

Our models also include several controls identified as determinants of party polarization in previous research. As more proportional electoral systems may create incentives for political parties to spread out along the ideological continuum,⁷¹ we follow previous studies⁷² and employ Gallagher's⁷³ index of electoral disproportionality. This index captures the overall effect of an electoral system and exhibits more within-country variation than individual aspects of electoral systems, such as district magnitude, threshold, or electoral formula. Beside proportionality, we include effective number of legislative parties,⁷⁴ since non-centrist policy positions become more electorally attractive to parties in more fragmented party systems.⁷⁵ The effective number of legislative parties' measure accounts for the number of parties in a system and their legislative seat shares, so that larger parties are counted more than smaller parties. Finally, we include GDP per capita (in thousands of constant 2010 USD), lagged by one year,⁷⁶ to capture the country's economic conditions.⁷⁷

Table 3 reports the results of our estimations using party system polarization on the left-right continuum as a dependent variable. The results reveal that military rule has a consistent negative and statistically significant effect on polarization. Moreover, this effect becomes even larger in substantive terms and remains statistically significant when we additionally control for the effective number of legislative parties and electoral system disproportionality. Hence, the results confirm that democratic elections following military rule reduce party system polarization.

Table 4 presents the results of our model when using party system polarization on social, economic, and European integration (instead of the general left-right continuum) as dependent variables. Since GDP per capita is available only from 1960 and thus reduces the number of observations in our data, we report the results of our estimations with and without this control. Our analyses reveal that military rule contributes negatively to

Table 3. Party polarization on the left-right continuum in Turkey, 1950-2018.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Military Rule	-1.191* (.493)	-1.423** (.477)	-1.300* (.515)	-1.394* (.488)	-1.661* (.621)
Effective Number of Legislative Parties	—	.259 (.141)	—	.360 (.210)	.230 (.199)
Electoral System Disproportionality	—	—	-.015 (.108)	.016 (.025)	-.009 (.027)
GDP per capita (in 1,000s)	—	—	—	—	.046 (.207)
Constant	.071 (.164)	.072 (.153)	.064 (.166)	.080 (.157)	.141 (.235)
Observations	18	18	18	18	15
R-squared	.27	.40	.30	.42	.57

Note: First-differenced OLS regression estimates; standard errors in parentheses; * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 4. Party polarization on social, economic, and European integration issues in Turkey, 1950-2018.

Variables	Social Issues		Economic Issues		European Integration	
Military Rule	-2.031 (.402)***	-1.989 (.646)*	-.763 (.298)*	-.243 (.404)	-.000 (.044)	-.024 (.071)
Effective Number of Legislative Parties	.279 (.173)	.221 (.207)	.326 (.129)*	.306 (.129)	.026 (.019)	.031 (.023)
Electoral System Disproportionality	.019 (.021)	.020 (.028)	.004 (.015)	-.007 (.018)	.003 (.002)	.002 (.003)
GDP per capita (in 1,000s)	—	.157 (.215)	—	.041 (.135)	—	-.019 (.024)
Constant	.207 (.129)	.095 (.244)	.054 (.096)	.039 (.153)	.003 (.014)	.018 (.027)
Observations	18	15	18	15	18	15
R-squared	.66	.60	.52	.64	.12	.19

Note: First-differenced OLS regression estimates; standard errors in parentheses; * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

polarization on social and economic issues, but not on European integration issues. Moreover, the negative coefficient of military rule in the model of party polarization on social issues is almost three times larger in both substantive and statistical terms than in the model of polarization on economic issues. The effect of military rule on party polarization with respect to economic issues fails to reach the conventional levels of statistical significance when controlling for economic development, but this may be because of a reduced number of observations, including the election that followed the 1960 military coup. In short, our results confirm that military rule consistently reduces party system polarization in Turkey, particularly with respect to social issues.

