Socio-Spatial Analysis of the Turkish Referendum and the Paradox of Modernity in Turkey

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Abstract

Turkey has been actively pursuing European levels of democracy, a production-oriented open-market economy, and culturally transparent institutionalization especially since the Justice and Development Party took over control of the Turkish parliament in 2002. In 2010, Turkey's electorate voted on a package of twenty-six amendments to the current Turkish constitution. The 2010 referendum on the constitutional reforms certainly became one of the turning points in the political history of modern Turkey. On the remarkable day of the thirtieth anniversary of military intervention (12 September, 1980), people went to polls and approved the constitutional reforms by the margin of sixteen points. In this paper, we analyzed the distribution of votes on the constitutional amendment package, compared these results to those of previous elections in Turkey, and attempted to answer the question of what this geographic distribution of the votes in the referendum means, what factors influenced such an outcome and how the results can be analyzed. We also examined the geography of those in support for and in opposition to the proposed constitutional changes.

Keywords: Turkish referendum, Turkish electoral maps, constitutional reforms.

Introduction

On September 12, 2010, the voters of Turkey approved a package of 26 constitutional amendments that had been intended to modernize Turkey's 1982 constitution. About 58 percent of Turkey's voters cast ballots in support of these constitutional changes, with 42 percent in opposition. The changes were supported strongly by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). For many Turkish voters, the referendum on constitutional change became a referendum on the Turkish government itself. Political opponents of the Erdogan government, from left to right, opposed the proposal but were outvoted by supporters of the proposed amendments.

In this paper, we analyzed the distribution of votes on the constitutional amendment package, compared these results to those of previous elections in

Turkey, and attempted to answer the question of what this geographic distribution of the votes in the referendum means, what factors influenced such an outcome and how the results can be analyzed. We also examined the geography of those in support for and in opposition to the proposed constitutional changes. These analysis provides valuable insights into Turkey's perception of itself as a crossroads of Europe and Asia, and how this perception and how differing views on Turkey's future vary in different parts of the country. The analysis also sheds light on the process of democracy in Turkey. Little research has been undertaken on the electoral geography of Turkey and other non-Western democracies, and thus this paper fills an important gap in the literature on democracy outside Europe and the United States.

Turkey and its political structure

Located along the historic crossroads of Europe and Asia, Turkey is currently working to establish its identity as a democratic country. Having applied for membership into the European Union, Turkey has been actively pursuing the implementation of European-style democracy and economic development. At the same time, Turkey is the largest country in Southwest Asia and many Turkish leaders advocate that Turkey should expand its influence in the Islamic world.

Modern Turkey was part of the Ottoman Empire, which present-day Turkey and surrounding areas in southeastern Europe, Southwest Asia, and North Africa for more than 500 years before World War I. The Ottoman Empire was dissolved formally in 1922. Turkey was recognized as the successor state to the Ottoman Empire in 1923. Mustafa Kemal, who had led Turkish nationalist forces in an effort to dismember the Ottoman Empire prior to its dissolution, became Turkey's first President. He was given the surname Ataturk or "Father of the Turks." Under Ataturk's rule, a new constitution went into effect in 1924.

Ataturk and his political party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), emphasized Turkish economic development and its emergence as a secular state until his death in 1938. After Ataturk's death, CHP continued to be Turkey's ruling party and leading political institution committed to Ataturk's reforms and ideologies. Turkey operated under one-party rule until after World War II, when Turkey began to function as a multi-party parliamentary democracy. However, the Turkish military has regarded itself as the guarantor of the Turkish constitution since the days of Ataturk. On several occasions, the Turkish military has intervened in civilian affairs through coups d'etat.

Turkey today is a multi-party parliamentary democracy, in which elections have been generally contested among several competing parties since 1945. Turkish politics has been characterized by an ongoing rivalry between two main groups of political parties. Some parties advocate a continuation of Ataturk's legacy, which emphasizes secularism and state-controlled economic development. These parties are known as Kemalist[1] parties, after Ataturk's

original surname. CHP, which was founded by Ataturk himself, remains the largest and most influential Kemalist political party.

The most important opposition parties tend to advocate a combination of populism, small-scale economic development, and adherence to Islamic principles in government in contrast to the strongly secular orientation of the Kemalists. The largest and most successful of these anti-Kemalist parties is the Justice and Development Party (AKP). In 2002, AKP won a majority of seats in Parliament (Table 1). As AKP's leader, Erdogan became Turkey's Prime Minister. AKP retained its parliamentary majority in the 2007 election. Although AKP did not refer to itself specifically as an Islamist party, it drew much of its support among non-elites in peripheral areas of Turkey. However, AKP has remained less popular in parts of northwestern Turkey and other western coastal cities such as Izmir. AKP's surprise win in the general election in 2002 opened deep concerns about how an Islamist party would govern the country. Military officials, high-ranking members of the judiciary, and leaders of the CHP expressed particular concern.   Military leaders did not rush to intervene but hoped that AKP would lose its public support and legitimacy in the following election (Guntera & Yavuz, 2007). However, in the following national and local elections AKP consolidated its public support and expanded its support throughout Turkey (Erdem, 2010). During the nine-year administration of AKP under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdogan, Turkey has changed tremendously and confirmed its candidacy for membership in the European Union (EU) by accelerating economic and democratic reforms.

Table 1. Parliamentary election vote distribution in 2002

Party	Percentage	Number of Seats in the Parliament
AKP (Justice and Development Party)	32.28	363
CHP (Republican People's Party)	19.39	178
MHP (National Action Party)	8.39	0
DYP (True Path Party)	9.54	0
GP (Young Party)	7.25	0
Independents	1.00	9

CHP remains Turkey's chief opposition party. Many military officers and civilian bureaucrats have also opposed AKP's government. On several occasions, Turkey's Constitutional Court has blocked or overturned legislation passed by the AKP-majority Parliament. AKP launched the drafting of a new civilian and democratic constitution within the framework of the EU reforms that had been required for eligibility for EU membership (Bolme & Ozhan, 2010). AKP's first attempt to draft a new constitution, which would have been

the first civilian-coordinated constitution in the political history of Turkey, failed to come to the floor of the parliament in 2007. After this failure, AKP's leaders decided to abandon efforts to replace the existing constitution. Instead, they proposed twenty-six changes in the current constitution. These proposed amendments were passed by Parliament and submitted to the voters in the September 2010 referendum.

In the history of modern Turkey, four constitutions have been adopted (1921, 1924, 1961, and 1982). The last two constitutions were written in the aftermath of military coups. Both were written and implemented without negotiations, bargaining and debates within sitting Parliaments (Bolme & Ozhan, 2010; Kocak & Andic, 2008). The 1961 constitution was drafted by the twenty members of Constitutional Committee which was formed among the Republican People's Party and Republican Peasants' Nation Party (Giritli, 1962). Similarly, the 1982 constitution was drafted by the Advisory Council under the supervision of National Security Council two years after the military intervention of 1980. The 1982 constitution contained many limitations on individual rights, cultural diversity and liberal economic development. On these grounds, it was criticized by EU member states and it has been revised sixteen times (EUbusiness, 2010).

The 26 proposed amendments can be divided into two broad categories. The first group included "amendments regarding fundamental rights and freedoms, thus aimed to bring about a more liberal and rights-based approach to the relationship between the individual and the state" (Bolme & Ozhan, 2010). These reforms emphasized protecting the rights of children, women, disabled individuals, the elderly, widows and orphans of martyrs, invalids and veterans. These constitutional changes also included removal of restricting the freedom to travel abroad and revising the rights of individuals to have access to their personal data or demand that their data be protected, corrected or removed.

The second part of the constitutional reform package affected the political power of the judiciary and the military. The judiciary was to be operated in a more democratic and participatory manner. The power of the military was to be curbed, for example by limiting military jurisdiction over civilians (Parkinson, 2010). These proposals generated strong opposition from Turkey's military and judiciary as well as from opposition parties.

