Between piety and secularism: tracing voter preferences in turkey's religious and secular heartlands

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ABSTRACT

There is no suspicion that there are many factors that affect voting conduct. The question of what these factors are has been asked by many professions and numerous studies have been conducted on the subject. The main objective of the questions asked in field studies on the subject is which factors are more effective in the vote choice of the voters. The data obtained from these analyses, which are mostly done by political sociology, are utilized effectively in the areas of political communication and political public relations.

In this analysis, the answer to the question of what factors are useful in the vote preferences was sought in the ranking of the cities of Konya and Antalya in Turkey. Konya is known as Turkey's most religious and conservative city, and Antalya is the most secular and liberal city. Thus, it will be possible to reach more intriguing findings through the comparisons between the databases of those two contrasting cities at the end of the analysis.

Key Words: Politics, Election, Voter, Voting Behavior, Political Public Relations

INTRODUCTION

The election is one of the most significant elements of democracy and has been practiced in different setups since the notable Ancient Greek times. Similar to the culture of democracy and social values, the concept of election and the factors affecting a voter's behavior have also changed and developed over the time.

The election is a decision-making procedure that reveals the opinion of the people on whether a certain person, group, or political party is worth a certain task or not. As a mechanism that has been used for at least two centuries in contemporary representative democracies, the election is presumably the most important tool of democracy. The political parties and cadres that will govern the country and its socio-cultural and economic structure are determined through local or general elections or referendums. As it is known, every individual lives in a society. Individuals are affected by the written or unwritten customs and rules of society. Also, there seems to be a constant interaction between individuals and the traditional culture of the society in which they live. In this context, voters are under the influence of various factors and situations both in normal conditions and in election procedures. While the established social values affect the political public relations of the governments and the opposition parties, they also affect the voters' political views and voting behaviors. This means that sometimes, rules affect individuals, and sometimes individuals affect rules.

It has always been a matter of great curiosity and research about which factors affect the choice of the electorate to determine who will rule the country. The analysis of these factors is important in two references. Firstly, politicians develop more accurate and effective strategies in political public relations to affect the voting behavior of society. Secondly, the findings from these studies contribute to forming a more conscious electorate.

This analysis aims to reveal the dominant factors affecting the voters' preference in the cities of Konya, known as the most religious and conservative city in Turkey, and Antalya, known as the most secular and liberal city.

In this research, the questionnaire, which was prepared by making use of the existing literature and different studies that had been applied before, was applied to 141 people in Konya and 100 people in Antalya. Thus, it was tried to determine the dominant factors that were effective in the voting behavior of the electorate of both cities. While determining the items

in the questionnaire, the factors such as the personal characteristics of the candidate, the economy, religious affiliation, nationalism, secularism perception, friend groups, social media, and universal social values were mainly focused on. Thus, a comparison of the factors affecting voters' behavior in these seemingly opposite cities will be made and quite meaningful results can be obtained at the end of the research. In addition, the gender, average age, education level, and earnings level of the participants were taken into account as variables. Evaluating the discoveries according to these variables will make the results of the research more significant.

1.VOTING BEHAVIOR

From the viewpoint of the political system, elections carry out a few basic functions such as providing the legitimacy and security of the order, providing the citizens with the opportunity to impact and control the decisions of the government, and showing that the elections are an indicator of success in terms of leadership (Rose and Mossawir, 1967: 174-178). According to Wojtasik, elections are a typical procedure in democratic systems; however, non-democratic administrations also frequently use various electoral systems to give the world an image of legitimacy. Elections perform seven fundamental functions. These include: a delegation of political representation, the election of ruling elites, the legitimation of power, the control of public opinion over officials, political responsibility, the creation of political programs, and the recreation of public image (Wojtasik, 2013: 25).

When it is talked about in a democratic election, it wouldn't be fair not to talk about the notion of "voting behavior". It is a common activity in which members of the society participate to elect their managers and leverage the determination of public policy directly or indirectly. It's an action that determines public policy, such as; the election process, which is one of the direct forms of open political action, or the use of influence tools such as public opinion formation and election campaigns. Such actions are seen in the election of the executive and legislative body at the local or national level (Gülmen, 1979: 18). Although "voting behavior" is one of the special items that fall under the scope of "political behavior", it has been the field on which political scientists first focused and did the most research because research conducted in this area would play an important role in explaining political behavior. The reasons for this priority can be examined under several headings compiled from various perspectives.