Conclusions

Few political phenomena attract as much scholarly attention as polarization, in part because polarization plays a key role in political processes, but also because it involves both benefits and risks for democracy, as noted in the introduction. Research on Turkish politics has usually viewed elite polarization negatively, perhaps because polarization in Turkey as in other developing democracies has been more extreme than in established democracies.⁷⁸ Specifically, Özbudun⁷⁹ argued that party system polarization has been one of the most serious and persistent maladies of Turkish politics.⁸⁰ However, the question whether party polarization has indeed been ‘persistent’ and a ‘malady’ deserves closer attention, especially because no previous study systematically measured and examined it over time. In this article, we construct an indicator of party system ideological polarization using information from the CMP project and do so in a way that accounts for

Turkey's multi-party system, distinguishes party polarization from citizen polarization, and analyzes the patterns of party system polarization and its determinants for a significantly longer period (1950-2018) than previous research.

Our results reveal that party polarization on policy issues is not a persistent feature of Turkish politics, as it has varied greatly over time. Consistent with previous research, we find particularly high levels of polarization in the 1977 elections that coincided with widespread violence and armed conflict between radical ideological groups.⁸¹ However, according to our data, polarization was also high in the early 1950s, and to a lesser extent in the late 1990s. Party policy differences were especially low in the 1960s and then again in 2002 when the AKP came to power. Since 2002 polarization has increased steadily over time but remains moderate compared to Turkey's earlier periods of multi-party politics.⁸² In measuring party ideological polarization, we relied on the general left-right ideological continuum along with several more specific (economic, social, and European integration) issue categories. These indicators have been widely used in existing research⁸³ and have enabled us to measure the *degree* of party ideological polarization in Turkey in a way that is comparable over time.⁸⁴ However, summary indicators – such as the left-right scale – inevitably mask some differences in sub-issues that underly our measures at different points in time. For example, existing research on Turkish politics suggests that party polarization in the 1970s was based on an intense confrontation between anti-communist and anti-fascist forces, in contrast to the secularist-Islamist divide that characterizes contemporary Turkish politics.⁸⁵ Future research may benefit from more detailed quantitative analyses on the evolution of party positions with respect to these issues and the extent to which they have contributed to party system ideological polarization.

In explaining changes in the levels of party system polarization, we argue that the military takeover of power in 1960 and 1980 had a powerful negative effect on party ideological polarization in Turkey. Whether these results extend to other developing democracies that have experienced military rule is a question that should be examined in future research. There is some evidence that our results may indeed generalize to other countries. For example, scholars find that party ideological polarization declined following the Pinochet's military rule in Chile⁸⁶ and the Suharto's military regime in Indonesia.⁸⁷ Decline in party system polarization also characterizes many Latin American countries with frequent military regimes in the twentieth century.⁸⁸

Another fruitful venue for future research is to examine how party system polarization compares and relates to ideological and affective polarization among ordinary citizens. Existing cross-national analyses reveal low correlation between party system and mass ideological polarization, suggesting

that they should be treated as distinct phenomena.⁸⁹ For example, in Turkey, as in the United States, political parties have been more polarized than the electorate.⁹⁰ Similarly, affective polarization – that is, the extent to which people like some parties and dislike other parties⁹¹ – is extremely high in Turkey and most likely exceeds ideological polarization among political parties and their supporters.⁹² In explaining the relationship between elite and citizen ideological polarization, there is some evidence that in developing democracies citizen polarization enhances party system polarization when the levels of partisanship in the electorate are low, as unattached voters are more likely to vote for extreme parties.⁹³ Nevertheless, more research is needed to develop a comprehensive understanding of how and why party and mass polarization – both in substantive and psychological terms – influence each other and to what extent they emerge from the same sources.

Finally, research on Turkish politics would benefit from careful inspection of whether party system polarization indeed constitutes a malady. Since polarization has been shown to have both positive and negative impact on democratic governance, this research would involve assessing the extent to which the negative outcomes of polarization outweigh its positive consequences. Considering the effects of polarization more systematically would also benefit broader literature on democratization, regime stability, and authoritarian backsliding. Elite polarization may be the missing link in the causal mechanisms that connect structural features of developing democracies, such as income inequality, natural resources, and social heterogeneity, to regime stability and change.⁹⁴ We hope that our study will both enable and motivate future research in this direction.