The referendum on the constitutional reform has brought to the surface an interesting political map of Turkey. This political map can be interpreted with respect to Turkey's major geographic regions (Figure 1). Broadly, Turkey's voting population were divided into three segments. The first consists of those who were in favor of democratic and liberal changes parallel to Copenhagen criteria of the European Union (Alessandri, 2010). This group included AKP and some other political parties such as the Islamist Felicity Party (SP), which was formed by former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, and the Great Union Party (BBP), which was formed by Muhsin Yazicioglu who died in a recent helicopter crash. In addition to this group, chambers of commerce that are

mainly associated with new bourgeoisie of Anatolian cities strongly supported these constitutional changes for the sake of establishing European levels of democracy and liberal open markets (Gulec, 2010). Recently formed Kurdish non-governmental organizations and chambers of commerce located in eastern Turkey also joined in supporting the changes not only to create conditions of fair trade but also to build regional prosperity and peace in the eastern flank of Turkey. In addition to all, many academicians, members of the artistic community, and victims of the 1980 military coup supported the constitutional reform. Broadly speaking, all these political parties and non-governmental organizations have grounded their arguments around the slogan "not enough but YES". Their ultimate wish, however, was to create an entirely new constitution.

The second segment included those who were interested in a revolutionary radical change toward establishing a constitutional right for the regional autonomy of the Kurdish people. This group mainly included members of Peace and Democracy Party, BDP, along with leftist organizations whose members disapproved of the proposed changes in the current constitution and advocated for a more inclusive brand new constitution. Their disagreement with the proposed changes focused on the reform's inadequacy for building a better society and bringing essential rights for the Kurdish people. BDP for instance highlighted three conditions for a possible support of the constitutional changes: a constitutional promise to address the Kurdish problem, bringing down the representational threshold[2] to five percent from ten, and release of political prisoners (Bulun, 2010). Since none of these conditions were included by the government, members of the BDP decided to boycott the referendum by simply not going to the polls. However, members of the Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) openly criticized the major Kurdish party's, BDP, boycott decision and emphasized the vitality of Kurdish people's participation in the referendum.

The main opposition parties and other important state institutions opposed the proposed constitutional changes. The statist left-of-center party CHP and the nationalist-right-wing party, Nationalist Action Party (MHP), came together to mobilize voters against the constitutional reform even though both parties are associated with different places on the Turkish political spectrum. It might be understandable why CHP wants to keep the status quo[3] considering its history of political power and its desire to preserve strong centralism (Ergil, 2010). However, it is harder to understand why MHP, as one of the major victims of the 1980 military intervention, sided with the opposition to the change in the 1982 constitution, which created a legal shield for the executers of the 1980 coup, and unsolved murders and imprisonments without a trial (Torun, 2010).

In addition to this segment, two other important sections of the government opposed to this constitutional change: judicial and military bureaucracy. Their opposition is understandable because the change in the constitution di-
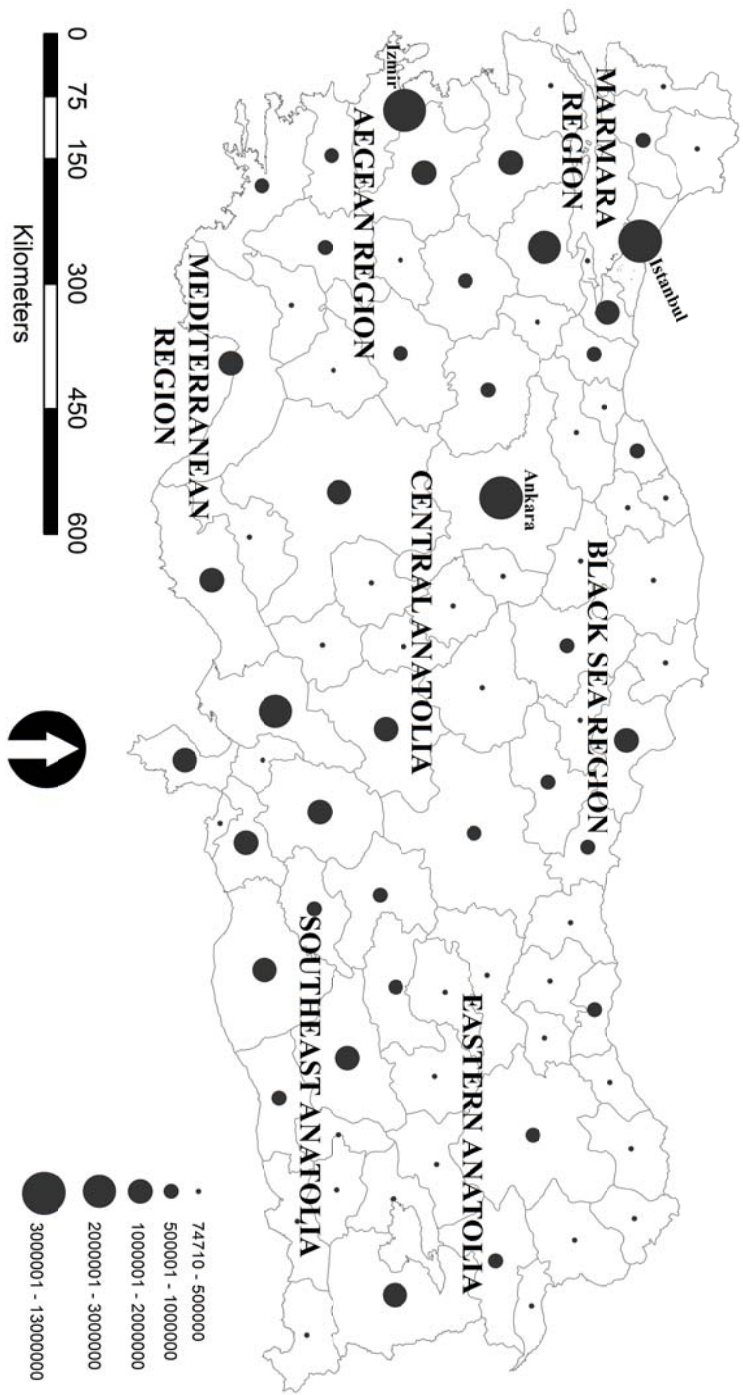
Figure 1: The map shows population density and the geographical regions in Turkey. Note that these regions are not official/political divisions in Turkey.

rectly aimed to end their privileges that the military and judiciary sectors of the government have been enjoying. Together, the opposition group repeatedly emphasized that this constitutional change would not only politicize the judiciary in favor of the ruling party but it also would seriously damage the fundamentals of state's secularity and unity (Cal, 2010). However, during the referendum campaigns none of the opposing political parties talked widely about how the new constitution would affect the political structure of Turkey. Instead they focused on the ruling party's nine years of governing the country and personal manners of the Prime Minister. By doing this, the opposing parties successfully transformed the referendum on the new constitution to a referendum on the AKP.

Geographical distribution of popular votes from 2004 to 2009
     Since the referendum campaigners turned the debate into a political test between the AKP and the CHP, it is important to review the geographical compositions of elections held from 2004 through 2009 (Table 2). Two years after AKP won its initial majority of seats in Parliament, AKP collected 41.7 percent of the vote share in local elections held throughout the country. AKP also won a majority of seats in the nationwide election for Parliament in 2007 and a majority of seats in local elections in 2009 (Table 2). Thus AKP solidified its status as Turkey's dominant political party.
     In the 2007 parliamentary election, AKP reached 46.6 percent of the popular vote (see Table 2), the second highest percentage for any party in Turkey's history. Despite the AKP's sweeping win in the popular vote, the party's seats in Parliament dropped from 365 to 341 out of 550 seats in the 2007 election because of independents' success[4] in the eastern part of Turkey (Belgenet, 2007). In the Provincial General Council Election of 2009, the AKP's vote share decreased from 46.6 percent to 38.8 percent among the popular vote and caused the party to lose its majority in 13 of 58 provinces throughout Turkey. The Nationalist Action Party (MHP)[5] noticeably increased its votes especially in the central and western Anatolia. However, the AKP still shared the second largest vote distribution in those areas won by CHP, MHP, or Kurdish independents (Carkoglu, 2009). Thus by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, AKP had become the country's most important party nationwide, with considerable strength throughout the country.