In democratic systems, the most important political action in which the majority of citizens participate is voting. Although some citizens may show their political activities in different lanes by participating in various mass demonstrations with various interest and pressure groups, voting is the most effective way to participate in politics for the overwhelming majority of people. In general, everyone has the right to participate in elections, regardless of their political views and roles in society. These rights are evenly distributed. No more active political behavior than voting behavior on a national scale has been observed as yet. Also, each vote is an equal unit of influence. Elections are held by secret ballots and voters cannot be blamed or condemned for their voting preferences. Therefore, the citizens can freely express their will in an election (Karamustafaoğlu, 1970; 153-164). From a methodological point of view, voting behavior has two interesting differences from other political behaviors in the eyes of researchers:

1) The fact that voting behavior is a political phenomenon that can be observed in all societies except monarchical regimes makes it the most utilized tool in all academic studies and researches on comparative political behavior. Whereas other political behaviors such as writing letters, carrying badges, and demonstrating do not have great significance and importance in every society.

2) Voting behavior, unlike other political behavior, is not qualitative. On the contrary, it can be conveyed with quantitative values that do not change according to societies and duration. (Gülmen, 1979: 16).

2. DECISION-MAKING

Decision-making is the technique of choosing one of the available alternatives to take action (Nutt, 1976: 84). After obtaining information about the alternatives, it is the process of choosing one of the available options to reach the best result under the current conditions (Chatoupis, 2007: 195). The concept of decision-making is a collection of tasks at a starting point that eventually results in a choice. It is also a process (Koçel, 2003: 80-82). The decision-making process is the sum of the physical and mental efforts related to choosing between more than one option (Tosun, 1992: 308). Decision-making can be a complex, time-consuming, and expensive process if the size or intensity of events increases (Bağkıran, 1983: 4). When the concept of decision-making, which is one of the most important functions of human nature (Noone, 2002: 21), is considered from an institutional and organizational perspective, according to Frishammar, it is a series of dynamic factors and activities that start with the recognition of the crucial elements for action and result in the formation of a certain judgment for action (Frishammar, 2003: 318). According to T. L. Saaty, decision-making processes can be

divided into two categories which are "intuitive" and "analytical". Intuitive decisions are usually made arbitrarily and are not supported by concrete and healthy data. In simple and superficial decision-making situations, the intuitive approach can be successful, however, in complex decision-making processes that require information, decision-makers may see that their decisions contradict their value judgments in the end. The expression "good decision-making" is used for situations where these deviations are not observed. Good decision-making was seen as an "art" in the sense of emphasizing one's intuitive power. Today, decision-making has become a "science" rather than an "art" (Saaty, 2001: xı). "Good or rational decision-making" is a mortal trait. People constantly develop ways and tools to make good decisions in decision-making processes that are becoming more and more complicated (Tabucanon, 1998: 1). As a common point, it is clear enough that a good decision should always be "the one that best meets the objectives" (Forman and Selly, 2001: 20). Also, the decision must stand the test of time. Approaches that bring people's value judgments together with objective and analytical methods have been developed for a long time. Everyone tries to make "good" and "successful" decisions; however, there is no precise definition of the concept of "good" due to its subjective nature. Therefore, while decision-makers are more interested in decisions with "good results", analysts and academicians think that a decision-making process that is well established within the framework of scientific theory and that takes all decision factors into account will lead to the best judgments (Henig and Buchanan, 1996: 3).

3. Theoretical Models Explaining the Factors Affecting Voting Behaviour

It's quite possible to trace the history of research and studies on voting behavior at the time section between the 1910s and 1950s (Esmer, 2002: 33-34). According to a similar view, scientific studies on the historical background of election and election procedures date back to the 1940s but gained significant momentum after the Second World War. Though studies on voting behavior have become one of the largest areas of political sociology so far, it is still another reality that researchers are yet to reach due to a consensus on what factors affect voters' preferences (Lipset, 1973; Gökçe et al., 2002: 7).

Political scientists have put forward different views based on research and surveys that they conducted and have developed various approaches and models to determine the general laws of voting behavior. From the perspective of political sociology, it should be underlined that the field is a discipline that examines the interactions between society and politics (Vergin, 2003: 12; Bahar, 2009: 217). Therefore, studies on political behavior and voter preferences are directly related to the field of political sociology.