Notes

1. Özbudun, 'The Turkish Party'; Sayarı, 'The Changing Party System'; Somer, 'Turkey.'
2. Arslantaş and Arslantaş, 'Keeping Power'; Özbudun, *Party Politics*; Somer, 'Turkey.'
3. Ibid., 'The Turkish Party,' and *Party Politics*.
4. Volkens et al., 'Manifesto Project Dataset.'
5. Linz and Stepan, *The Breakdown*; Sani and Sartori, 'Polarization,' 337; Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.
6. Alesina and Drazen, 'Why are Stabilizations Delayed?'; Indridason, 'Coalition Formation and Polarisation'; Jones, 'Party Polarization.'
7. Powell, *Contemporary Democracies*; Warwick, *Government Survival*; Maoz and Somer-Topcu, 'Political Polarization.'
8. Frye, *Building States*.
9. Enyedi, 'Populist Polarization'; Handlin, 'The Logic'; Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán, 'Latin American Democratization'; McCoy, Rahman, and Somer, 'Polarization'; McCoy and Somer, 'Overcoming Polarization'; Nugent, *After Repression*; Somer, 'Turkey'; LeBas, 'Can Polarization Be Positive?'

10. Dalton, 'The Quantity'; Lachat, 'The Impact'; Singer, 'Elite Polarization.'
11. Hetherington, 'Resurgent'; Lupu, 'Party Polarization.'
12. Ibid., 'Resurgent'; Moral, 'The Passive-Aggressive Voter.'
13. Dalton, 'The Quantity'; Hellwig, Mikulska, and Gezgor, 'Perceptions'; Moral, 'The Bipolar Voter.'
14. Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center*; Baumer and Gold, *Parties*.
15. Wang, 'The Effects.'
16. Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 'Systemic Polarisation,' 263.
17. Esmer, 'Economic Crisis.'
18. Arslantaş and Arslantaş, 'Keeping Power'; Özbudun, 'Changes', and *Party Politics*, 88–90; Söyler, *The Turkish*, 170.
19. Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 'Systemic Polarisation,' 769; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, *Culture War*; Hetherington, 'Putting Polarization in Perspective'; Lauka, McCoy, and Firat, 'Mass Partisan.'
20. Esmer, 'Economic Crisis.'
21. Dalton, 'The Quantity.'
22. Ibid., and Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*.
23. Adams, Merrill, and Grofman, *A Unified Theory*; Boix, 'The Emergence'; Cox, 'Centripetal.'
24. Cox, 'Centripetal'; Dow, 'A Comparative'; Dow, 'Party System'; Matakos, Troumpounis, and Xeferis, 'Electoral Rule.'
25. Andrews and Money, 'The Spatial Structure'; Cox, 'Centripetal'; Merrill and Adams, 'Centrifugal.' Party efforts to avoid being 'squeezed' in the center of more fractionalized party systems, however, are often checked by party motivation to remain acceptable for coalition or minority governments. See Curini and Hino, 'Missing Links,' and Dow, 'Party System.'
26. Lipset and Rokkan, 'Cleavage Structures.'
27. Boix, 'The Emergence'; Zielinski, 'Translating.'
28. Developing democracies are characterized by low levels of institutionalization of democratic institutions. See Levitsky and Murillo, 'Variation,' and O'Donnell, 'Illusions.'
29. Handlin, 'The Logic,' 75; Laebens and Öztürk, 'Partisanship,' 251.
30. Curini and Hino, 'Missing Links.'
31. Singer, 'Elite Polarization,' 182; Coppedge, 'The Dynamic'; Mainwaring and Pérez-Lián, 'Latin American Democratization.'
32. Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 'Systemic Polarisation,' 779.
33. Ibid., 'Elite Polarization,' 182.
34. Curini and Hino, 'Missing Links,' 469; Kitschelt, 'The Formation'; Lupu and Riedl, 'Political Parties.'
35. Lupu and Riedl, 'Political Parties,' 1342.
36. Ibid.; Singer, 'Elite Polarization'; Svobik, 'Learning.'
37. Dalton and McAllister, 'Random Walk,' 770.
38. Schattschneider, *Party Government*.
39. Abramowitz, *The Disappearing Center*; Lupu, 'Party Polarization.'
40. Bunce and Csanádi, 'Uncertainty'; Lupu and Riedl, 'Political Parties.'
41. Haggard and Kaufman, 'Democratization,' 133.
42. Hagopian, 'Parties and Voters'; Levitsky and Murillo, 'Variation'; Schmitter and Karl, 'What Democracy Is.'
43. Another 30 percent are due to an incumbent turnover, seven percent – civil wars, and two percent – popular uprising. See Svobik, 'Which Democracies,' 730.