Geographical distribution of the referendum
     On September 12, 2010, the thirtieth anniversary of military intervention in 1980, voters in Turkey went to a referendum to either approve the constitutional reform of twenty-six items or reject the package altogether. Voters were required to choose between voting "yes" or voting "no" on the entire package; they were not given the option to vote for some and against others. The result of the voting showed that 58 percent of voters voted in favor of the reform and 42 percent of them voted against the reform (Figure 4). In the referendum,

Table 2. Distribution of electoral votes of local (2004 and 2009) and Parliamentary (2007) elections

	March 2004			July 2007		March 2009		
	Provincial General Council Election	Mayorships won		General Election		Provincial General Council Election	Mayorships won	
	Vote share (%)	Greater City & Districts Provinces	Greater City & Districts	Vote share (%)	Number of Seats	Vote share (%)	Greater City & Districts Provinces	Greater City & Districts
AKP	41.7	58	470	46.6	341	38.8	45	447
CHP	18.2	8	125	20.9	112	23.1	13	170
MHP	10.5	4	70	14.3	71	16.1	10	129
DTP	5.2	5	29			5.6	8	50
SP	4.0	1	12	2.3		5.2		23
Other	19.7	4	128	10.7		10.8	4	58
Independents	0.7	1	17	5.2	26	0.4	1	15
Total	100	81	851	100	550	100	81	892

Source: SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research by Ali Çarkoğlu
* Democratic Society Party (DTP) entered 2007 general elections independently. See footnote.
* District numbers increased in 2009.

turnout was around 74 percent of registered voters. According to the leadership of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), 4 to 5 percent of people boycotted the referendum. But, the boycott was dominantly visible in the eastern part of Turkey where BDP holds a strong public support (see Figure 5 for the concentration of boycott regions).

In this study, we analyzed the distribution of votes on the constitutional amendment package, compared these results to those of previous elections in Turkey, and attempted to answer the question of what this geographic distribution of the votes in the referendum means, what factors influenced such an outcome and how the results can be analyzed. In doing so, we aimed to improve understanding of socio-political differences within Turkey[6]. The data were obtained from archives of the government organization High Council for Elections (YSK). We used ArcGIS 9.3 software to prepare our maps. Other graphs, maps and charts were taken from other secondary sources such as political parties' webpage and published exit polls as cited in the text.

Political meaning of 'Yes' and 'No' votes

In the 2010 referendum, the composition of the vote distribution showed close parallels with the map of 2007 general election outcome (see Figures 2, 3 & 7). The referendum was supported by majorities in provinces throughout Turkey, except for provinces including several cities located in the western part of the country that border the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas[7]. 'Yes' votes were a majority in Central Anatolia, the Black Sea region, and the eastern part of Turkey along with the big cities of Marmara including Istanbul. In some cities of Eastern Turkey, 'Yes' votes reached 96 percent of the support of those who participated in the referendum, although as high as 91% of the voters in these provinces boycotted the referendum[8].

Geographical reading of the distribution of the vote

To better understand why the Turkish people voted in a certain way, we also explored the exit poll conducted by the A&G Research Company on the same day of the referendum. A&G investigated who voted which way and why. This study was conducted in 7 regions of Turkey and 49 provinces, with 3072 participants divided equally between males and females. Tables 3, 4 & 5 show the broad topography of the voting behavior in the Turkish referendum. Tables 3 and 4 display the frequency of reasons underlying a voter's decision to vote "yes" or "no," respectively. Figure 6 compares the distribution of "yes" or "no" votes by occupation.