The three leading theoretical models explaining the general factors affecting voting behavior are as follows:

3.1. Colombian Model/Sociological Model

The first of these models is what is often called "Columbia Studies". Some analyses on the subject were carried out under the leadership of Paul Lazarsfeld, who worked at Columbia University in the 1940s.

Paul Lazarsfeld focused on the examination of the psychological mechanisms related to the preference processes, promotion, advertising, and mass communication on consumer behavior, and had set two main goals in front of him. They are the media effects in the process of voters' exposure. In other words, how much has the media influenced the voters' preferences in this process? Lazarsfeld's central hypothesis at the outset of the study was that voting is essentially an individual behavior influenced by the voter's personality structure as well as media exposure; however, at the end of the research, it was concluded that the influence of the media in the formation of the voter decision remained at a minimum level and that the main and definite effect came from the social group to which the person belonged. Naturally, this obvious result contradicted the hypothesis of the research (Antunes, 2010: 164). This means that, according to the data revealed by the early Columbia studies, the communication between the political party and the electorate has a potential effect on voting preferences; however, it is not easy to argue that this communication has a very solid and reliable place in theoretical voting models. The empirical effects of media communication are much smaller than expected. Therefore, Lazarsfeld et al. proposed a hypothesis that predicts a two-stage flow of communication: Media reports during the election campaign may not directly affect the preferences of citizens. Instead, it can reach the expected effect to some extent by acting through the filter of opinion leaders (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944: 68).

According to this model, the social group to which one belongs is the determining factor of voting behavior. Voters usually vote for parties that best reflect the interests of the social group to which they belong. Social divisions play a larger role than psychological influences coming from the family. The most important of these divisions are social class, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, and geographical region (Heywood, 2007: 311). So, considering that people are more inclined to communicate with those who are from their own religion and social class, it can be understood that they will have a closer

relationship with their families, friends, and business circles. In this context, their political choices are a product of their ethnic background and social class, just as their clothing style, way of thinking, speaking style, human relations, and literary and musical tastes.

To put the model in the words of Boiney and Paletz, in the sociological approach, which sees the voting behavior of the citizen as choosing between the parties rather than choosing among the candidates, it is argued that variables such as family, socio-economic status, social group, and religion are effective in the decision of the voter. Researchers who adopt this approach think that individuals tend to follow the people they live in the same environment and that the demographic characteristics of the people can be a guide in predicting the result of an election. Accordingly, voting behavior is essentially a group experience. Therefore, the Colombian Model brought a sociological dimension to voting behavior (Boiney and Paletz, 1991: 5).

3.2. Michigan Model/Psycho-Social Approach

This model approaches voting behavior from a psycho-social perspective. The psychological approach, which is based on the assumption that the closeness of the voter to a certain individual party affects the voting behavior, was first included in the book titled "The American Voter" which was published by Campbell and his friends in 1960. These researchers claimed that partisanship based on the phenomenon of "party identification" forms the basis of the political attitude of American citizens (Campbell et al., 1960: 58). The traditional model of 'party identification' corresponds to the original concept which was developed by the 'Michigan model' regarding voting behavior. Party identification which is gained through some political experiences in the process of socialization refers to the continuous reinforcement of the feelings of advocacy for a particular political party or movement. Over time, a powerful psychological tie develops between the person and his or her political party. This situation is much more stable than all other political attitudes and plays a key role in the formation of voting preferences. This is the most important factor that determines voting behavior (Campbell et al., 1960: 121).