44. Geddes, Frantz, and Wright, 'Military Rule,'; Poe, Tate, and Keith, 'Repression.'
45. Munck and Bosworth, 'Patterns,'; Sigelman and Yough, 'Left-Right.'
46. Nugent, *After Repression*; Wikham, 'The Path.'
47. Zürcher, *Turkey*, 248.
48. Ibid., 281.
49. Volkens et al., 'Manifesto Project Dataset.' See also Budge et al., *Mapping*, and Klingemann et al., *Mapping*. The CMP project is also known by its more recent name 'Manifesto Research and Political Representation' (MARPOR). The data is available online: <http://manifesto-project.wzb.eu>.
50. For advantages and disadvantages of these data, see Bakker and Hobolt, 'Measuring'; Budge and Meyer, 'Understanding'; and Marks et al., 'Crossvalidating.'
51. Bakker and Hobolt, 'Measuring'; Budge et al., *Mapping*; Marks et al., 'Crossvalidating.'
52. Budge, Robertson, and Hearl, *Ideology*; Budge et al., *Mapping*; Budge and Meyer, 'Understanding'; Laver and Garry, 'Estimating.'
53. Ibid., *Ideology*; Budge et al., *Mapping*.
54. Volkens et al., 'Manifesto Project Dataset,' 29. For detailed explanation and justification of this approach, see Laver and Budge, 'Measuring,' and Budge and Meyer, 'Understanding.'
55. Budge and Meyer, 'Understanding,' 101.
56. Bakker and Hobolt, 'Measuring,'; Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister, *Political Parties*.
57. Hix, 'Dimensions,'; Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson, 'Does Left/Right?'; Kitschelt, *The Transformation*; Marks et al., 'Crossvalidating.'
58. Fuchs and Klingemann, 'The Left-Right Schema'; Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge, *Parties*; Huber and Inglehart, 'Expert.'
59. Dalton, Farrell, and McAllister, *Political Parties*; Mair, 'Left-Right.'
60. Çarkoğlu, 'The Nature'; Esmer, 'At the Ballot'; Kalaycioglu, 'Elections.'
61. Bakker and Hobolt, 'Measuring,' 38.
62. 'GAL' refers to green, alternative, or libertarian, while 'TAN' – traditionalist, authoritarian, or nationalist party statements.
63. Aaskoven, 'Do Fiscal Rules?'; Han, 'Income Inequality'; Matakos, Troumpounis, and Xefteris, 'Electoral Rule'; Wang, 'The Effects.'
64. Dalton, 'The Quantity,' 906.
65. The original left-right scale in the CMP data is from -100(left) to +100(right).
66. Detailed information for each election is available in the Appendix.
67. Appendix is available in the on-line publication. Interested readers may also contact the corresponding author for a copy of the Appendix.
68. Wooldridge, *Introductory Econometrics*.
69. Ibid., 387.
70. For data measuring military rule, see Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland, 'Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited'; Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, 'Autocratic Breakdown'; and Hadenius and Teorell, 'Pathways.' In 1973, 1997, and 2007, the military threatened to intervene but did not install military rule in Turkey, while the 2016 military coup attempt failed.
71. Cox, 'Centripetal'; Dow, 'A Comparative'; Dow, 'Party System.'
72. Dow, 'Party System,'; and Matakos, Troumpounis, and Xefteris, 'Electoral Rule.'