The results of this survey confirm the observation relating support for the constitutional change to support for Erdogan and his AKP-led government. Nearly half of those supporting the changes stated that they did so to support Erdogan, whereas nearly half of the changes' opponents gave opposition to Erdogan as a reason to oppose the changes. In addition, many opponents voted against the new constitution because it was seen as increasing AKP's power as
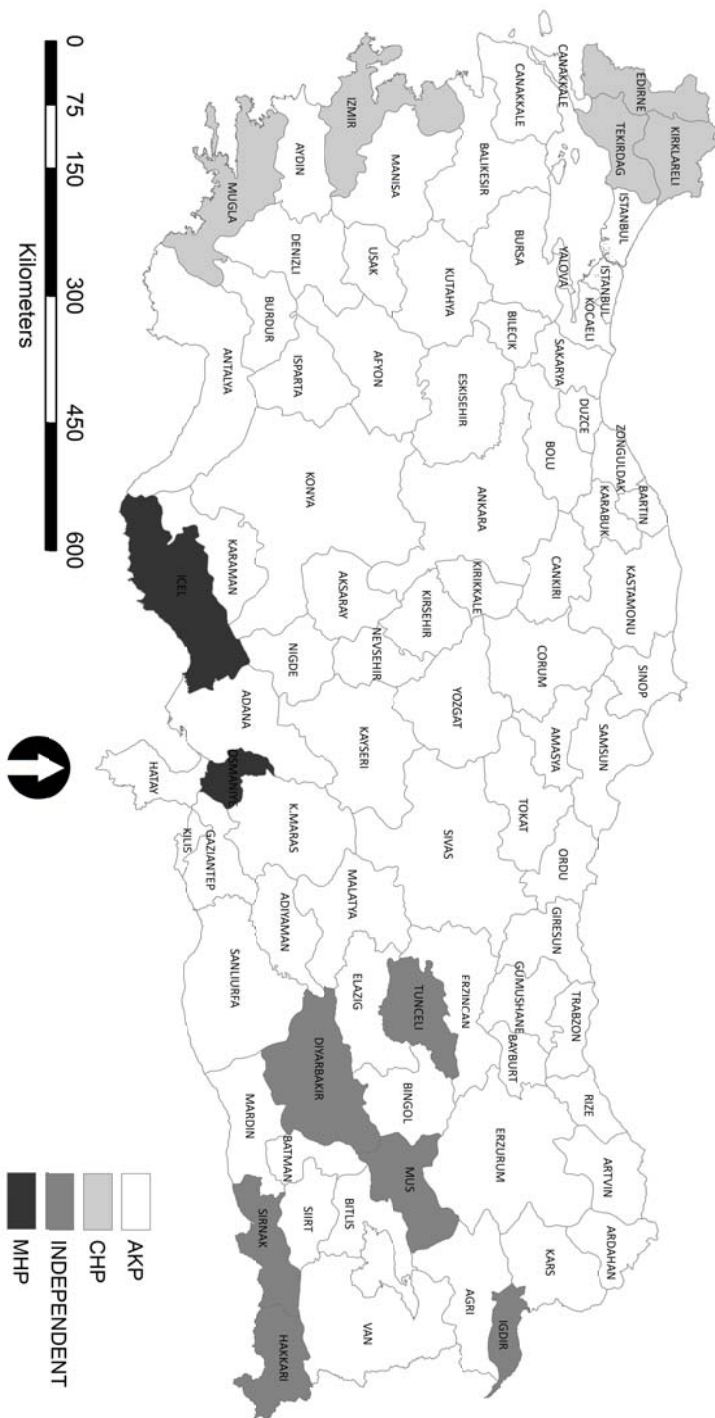
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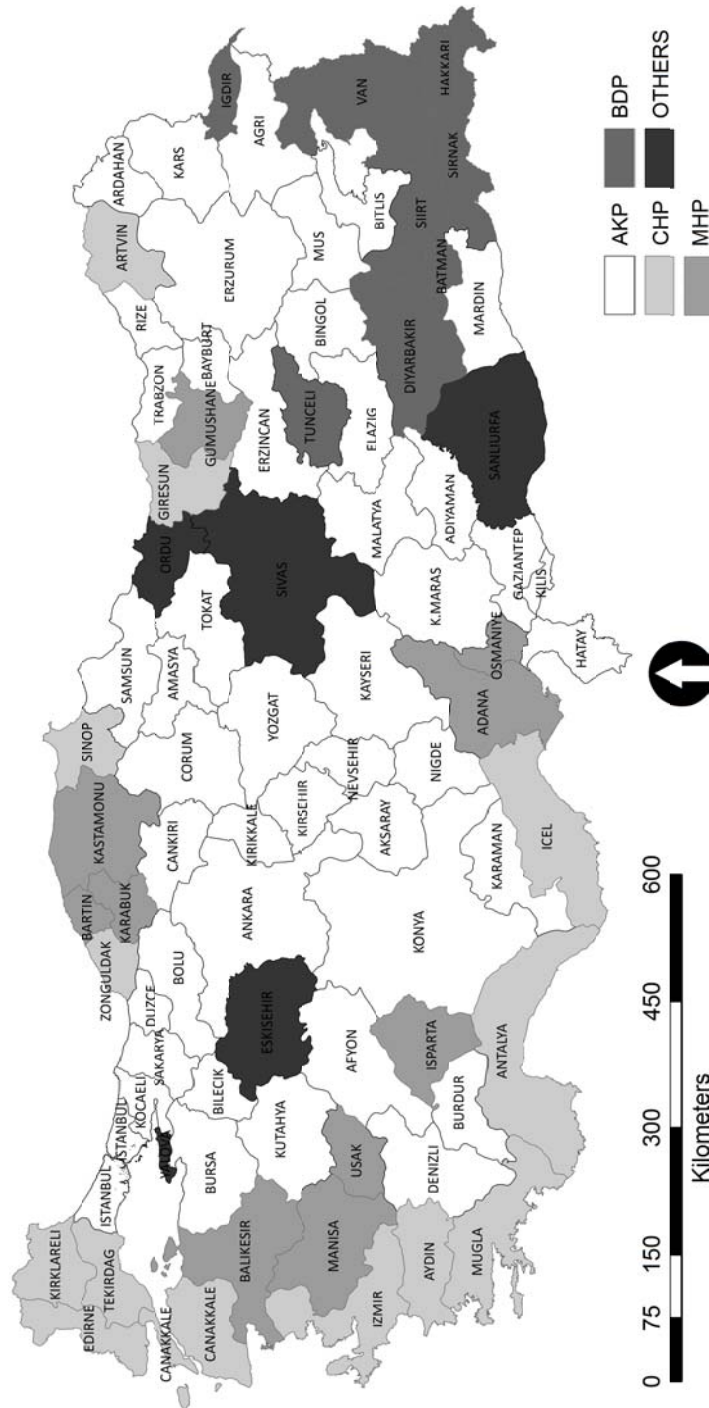**Figure 2.** Parliamentary election in 2007
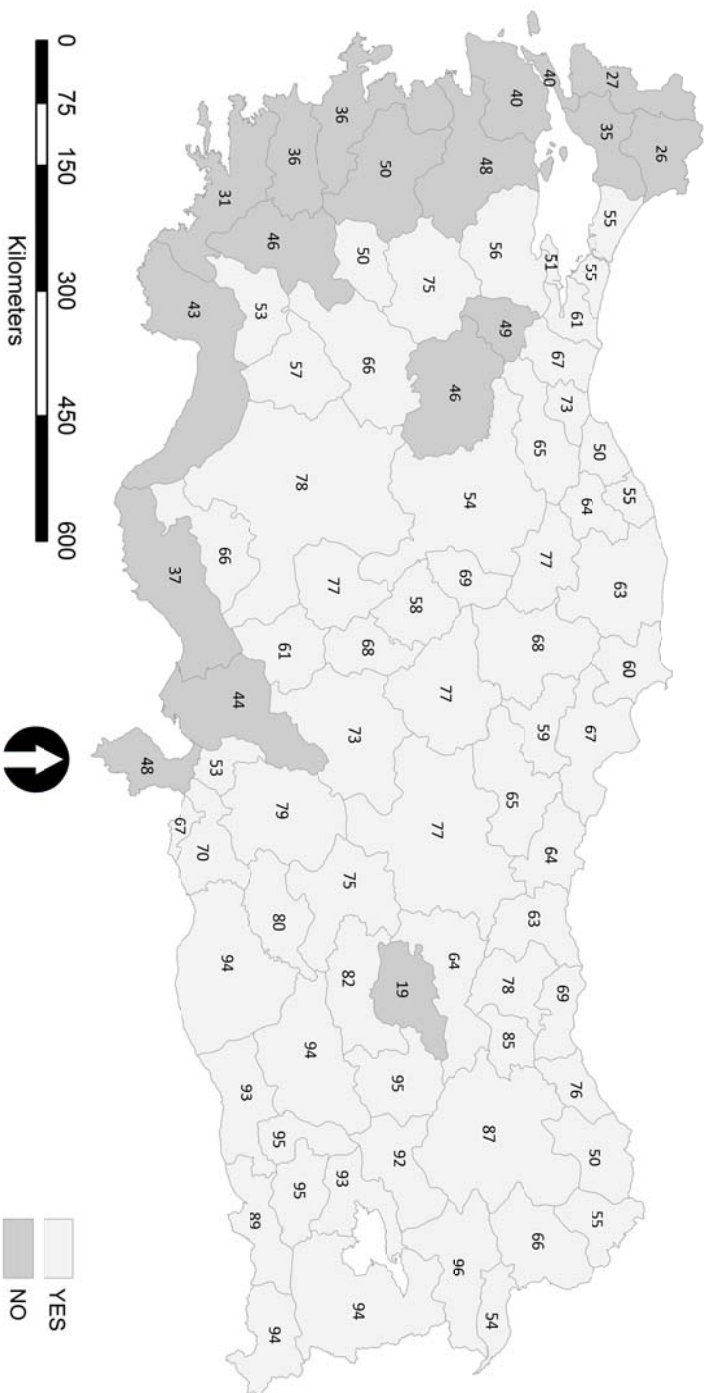
Figure 3. Local election in 2009

Figure 4. The 2010 referendum map. Numbers show "yes" percentage for each province. It is important to note that "yes" and "no" votes in some provinces are equally or closely distributed.
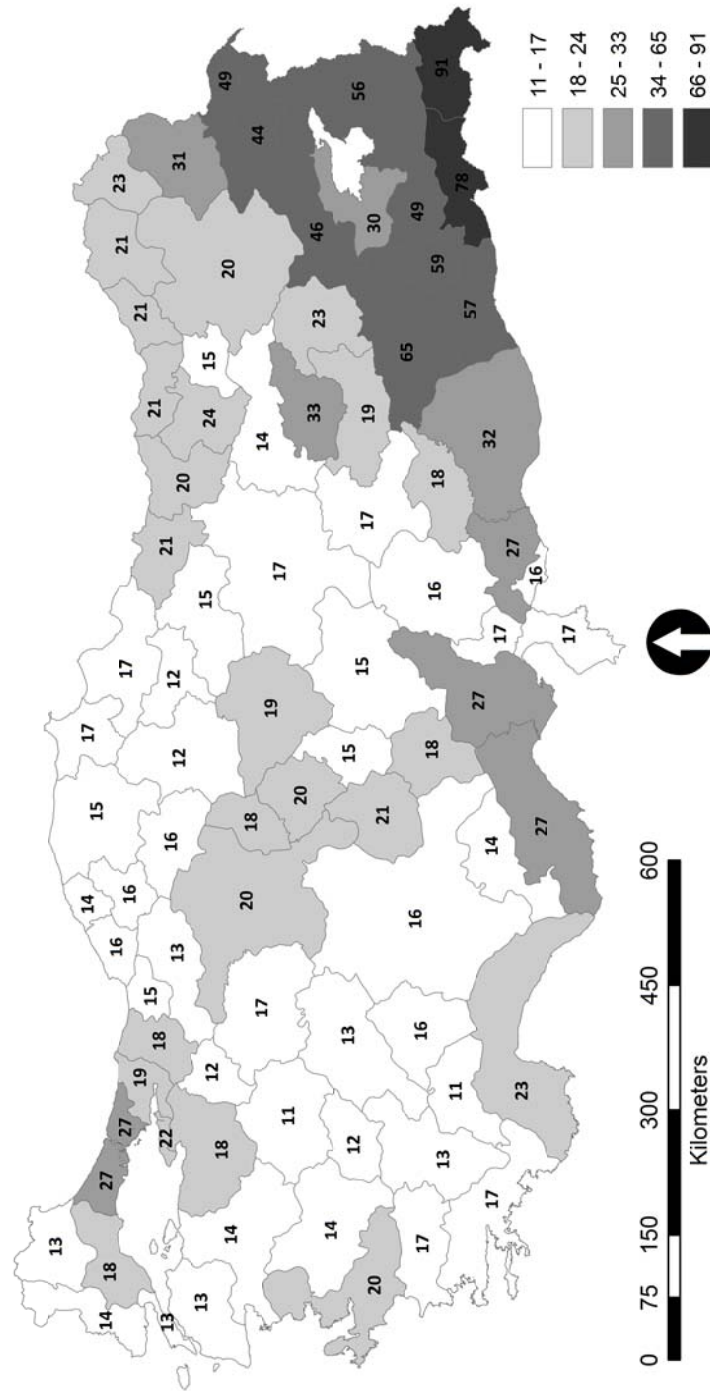
Figure 5. The 2010 referendum boycott map. Numbers show the percentage of nonparticipation.

the governing party. Limiting the power of the judiciary, which in the past had ruled against AKP, was cited frequently by opponents of the changes.