The act of voting is the result of a sphere of socio-political forces, in other words, a sphere of political life. Political life partly consists of the voters, their reference groups like family and friends, and also the candidates and their characteristics (Campbell et al., 1960, as cited in Visser, 1998: 37). Many researchers and writers have therefore suggested that there is a close similarity between the concept of "party identity" and "religious identity". Party identity provides voters with an ideology that resembles religiosity. Ideology in politics is just like the theological structure in religion because the party identity in politics provides a certain architectural structure, organization, and internal consistency to one's world of thought just as theology operates in religious people's minds (Miller and Shanks, 1996: 121). According to the same group of researchers, known as the "Michigan School", most voters have an established "psychological bond of affection" for a specific party under the psychological effects of the factors mentioned above. The roots of this bond should be sought in childhood affected by the same social environment. This loyalty, which can be expressed as "party identity", resembles a sort of religious commitment. Accordingly, voting behavior is generally permanent (Fiorina, 1997: 400; Akgün, 2007: 67). In summary, individuals form an identity with their party, under the influence of their families. This model places great emphasis on early political socialization (Heywood, 2007: 312). In this sense, "party identity" or "party identification" is the most famous concept used by the model (Curtice, 2002: 8). Regarding the role of party affiliation in voting decisions, Campbell et al. used the expression "a tight, but unstable bond" (Campbell et al., 1980: 148). "Identification with the party" follows a relatively stable course over time, though not completely, and strongly determines the voter's decisions. It can be said that this is a durable attitude. When voters encounter a new or familiar candidate, they will return to their starting point in their political attitudes and decide as similar as possible (Conover and Stanley, 1989: 912-940; Rahn, 1993: 472-496). Therefore, voters can be persuaded to vote for another political party if they find reasonable and convincing reasons despite all the power of the party identity.

The Michigan model and the sociological model are similar in that partisans feel they belong to a social group. In this model, people blend their self-perceptions and political attitudes with religious, ethnic, or regional groups. The Michigan model, unlike the sociological model, proposes the thesis that the causal link between attitude and voting works bi-directionally. Just as attitudes determine the color of the vote, in some cases, the color of the game also determines the attitudes of the person on certain issues (Andersen and Heath, 2000: 1-22).

3.3. Rational Choice Model/Economic Approach

Studies on the Rational Choice Approach started with Anthony Downs' work titled "An Economic Theory of Democracy", which shook the existing principles on voters' preferences and was later developed by different researchers. Downs explains the main thesis of his theory in the following words: "Our main thesis is that parties operating in democratic

political systems are like contractors in a profit-seeking economic structure. These political parties develop policies that can attract more votes to come to power, which is their specific and final goal, just as contractors develop projects that they think will bring more profit. The thesis is based on the assumption that citizens act rationally in politics, not for the sake (Downs, 1957: 295-296). According to the theory, the basis of voting behavior is the concern to maximize the efficiency of voting. Voters and political parties act directly in their interests. Here, rationality is the use of tools in a way that will serve the realization of the goals. The word "rational" here refers to active personal interests. There is an ongoing process of maximizing the output for a given input and minimizing the input for a given output. Thus, whenever economists refer to the phrase "rational man", they are not describing a person whose thinking processes make logical propositions. They are describing people who are free from prejudices or have dysfunctional emotions. In normal usage, each of them can be seen as a rational person; however, the word "economic" refers to a person who moves towards the point of obtaining the most valuable output by using his knowledge in the most effective way to achieve the goal (Downs, 1957: 5). For example, some studies in the United States have revealed that voters evaluate the presidential candidates according to the indicators of improvement or deterioration in the economy, reward the presidential candidate in the next election when the economic conditions improve and punish the candidate when the economy deteriorates (Hibbs, 2000: 149- 180). Some researchers assert that economic conditions are the biggest factors influencing voters' behavior. Certainly, it is at least "one of the strongest factors", even if it is not "the most powerful factor".

4. FACTORS AFFECTING VOTING BEHAVIOR IN TURKISH SOCIETY

It has to be admitted that the models outlined above have definite and obvious repercussions on voting behavior all over the world; however, as in every country, there are some differences in the details of voting behavior in Turkey.

According to Şerif Mardin, some deep cultural differences in Turkish society have existed since the time of the Ottoman Empire. In this differentiation, the Ottoman dynasty and its surroundings consist of the "center". On the other side, there is an "environment" that consists of people from different religions, ethnicities, and languages. The center has constantly and systematically distanced itself from the environment (large masses of people). Which means, the center and the periphery are separated from each other. While the center constitutes the urban, educated, secular, nationalist, statist, and elite social class, the periphery is mostly composed of rural, uneducated, traditionalist, conservative, and religious people, and they are usually distant from the state. These two groups, who were suspicious of each other during the multi-party period that started after the modern Turkish Republic was founded, are quite different in their party preferences. If the evaluation of social division is needed in terms of voting behavior, it can be said that while peripheral parties generally receive votes from more religious, provincial, and less educated voters, center parties receive votes from more educated and less religious social classes. The center-periphery distinction has always coincided with the right-left distinction in Turkish political life for a long time. Right-wing parties were supported by the majority of the voters who adopted the values of the surrounding social classes such as a free-market economy, conservatism, family values, and religious education. Left-wing parties, on the other hand, were supported by the statist and secular classes. In addition, this theory has been supported by many empirical studies (Mardin, 1973: 169-190).