73. Gallagher, 'Proportionality.' Data on party votes obtained from the *Turkish Statistical Institute* (TUIK).
74. Laakso and Taagepera, 'Effective.'
75. Andrews and Money, 'The Spatial Structure'; Cox, 'Centripetal'; Merrill and Adams, 'Centrifugal'; Curini and Hino, 'Missing Links'; and Dow, 'Party System.'
76. Aaskoven, 'Do Fiscal Rules.'
77. Data are from the World Bank. See the Appendix for further details.
78. Curini and Hino, 'Missing Links'; Esmer, 'Economic Crisis'; Laebens and Öztürk, 'Partisanship.'
79. Özbudun, *Party Politics*, 87.
80. See also Laebens and Öztürk, 'Partisanship,'; Somer, 'Turkey.'
81. Karpát, *Studies*, and Zürcher, *Turkey*.
82. For individual party left-right movements, see the Appendix.
83. Hix, 'Dimensions,'; Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson, 'Does Left/Right?'
84. Budge, Robertson, and Hearl, *Ideology*; Budge et al., *Mapping*; Budge and Meyer, 'Understanding'; Laver and Garry, 'Estimating.'
85. Özbudun, *Party Politics*, 93; Sayari, 'Towards'; Somer, 'Turkey'.
86. Munck and Bosworth, 'Patterns.'
87. Nugent, *After Repression*.
88. Mainwaring and Pérez-Linán, 'Latin American Democratization,'; Payne, 'Party Systems.'
89. Pardos-Prado and Dinas, 'Systemic Polarisation,' 769; Lauka, McCoy, and Firat, 'Mass Partisan.'
90. Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope, *Culture War*; Hetherington, 'Putting Polarization in Perspective'; Kalaycıoğlu, 'Elections.'
91. Wagner, 'Affective Polarization.'
92. Lauka, McCoy, and Firat, 'Mass Partisan.'
93. Ezrow, Tavits, and Homola, 'Voter Polarization.'
94. Haggard and Kaufman, 'Democratization,' 126.

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Appendix

Table A1. Variable descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Party System Left-Right Polarization	19	1.181	.662	.25	2.42
Party System Polarization on Social Issues	19	1.007	.645	.14	2.12
Party System Polarization on Economic Issues	19	.760	.402	.06	1.52
Party System Polarization on European Integration	19	.046	.042	0	.16
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
Military Rule	19	.105	.315	0	1
Effective Number of Legislative Parties	19	2.698	.961	1.15	4.87
Electoral System Disproportionality	19	12.005	9.037	2	32.22

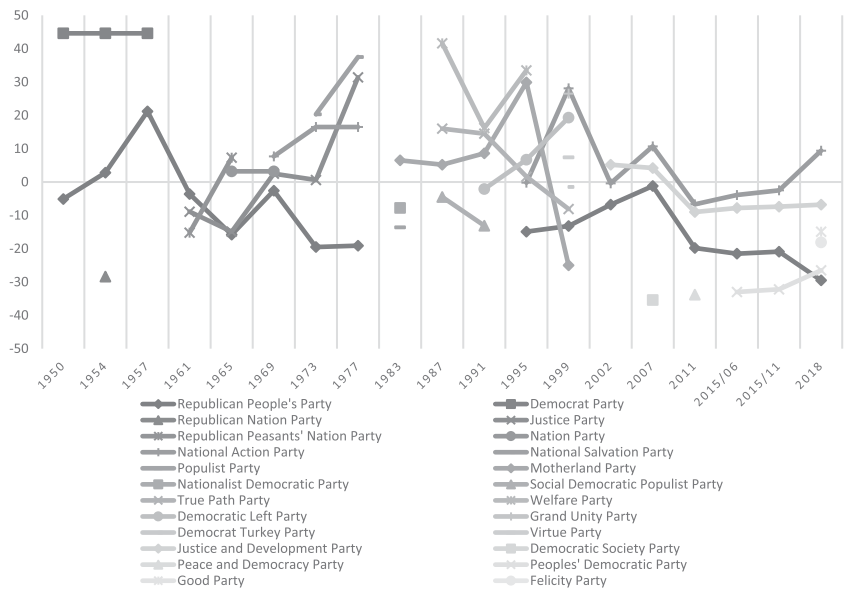


Figure A1. Party left-right positions in Turkey's general elections, 1950-2018.