The occupational survey (Figure 6) provides insights into the relationships between socioeconomic class, occupational structure, and support for constitutional change. The constitutional changes, like AKP itself, were supported

Table 3. Answers given by those who said "YES" in the referendum

Why 'YES'	Percentage
To see Turkey more free and progressive	58.2 %
For Recep T. Erdogan (Prime Minister)	46.8 %
To change the 1982 constitution*	42.4 %
To see judicial independence	29.9 %
To oppose Kemal Kilicdaroglu (Opposition Leader, CHP)	13.7 %
To comply with my partner's wish	9.7 %
To support my party	9.6 %
To see a progress in solving the Kurdish problem	6.4%

Source: A&G Research Company
*change in this context should be understood as a positive step

Table 4. Answers given by those who said "NO" in the referendum

Why 'NO'	Percentage
Not to see AKP to take root in the government	48.3 %
To oppose the Prime Minister	46.3 %
Not to see the government take possession of Judiciary	40.8 %
To see Prime Minister going to the Supreme Court trial	28.1 %
Not to see divided Turkey (referring to the Kurdish separatist movement)	20.0 %
For Kemal Kilicdaroglu (Opposition Leader, CHP)	19 %
To support my party	8.5 %
Offended by the government's language	7.0 %
To comply with my partner's wish	5.7 %

Source: A&G Research Company

most strongly by non-elites including farmers, laborers, small business owners, and housewives. Government workers and corporate (private sector) employees, whose positions generally require higher levels of formal education, were more likely to vote "No." More than two-thirds of students also voted "No."

More and less educated people supporting the changes did so for different reasons. Fifty-six percent of primary school graduates who had no more education and voted 'Yes' indicated that they voted 'Yes' because of the Prime Minister. Those who held higher education and voted 'Yes' said that they voted 'Yes' because they wanted to see a democratic Turkey and independent courts in the country.

Table 5. 'YES' and 'NO' distributions according to the political parties

Major Parties in Turkey	**YES**	**NO**
AKP voters	98.2 %	1.8 %
CHP voters	4.5 %	95.5 %
MHP voters	28.8 %	71.2%
BDP voters who participated in the referendum	65 %	35 %
SP voters	96 %	3.4 %

Source: http://www.agarastirma.com.tr/

Geographical complexity of the vote

Politics of fear

Nearly all AKP supporters voted for the referendum, and nearly all CHP supporters voted against it (Table 5). However, MHP supporters were divided more evenly. 28.8 percent of the MHP supporters voted 'Yes' despite their party's strong opposition to the constitutional reform (see Table 5). This is one of the remarkable results of the referendum because MHP, to many commentators, became the real losing party of the referendum (Congar, 2010). If that is the case, then, there are several possible ways we can explain MHP's loss. One is MHP's misinterpretation of the political trend in Turkey. Turkish people have long suffered from regional bloodshed that has touched thousands of families all around the country. People from both the Kurdish and Turkish sides have showed their willingness to stop this bloody war, which has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and millions of dollars worth of national resources. Despite this reality, MHP's leadership kept ignoring the existence of this problem and more tragically tried to accentuate this decades-long conflict. A close monitoring of MHP's referendum campaigning suggests that MHP put
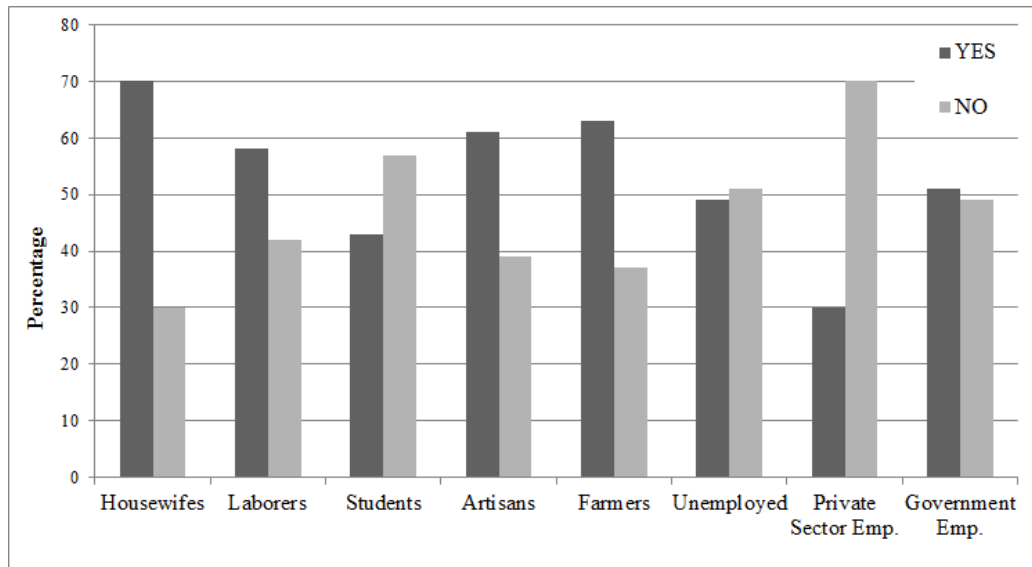
Figure 6. 'YES' and 'NO' vote distributions by occupations
Source: A&G Research Company

more emphasis on the rhetoric that the constitutional reform would ultimately divide Turkey and bring dark days to the country rather than considering the possibility that the changes could produce alternative solutions. These and similar policy talks of MHP's leadership backfired among MHP's own supporters. As a consequence, MHP lost its voters to the 'Yes' side.

Another reason why MHP became one of the losing parties in the referendum is because MHP was one of the main victims of the 1980 military authoritarianism that had triggered the coup. Many supporters of MHP, including its leadership, had been jailed and tortured by the executers of the coup. For the first time in Turkish history, people had a chance to face off with the executers of the military coup of 1980 if the provisional article 15, which protected those executers from trial in court, was removed from the 1982 constitution. The 2010 referendum package included removal of the article from the constitution. For this reason, many MHP supporters voted 'yes' in the referendum, in turn, the pains of 1980 military intervention might wane.

Paradoxity of modernity

A close analysis of vote distribution of the 2007 parliamentary election and the 2010 referendum reveals that political composition of electoral distribution has not changed significantly. Both maps (see Figure 2 and Figure 4) indicate that the ruling party resumed Central and Eastern Anatolia and the Black Sea region's support. The major opposition party (CHP) also consolidat-

ed its support from Western Marmara and the Southwestern regions, where the party had been strong historically. But how can we interpret this referendum map if we assume that this constitutional reform claims bringing European levels of democracy to the country, and if the people in these coastal regions are more prone to western ideologies and European lifestyles? People in rural portions of Turkey are more inclined to have more traditional lifestyles and ideologies, but a majority in these regions supported the referendum.

One explanation of this paradox is that people are motivated to follow to take their own parties' position or strictly oppose to the ruling parties even when the debate is national and for the interest of whole country. Western and southwestern Turkey in general have been associated with support for statist left-wing parties such as CHP and the Democratic Left Party (DSP) for decades. CHP strongly opposed the constitutional reform because the party did not want to see an Islamic-inclined party, AKP, to seize control of the judiciary. For CHP and other secular parties, these judicial institutions represented the last bastion of Ataturk's legacy. Other major institutions such as the Grand Turkish National Assembly, the presidency and the Turkish Council of Higher Education (YÖK) have already been lost to Islamists in the eyes of secularist segments. Since AKP's ascendancy, CHP has taken any major constitutional and legal changes enacted by AKP to the Supreme Court, whose majority was composed of judges with strong statist worldviews.