In Gökçe's view, variables such as family, socio-economic status, social group, and religion can play a role in the vote cast by the voter in Turkey. Acting on the assumption that individuals' attitudes and preferences are influenced by the people they are in contact with, the model argues that voting behavior is determined by the factor of "social division" in society. The party preferences of the voters are defined as religious belonging and indispensable habits, and the vote used by the voters expresses that this unchangeable identity is usually confirmed (Gökçe et al., 2002: 7). According to Çobanoğlu, it is possible to count "social environment", "the candidates' personality", "available alternatives" and "system of social values" among the factors that affect voters' decision-making process. "The education level", "economic conditions", "expectations", and "goals" as well as "moral, religious, and human values" of the person can be counted among these factors (Çobanoğlu, 2007: 141-142). According to Damlapınar and Balcı, "family and social background", "party affiliation", and "the candidate's image", (Damlapınar and Balcı, 2005: 58), also according to Balcı, some other factors such as the "increase in the number of undecided voters", "the existence of political parties and candidates who are similar to each other" can be effective in the formation of the political preferences of the electorate and the decision-making processes (Balcı, 2005: 144).

As to the factors related to the political party, the major factors are "party leader", "party type", "party program", "actions performed", "promises and discourses", "the candidate's image", "ideology", "views on religion". Several other factors like "the organizational structure of the party", and "the relations of the party with the voters" may be mentioned in this

context. In some opinion polls, it is revealed that "the leader profile" is important and even the most efficient factor in the party preferences of the voters (Devran, 2003: 197). "The staff that the leader works with" and "political view" take the first three places (Çaha et al., 2002: 77). Meanwhile, in some other opinion polls, it has been understood that "the ethnic origin and religiosity of the political party candidate" is a more important factor, especially for female voters in Turkey. In contrast, the candidate's "socio-cultural identity", "ethnicity", "religiosity", and "hometown" have the lowest impact on the voting decisions of voters with university and graduate degrees. Likewise, according to Kılıç's research, the voters who take the candidate's "ethnic origin", "hometown" and "religiousness" seriously are living in the Çankaya district of Ankara, the capital city of Turkey. According to him, it is noteworthy that the "socio-cultural identity", "religiousness" and "hometown" of the candidate are highly influential in the voting decisions of voters who have nationalist and Islamist ideas (Kılıç, 2013b: 197). Hence voters who consider themselves Islamist tend to show more interest than others in a candidate who adheres to their religious values and allows them to support and maintain their religious views. Therefore, candidates who use religious discourse and symbols by emphasizing religious values can be expected to be more supported by Islamist voters (Kılıç, 2013a: 198).

An overview of the studies carried out in Turkish society so far is probably the following one: The results of a study conducted on 10,393 participants in 59 cities in Turkey in the year 2010 demonstrated that religiosity and ethnicity were the most important factors determining voters' preferences over the last ten years. It seems that voting behavior in the country has started to stick in ethnic, especially "Turkish-Kurdish" and "secular-religious" divisions day by day (Bilecen, 2016: 532).

5. RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CITIES OF KONYA AND ANTALYA IN TURKEY.

Even up to now, there have been a lot of academic analyses regarding the relationship between religiosity and voting behavior all over the world. Within the framework of this study, similar fields of research were conducted in Konya, known as the most religious and conservative city, and in Antalya, known as the most secular city, in Turkey. So it was expected to clarify the answer to the general question which is, "Is there any relationship between religiosity and voting behavior?" Hence, we will try to find answers to the questions listed below in the context of the answers given to the survey clauses below:

Research Clause 1. The candidate's physical charisma is crucial for my vote preference.
Research Clause 2. The candidate's speaking ability is vital for voting preference.
Research Clause 3. A candidate's educational status is vital for voting preference.
Research Clause 4. The candidate's intensity on nationalism is vital for voting preference.
Research Clause 5. In regard to voting preference, the candidate is expected to give importance to religion and religiosity.
Research Clause 6. The candidate's emphasis on secularism is significant for voting preference.
Research Clause 7. The course of the economy is important for voting preference.
Research Clause 8. In regard to voting preference, the candidate is expected to frequently emphasize universal values such as democracy, law, and human rights.
Research Clause 9. The general preference of families and friends is vital for voting preference.
Research Clause 10. The general trend on social media is important for voting preference.