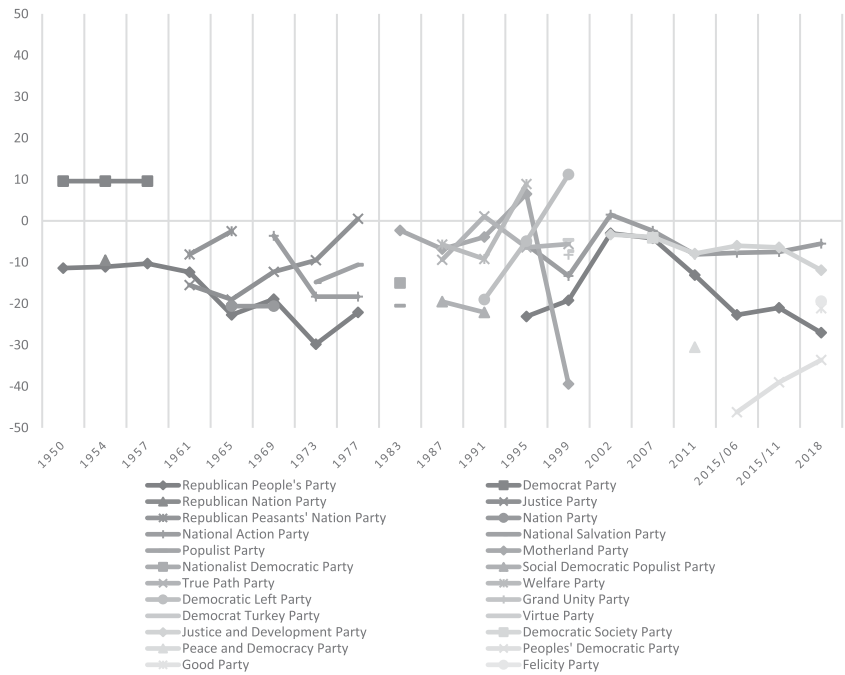


Figure A2. Party positions on economic issues in Turkey's general elections, 1950-2018.

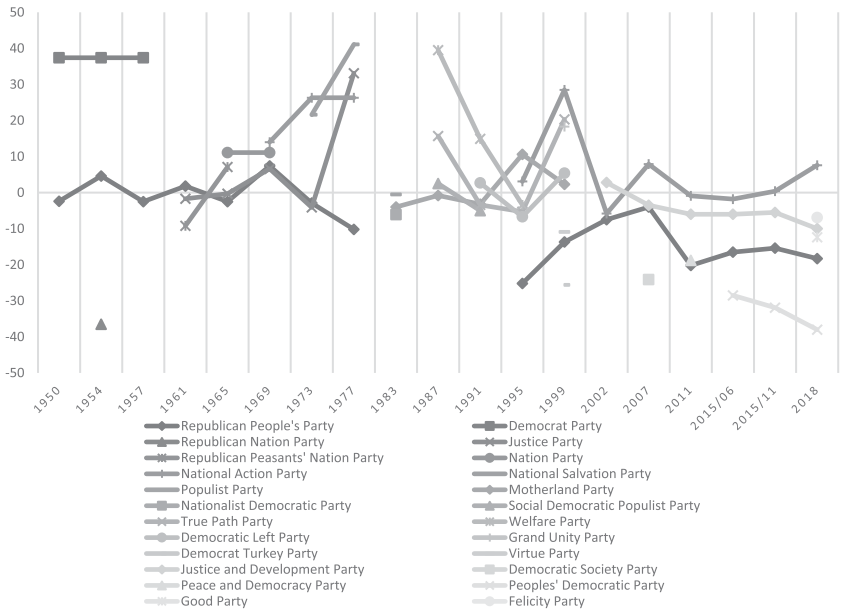


Figure A3. Party positions on social issues in Turkey's general elections, 1950-2018.

Table A2. Party system polarization by issue dimension in Turkey, 1950-2018.

Election Year	Left-Right	Economic Issues	Social Issues	European Integration
1950	2.36	1.00	1.89	0.00
1954	2.34	1.00	2.06	0.00
1957	1.10	0.94	1.88	0.00
1961	0.38	0.24	0.35	0.01
1965	0.54	0.31	0.33	0.03
1969	0.25	0.35	0.14	0.01
1973	1.30	0.82	0.92	0.16
1977	2.42	1.01	2.12	0.03
1983	0.90	0.81	0.21	0.03
1987	1.16	0.52	1.08	0.07
1991	1.10	0.90	0.70	0.09
1995	1.66	0.96	0.97	0.11
1999	1.78	1.52	1.43	0.04
2002	0.42	0.13	0.39	0.07
2007	0.89	0.06	0.61	0.08
2011	0.73	0.57	0.71	0.04
2015/06	0.95	1.33	0.83	0.04
2015/11	0.91	1.06	0.90	0.04
2018	1.25	0.90	1.61	0.03
Mean	1.18	0.76	1.01	0.05