A law concerning headscarves is a clear example. In 2008, the AKP-dominated Parliament passed a law that would allow students to wear headscarves on university campuses. The new law overturned long-standing policy that forbade the wearing of headscarves in universities. The bill passed by a large majority, with 411 of the 518 members of Parliament who participated in the voting.[9] Despite the support of 411 representatives of 518 in total, CHP took this parliamentary change to the Supreme Court, claiming the change violated the fundamentals of the 1982 constitution which are not even subject to proposal. At the end of the trial, the higher court overturned the parliament's decision on allowing students to wear headscarves in universities.

This is an important example because Kemalists-CHP elite in particular-treated this law, allowing headscarves in public places such as universities, as a big concession to secular nature of the state and saw the AKP-led reforms the erosion of the once-dominant Kemalist ideology. Ozyurek (2006) explains this notion as this: "Kemalism was no longer all powerful and hegemonic, but rather a fragile ideology in need of citizens' protection" (pg. 16). From reading Ozyurek's argument, we can infer that Kemalist elites and the supporters of CHP opposed current AKP-directed social and political changes (including 2010 constitutional reforms) because "first the changing economic structure moved them-Kemalists- from upper-middle class status to the lower middle class by diminishing the value of their salaries. Second and more important, they lost their monopoly over public space and their respectable position" (pg. 17). As Heper puts it, 'bureaucratic elites (Judges, Prosecutors, etc.), represent-

ing the tradition against 'political elites' was losing ground horizontally and vertically (Gungen & Erten, 2005; Heper, 2006). Once again, if we read carefully what has been proposed for change in the 2010 constitutional referendum (changes in the structures of the Supreme Court, Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors, etc.), we can understand why CHP was uncomfortable with voting 'yes' in the referendum. It is also important to note here that CHP supporters voted against the referendum in part because they are perhaps more concern with protecting the secular nature of Turkey more than anything else. The AKP government during its nine-year ruling was not quite successful with convincing CHP supporters that the secular nature of the state would not be shifted toward an Islamic one.

A second explanation, as mentioned earlier, to why the Western Marmara, Coast of Aegean and Mediterranean region opposed this European-driven constitutional reform, although this area includes the European portion of Turkey, is that voters of these regions have been convinced that the Islamist-inclined ruling party would ultimately change the way of life that secularists have been enjoying since the founding of the republic. It is unclear whether the AKP has the power or intention to change the directions of the country, but the CHP continued pushing this fear factor in its referendum campaigns. The CHP leader, Kemal Kilictaroglu, in every public meeting has accused of the ruling party of paving the way for a civilian dictatorship (Hurriyet, 2010). For the CHP leadership, the proposed constitutional reform was another way of controlling another institution of republic by Islamists. The fear that has been inflated by the CHP worked in some geographical regions.

Another explanation why these coastal regions opposed this constitutional reform might be found in the republic's education system. To sort out this claim, we need to take a look at a survey that was conducted by a prominent labor union in education (Egitim Bir-Sen) in Turkey. The study showed that Kemalists, who generally support CHP, had the highest level of education among the participants but were the least supportive of the Kurdish reforms which have been pushed by the ruling party and embraced by many intellectuals and ethnic groups in Turkey (Bir-Sen 2010). In the same study, to the question of 'are you supportive of education in mother language', only 38 percent of Kemalists supported the right of people to speak their mother language (in this case, it is Kurdish) in schools in contrast to 75 percent of 'leftists', 70 percent of 'democrats' and 63 percent of 'Islamists' (ibid). Results of the study may have been paradoxical in many western democracies because many educated voters link education, tolerance, and multiculturalism. In the Turkish context, however, this complexity and contrariness, in part, can be understood within standardization of the Turkish educational system. Commentator Mustafa Akyol explains this Turkish paradox in these words:
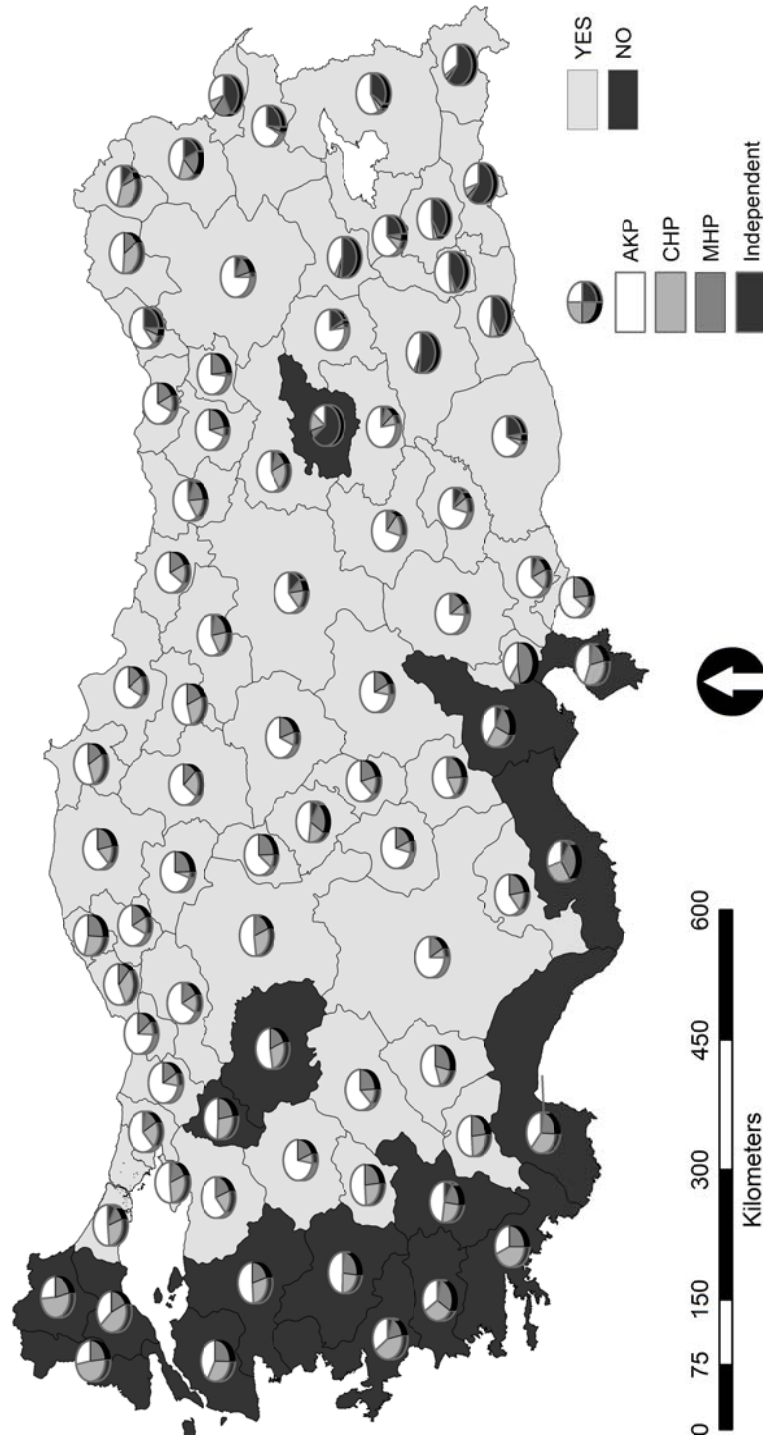
Figure 7. Comparative map showing the results of 2007 election and the referendum in 2010

The answer might be in the education system. In the West, education is designed mainly to raise critical and democratic-minded individuals. But Turkish education, from primary school to universities (yes, even the universities), is designed to raise generations "loyal to the principles and revolutions of Atatürk."