6. METHODS

In this analysis, the method of literature review was utilized in the theoretical chapters. In the last chapter of the study, a comprehensive field research was carried out in the city center of Konya which is known as the most religious city in Turkey. Data acquired during the research were assessed and analyzed through the program of SPSS and the results were set forth clearly.

6.1. Application for Research and Sampling

A field survey was carried out on 241 participants of different ages, genders, education levels, and vocations in the cities of Konya and Antalya. This research was carried out by grounding on the data obtained from the studies and research made up to now. The data fundamental to the field study was obtained using a face-to-face survey technique conducted with 256 people selected by the random sampling method. As a result of the preliminary analysis of these questionnaires, 241

questionnaires were subjected to analysis.

6.2. Data Collection Instruments

A questionnaire consisting of 10 questions was prepared to determine the participants' ideas on the main issue detailed above. The scale is arranged in the 5-point Likert-type to discern the thoughts of the participants at these points. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Undecided Disagree Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The scale was designed partly by utilizing a similar scale used in field studies applied earlier by the United States and European academic circles regarding the topic. The trustworthiness of the scale used in this study (Cronbach's α) was calculated as 0.94. The second part of the survey consisted of questions to reveal the social and demographic characteristics of the participants such as the levels of education, average monthly income, marital status, gender, and age. The questionnaire created was examined by two experts for surface validity before being applied in the field and it was arranged according to their recommendations. It was also presented to 43 people in terms of observing the clarity of the questionnaire and seeing the problems that may be faced in the field in advance and after the final checks were finished, it was made ready for the application.

6.3. A Comparative Analysis of the Data Obtained from the Field Research on the Factors Affecting Voting Behavior in Antalya and Konya Cities

When we examine the demographic measurements, which are the first 4 questions;
● While the majority of individuals participating in the survey in Antalya are women, the majority of individuals participating in the survey in Konya are men.
● While the majority of individuals participating in the survey in Antalya are between the ages of "20-25" and "40-45", they are in the age range of "20-25", "50-55" and "18-20" in Konya.
● While the majority of individuals participating in the survey in Antalya are High School/University graduates, they are High School graduates or equivalent in Konya.
● While the majority of individuals participating in the survey in Antalya have an income between "1000-3000 TL" and "3000-5000 TL", the number of individuals participating in the survey in Konya is approximately equally distributed across all income levels. While examining these questions, the ratios of each question on a Likert scale, in Antalya and Konya, were examined and it was tested whether there was a significant difference between these two cities. While testing the hypothesis, the decision was made using the z-test statistic.

Hypothesis: H0: There is no difference between the rate of answers given in Antalya and the rate of answers given in Konya. H1: There are some differences between the rate of answers given in Antalya and the rate of answers given in Konya.

DECISION: If (z > 1.96) or (–z < -1.96), the H0 hypothesis is rejected.
Based on the data obtained;
● 54% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 45.4% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they do not attach importance to the physical charisma of the candidate. With these ratios, the z-test statistic was found to be 1.32, and since this ratio was lower than the critical value of 1.96, no difference could be found between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's physical charisma. According to the available data, voters in both provinces do not attach importance to this feature in their candidate preferences.
● 50% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 48.9% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they attach importance to the candidate's speaking ability. With these ratios, the z-test statistic was found to be 0.168, and since this ratio was lower than the critical value of 1.96, there was no significant difference between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's speaking ability. In other words, voters in both provinces attach importance to this feature in their candidate preferences.
● 68% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 68.1% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they attach importance to the education level of the candidate. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be -0.0164, and since this rate was higher than the critical value of -1.96, no difference could be found between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's education level. Voters in both provinces attach importance to this feature in their candidate preferences.

● 51.8% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 64% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they attach importance to the candidate's giving importance to nationalism. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be 1.91, and since this rate was lower than the critical value of 1.96, no difference was found between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's giving importance to nationalism. Voters in both provinces attach importance to this feature in their candidate preferences.

● 45% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 17.7% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they do not attach importance to the candidate's giving importance to religion and religiosity. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be 4.6, and since this rate is higher than the critical value of 1.96, a significant difference was determined between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's giving importance to religion and religiosity. However, voters in Antalya give less importance to the religiosity of the candidate than voters in Konya.

● 78% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 52.5% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they attach importance to the candidate's giving importance to secularism. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be 4.32, and since this rate is higher than the critical value of 1.96, it has been seen that there is a significant difference between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's giving importance to secularism. Accordingly, voters in Antalya give more importance to the candidate's adherence to the principle of secularism than voters in Konya.

● 81% of 100 voters participating in the survey in Antalya and 54.6% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that they attach importance to the course of the economy. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be 4.6, and since this rate was higher than the critical value of 1.96, a difference was found between the two provinces in terms of the course of the economy. Accordingly, the voters in Antalya give more importance to the economic situation and the course of their candidate preferences compared to the voters in Konya.

● 70% of the 100 voters who participated in the survey in Antalya and 61% of the 141 voters who participated in the survey in Konya stated that they attach importance to the candidate's frequent emphasis on universal values such as democracy, law, and human rights. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be 1.46, and since this rate is smaller than the critical value of 1.96, no difference was found between the two provinces in terms of the importance of the candidate's frequent emphasis on universal values such as democracy, law and human rights.

● 34% of 100 voters surveyed in Antalya and 49.6% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that the general tendency of their family and friends is not important. In terms of these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be -2.46, and since this rate was lower than the critical value of -1.96, a difference was found between the two provinces in terms of the influence of family and friends. Accordingly, voters in Antalya give more importance to the factor of family and friends in their candidate preference.

● 28% of 100 voters surveyed in Antalya and 59.6% of 141 voters surveyed in Konya stated that the general trend in social media is not important. With these rates, the z-test statistic was found to be -5.18, and since this rate was smaller than the critical value of -1.96, a difference was found between the two provinces in terms of the general trend in social media. Accordingly, it is understood that voters in Antalya are more open to the influence of social media on their candidate preferences.

7. CONCLUSION
Just as everything has one or more reasons, there are many logical reasons for voters' behavior. A large number of academic studies and research have been conducted to date to determine the main factors that create, affect, and direct individuals' voting behavior. The studies carried out in this field play a determining role in political public relations on the one hand and contribute to the public's voting behavior to reach a more conscious point on the other hand.

This study, which aims to determine the strongest factors that play a role in the formation of voting behavior, presents the results of a field study conducted in Konya ,known as the the most conservative and religious city, and Antalya, known as the most secular city in Turkey, to find the reasons that affect the preferences of the voters. These are "physical charisma", "oratory ability", "education level", "frequent use of nationalist discourses", "frequent emphasis on religious discourses", "frequent expression of secular discourses", and "democracy, frequent references to law". is. and human rights", "effect of family and friends", "effect of the economic situation" and "effect of social media".

The reason for choosing the cities of Konya and Antalya as the universe of the research is that Konya is known as the most religious city in Turkey and Antalya is known as the most secular city in the country. There is no doubt that religiosity and secular mentality play an important role in shaping individuals' political identities and voting behavior. The research also

revealed the differences between the voting behavior of religious and secular groups of people.

In this context, participants were presented with ten factors likely influencing their voting behavior. Considering the findings obtained from the analysis of the data obtained from the research in question, it can be noted that there was no significant difference between these two provinces concerning the factors of the candidate's physical charisma, oratory ability, education level, frequent use of nationalist discourses, emphasis on democracy, the consciousness about the human rights and the influence of social media. On the other hand, the voters in Konya gave more importance to the factors of the candidate's religiosity and also a frequent emphasis on religious values in speeches. In contrast, voters in Antalya considered the candidate's frequent mention of secular matters, family and friendship, and the economy. They also consider the general trend in social media much more important before and during the elections.

Another interesting finding obtained from the research is that religiosity and nationalism are mixed in Turkish society. More precisely, religiosity and nationalism seem to be almost matched, especially on the emotional level. Undoubtedly, both factors are highly effective in the voting behavior of Turkish voters. For a long time, religious and nationalist masses have been quite stubborn about not voting for left and social democratic parties. Religious people see the political parties they support as a part of religion, while nationalists perceive the political parties they support as symbols of patriotism. This study revealed that most religious people have nationalistic feelings and this affects their voting behavior.

Although the universe of the research has been carefully chosen, the greater number of participants in the research could have resulted in healthier results. This study is likely to give readers a good idea, especially about political public relations, and to inspire other studies in the same field.

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