Unfortunately, those "principles and revolutions" don't include concepts such as individual freedom, cultural diversity, and, alas, even democracy. (In case you haven't noticed, Atatürk has a zillion sayings about nationalism, secularism or "republicanism," but hardly anything on democracy.)

That's why a mind shaped by the Turkish education system, unless tainted by some other factor, will be a staunch nationalist, secularist, and "republicanist" — but hardly a liberal or democrat (Akyol, 2010).

In this sense, CHP as a political party founded in Ataturk's time garners the support of the most educated and westernized segment of the Turkish population today, and it is representative of the orthodox culture of the first republicanism. It appears to be that the CHP's political mentality has not been moved away from the Cold War socio-psychology. The party as the inheritance of Kemalist modernity and the Cold War conservatism has failed to adopt the global change that has dominated the world and Turkey since late 1990s (Mahcupyan, 2010). Ozyurek argues that despite Islamist politicians' favoring in joining the European Union, "hoping that the new laws Turkey would be required to adopt would create an atmosphere allowing them political activism and the freedom of religious expression" Kemalist citizens became reluctant to entering the European Union arguing that "being part of the European Union would lead to a loss of sovereignty" (Ozyurek, 2006, p. 11). Thus, they disliked the new criteria of modernization that the European Union forced upon Turkey during the integration negotiations. If the CHP continues to misread the changing sociology of modern Turkey, electoral outcomes such as the 2010 referendum election and Turkish electoral geography will remain similar to that of 2007[10].

Traditional modernists

How is it possible to explain that traditional and less educated Central, East and Southeast Anatolian constitutes become pro-change? How can we explain this complexity? Similar to the geographies of 'No', Anatolian constituency shows strong ties with the AKP's leadership and the party's rhetoric. To understand this tie, we need to look at the AKP's leadership and the Prime Minister himself. Erdogan's charisma and personal background shows very similar cultural elements of those Turkish peripheries. He comes from an ordinary Turkish family. He often makes stops to greet elderly, poor and families of injured soldiers as he travels around the country. People connect with him. His populist vision in many times marginalizes other leaders as being the lead-

er of certain regions and people (Kocer, 2011). Thus, his position in the referendum dragged millions to the polls. In other words, 46.8 percent of participants voted yes because of the Prime Minister Erdogan and his party (see Table 3).

Of course, explaining the number of 'Yes' votes on the basis of the Prime Minister's personal influence on the electorate does not reflect the whole picture. It is also important to highlight here that Anatolian business organizations and civic initiatives' support for a change should not be underestimated. Especially after the soft military intervention of 28th February 1997[11], financial entrepreneurship has been discriminated as 'green'[12], indicating Islamist and dangerous capital as opposed to secular and trustworthy capital. This segregation of economic activities resulted in creating discontent among Anatolian business venture operators, who constantly supported liberal regulations and were opposed to any sort of centralist and a closed Turkey. These entrepreneurs demanded more freedom for the flow of capital, fair conditions to compete and a more open and democratic Turkey. In the last two decades, this new rising Anatolian bourgeoisie has acquired enough economic power to demand more influence in political matters that are crucial to the country's future. These business entrepreneurs and their middle-class associates desired change and sociopolitical inclusion, as opposed to the elites of the republic who preferred the continued management of the economy by the state. Thus Anatolia's new middle class people wanted to keep their traditions yet participate in modern activities and ideologies that leftist-Kemalist segments of the country have long been associated with. These people compose of conservative modernists (or progressive Islamists) of contemporary Turkey today. They celebrate traditional and religious festivals while they attend musical theaters and bowling parties. Therefore, this segment of the society dominantly said 'Yes' in the referendum although they should not be automatically counted in the AKP's electoral composition.

Persistence of Kurdish issue

On the other part of the country, millions boycotted the referendum. Boycott in some provinces reached the 91 percent level (see Figure 5 & 8). How can this political protest be interpreted? There are several possible readings of the boycott. One is that Kurdish people in the leadership of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and Kurdish Workers' Party[13] (PKK) a) did not want to approve a constitutional reform that did not directly deal with the Kurdish problem and b) wanted to send a message to the goverment that BDP and PKK should both be involved in negotiations dealing Kurdish matters with Ankara. For the most part, Kurdish people in the Eastern and the Southeastern Anatolia complied with their political leadership's call and joined the boycott.

A close investigation reveals that BDP's influence on the Kurdish people was not effective throughout Turkey despite BDP leadership's intense call for a national boycott. This means that BDP's rhetoric claim for being the repre-

sentative of Kurdish people in Turkey remained limited to several provinces in the East and Southeast Anatolia. This area is small given that about 20 million Kurds live in Turkey. BDP underlined the reality that the party no longer has a monopoly over representing whole Kurdish people in Turkey but re-emphasized that it is the party of a certain Kurdish-dominated region. Even in the provinces where the BDP was dominant, the boycott did not affect the overall outcome of the referendum in great numbers. In Diyarbakir, for instance, only 65 percent of people boycotted the referendum.

Despite the boycott, some Kurdish civic and business organizations encouraged people to go to the polls. For example, members of the Diyarbakir Industrialists' and Businessmen's Associate (DISIAD) openly expressed their support of the constitutional reform and encouraged Kurdish people to participate in the referendum. This was a crucial move because members of the Kurdish bourgeois saw no alternative to establishing peace and opening up the region for economic development and regional transformation. Thus for the Kurdish bourgeoisie, this constitutional reform was just the beginning of a new start (Gulec, 2010).

The map in Figure 5 focuses on the distribution of boycott in the eastern part of Turkey. Numbers indicate the percentage of boycott in those provinces. As shown, province Hakkari has the highest number (91%) of boycott. Boycott in Diyarbakir, considered to be the capital of Kurdish resistance, reached to 65% of the total electoral. On the other side, Bitlis voted 'yes' in the referendum despite its Kurdish majority. In general, what we can infer from this is that the boycott is mainly concentrated in the 13 provinces with the largest percentages of Kurds although most people in Kurdish-majority areas who did participate in the referendum voted "yes". For instance, in the province of Agri, 96% of those voting voted "yes", illustrating that the Kurdish region is more diverse and polyvocal than what BDP and PKK think.

Conclusion

The Turkish referendum in 2010 on the constitutional reform has made significant changes in the republic's fundamental structures. In the leadership of the AKP, the referendum has brought an end to the possibilities of military interventions in the history of Turkish politics. The referendum has reduced long lasting Turkish military involvements in politics and generals' responsibility of protecting the republic from potential internal and external enemies which has always been used to justify military coups and interventions in the past. The second change that the referendum brought is that it ended the judicial superiority and privileges of higher courts over the civilian branch of Turkish government and Turkish democracy. Power of high court judges and public prosecutors will be mitigated and democratized as a result of the referendum.

The referendum results also revealed several geographic complexities and challenging conclusions. Geographic complexity underlies the paradox of the referendum results. People who possessed higher education and had western
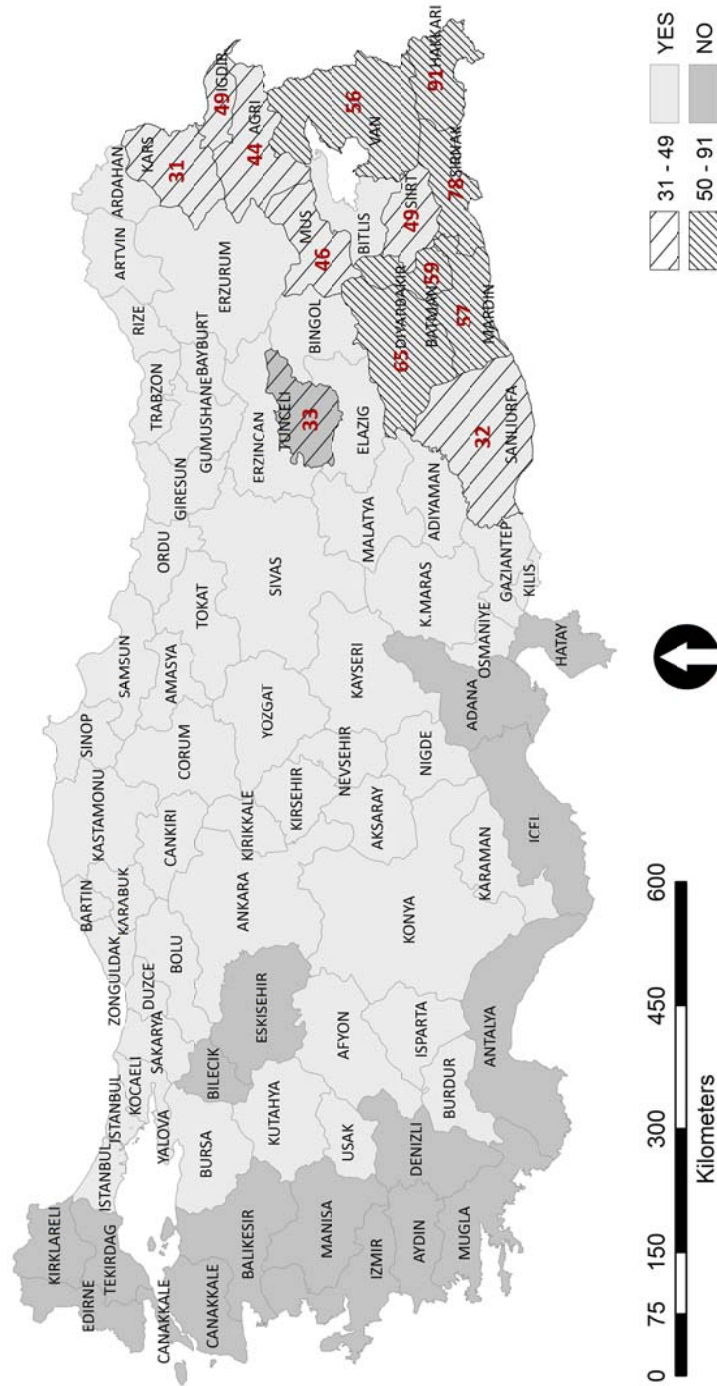
Figure 8. The 2010 referendum map including boycott. Numbers show the concentration of the boycott in percentage. In our analysis, we treated nonparticipation lower than 30 percent in the referendum insignificant.

life experiences and viewpoints voted against the constitutional reform while residents of regions that are most likely to be identified as traditional and conservative voted in favor of changes in the constitution. These paradoxical outcomes allowed us conclude that political partisanship played significant role in the shaping of peoples' decision. People voted in the line of their worldview and socio-economic class structure. Western cities where CHP is strong voted against the changes that convulses the status quo (the establishment) while Anatolian voters supported the reform that turned the eighty-year CHP controlled military and judiciary bureaucratic system upside down. A careful reading of the referendum reveals that people in the Anatolian interior—the periphery of Turkey—wanted to open the doors of Anatolia to the rest of the world while people in the Western Anatolian provinces wanted to retain their traditional power and rejected any changes that are presented by parties other than their own. However, this is not to say that those who voted for change and reside in central part of Anatolia are much more progressive, western and democratic than those who voted 'no' and reside in the coastal areas. We have very little/no evidence to support this claim. What we can conclude is that the Turkish opposition effectively failed to understand the dynamics of Turkish society and lacked coming up with alternative plans and making constructive criticism for constitutional reforms. Here we can confidently say that majority of Turkish voters want civil and market-oriented politics in Turkey. Those political parties that read this orientation correctly can be foreseen to direct the future of Turkish politics in the long run.

Notes
1. Kemalism, synonym of Ataturkism, is a political philosophy that highlights western-style modernization and rationality (substituting reason for religion). Kemalism includes principles of republicanism, secularism, nationalism, popularism, statism and reformism which later became the main principles of the Republican People's Party, CHP. According to Heper, the CHP and the Kemalist civil bureaucracy converted 'Kemalism' from "a way of rational thinking to a political manifesto –ideology- and considered themselves its guardian" (Heper & Criss, 2009, pp. 25, emphasis added)
2. Representational threshold refers to a clause that necessitates a party to receive a minimum percentage of votes nationwide to be represented in the parliament. Currently the percentage is 10 in Turkey.
3. Status quo means here that the CHP has been the dominant ideology of the state from military to Universities and from cinema to judiciary. In the early years of the republic, it was a very common application that CHP's branch representatives in provinces had acted as the representatives of the government similar to today's mayors and head official of districts. The CHP has enjoyed being the party of Ataturk and it still profits from this long time association. The CHP considers itself as the spinal cord of the regime and ultimate motor for educating public in Turkey. Thus, CHP

regards 'politics' as a vehicle to modernize Turkish people. For CHP, a political party is not more than part and parcel of indoctrinating people with Kemalist ideology and a transformer of uneducated public to more rational, modern and secular citizens.

4. Independents were the former members of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) whose 21 members were able to enter the Parliament independently (because of the national quota) aligning with several parties in 2007 Parliamentary election. Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) became the successor of the DTP after the Supreme Court banned the DTP in 2009. DTP (later BDP) is a Kurdish nationalist party whose supporters are visible in the eastern part of Turkey and big cities such as Istanbul.

5. The MHP can be positioned at the far right of the center and nearly opposite of the Peace and Democracy Party of Kurdish people in the political spectrum (see Figure 3).

6. In our analysis and mapping, the approximate percentage volume of boycott in the eastern part of Turkey was estimated by subtracting the total percentage of the electoral absent of 2007 election from the total percentage of those who did not participate in the 2010 referendum. This means that the percentage of absent votes of 2007 was about 16 and the percentage of absent votes of 2010 referendum was 26. In other words, there is about a 10 percent margin between the two electoral numbers. This 10 percent margin cannot be automatically counted as the total percentage of boycott because considering the total electoral power of Democratic Society Party (DTP) which later merged with the BDP was 5.6 percent in 2009 local elections. This shows that if every BDP constituency joined boycotting the referendum, then, the total percentage of the boycott including all other leftist parties' electoral power cannot exceed 6 percent throughout Turkey. In numbers, 13.682.729 people did not go to polls in 2010 and 6.743.010 people were absent in 2007 election (YSK, 2010). Keep in mind that as 2010, 2.556. 335 registered electoral live abroad and among them only 196. 299 people voted in the referendum 2010. Therefore, we are very cautious about making sweeping generalization about the total number of boycott and, thus, focus on regional maps of the boycott (see Figure 5). We also need to be aware that we are comparing two different voting behaviors. In their very nature, parliamentary election has a quite different voting behavior than that of referendum. For that reason, we simply ignored the absent votes lower than 20-25 percent in the referendum 2010.

7. Turkey is dived in 81 provinces which are the largest administrations in the country. Provinces are also divided into districts and there are currently 892 districts in Turkey.

8. Again, we should be very cautious about making sweeping generalization of the geographical distribution of referendum votes. It is clear in the Figure 4 that not all coastal provinces voted for one direction. The matter of fact, several provinces' vote outcome is very close to each other in numbers.

9. Turkish Parliament comprises of 550 seats altogether.
10. Indeed, the result of 2011 general election was consistent with this point. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party cleared almost fifty percent of the entire electoral and secured its third-term governing.
11. On 28 February, 1997 National Security Council warned Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan -the leader of Islamist leaning party, Welfare Party- to take serious measurements to combat with increasing Islamic sentiments in the country by stating "secularism is not only a form of government but also a way of life and the guarantee of democracy and social peace" and asking the Erbakan coalition to implement 20 measurements offered by the council which included monitoring some Anatolian entrepreneurship that may have involved in supporting reactionary Islam (Heper&Criss, 2009). As a result of strong pressures from Turkish military, Prime Minister Erbakan resigns on 18 June, 1997 and the Constitutional Court closes his party on 16 February, 1998. Therefore, the 28 February development is written as 'soft military intervention or 'post-modern coup' in the contemporary Turkish political history.
12. Green or Islamic capital as such can be identified as "a separate capital fraction that can pursue a distinct and collective agenda. It discusses the symbiotic relationship between interest-free banks, firms, religious networks and communal linkages in order to understand this peculiar way of capital accumulation in relation to Islamic motifs." (Hosgor , 2011).
13. PKK is not a legitimate political party in Turkey. It is an armed group that is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the EU and the US.

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