Voter Preferences, Electoral Cleavages and Support for Islamic Parties

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Abstract

Increasing scholarly attention has recently been focused upon the origins and fortunes of Islamic parties. This paper examines the individual determinants of support for these parties utilizing the fifth wave of the World Values Survey. It is argued that the distribution of individual preferences along political cleavages like left-right, secularism-Islamism, and regime-opposition are critical explanatory variables. The cases under investigation are Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in Morocco. The results of the multinomial logit show that Islamic parties obtain support from a broad spectrum of voters and this support base is best understood in relation to the distribution of voter preferences for rival parties. Furthermore, left-right and Islamism appear to be the most important cleavages in the electoral markets under investigation.
Introduction

Increasing scholarly attention has recently been focused upon the origins and fortunes of Islamic parties. In this vein, a good amount of research examined the Islamic party moderation (Kalyvas, 2000; Schwedler, 2007) and their commitment to democracy (Tibbi, 2008, p. 43-48; Nasr, 2005). While there is merit in investigating these questions, it is also important to understand the microlevel foundations of support for Islamic parties. Surprisingly, little empirical research has been conducted toward this end (for an exception see Carkoglu, 2006; Tepe, 2007) and studies with a comparative orientation are rare (Garcia-Rivero and Kotze, 2007; Tepe and Baum, 2008). This study aims to fill this gap by examining the individual level determinants of support for Islamic parties.

It is important to understand the popular base of Islamic parties for two reasons. First, they invoke the image of religious fundamentalism among many Western observers, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. It is imperative to examine the microlevel determinants of support for these parties to understand whether they represent a growing fundamentalism or a moderate brand of Islam. Second, an analysis of Islamic party support may help understand the fortunes of these parties. Did they increase their support because they were able to capitalize on the reactionary votes of citizens who suffer from economic conditions? Are they drawing support from citizens who are fed with the corrupt practices of existing regimes? Or, are they exploiting individual preferences about deeper societal divisions?

My main argument is that support for Islamic parties can best be understood within the contours of the electoral competition. I contend that Islamic parties capitalize on the distribution of voters’ preferences along significant cleavages to maximize their
gains in electoral markets. Since the constituency base of most Islamic parties is formed by a wide spectrum of voters with different ideological preferences, their electoral fortunes will depend on their success in stealing supporters from rival parties. Thus, it is imperative to understand the popular base of inter-party competition in addition to the distribution of individual preferences along significant cleavages to explain growing support for these parties.

The fifth wave of the World Values Survey (2005-08) is used to carry univariate and multinomial logit analyses. The cases under investigation are Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in Morocco. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. After a review of the extant research about Islamic parties, the contours of electoral competition in Turkey and Morocco are introduced. The third section explores the distribution of individual preferences along the main cleavages in Turkey and Morocco. In the fourth section the results of the multinomial logistic regression are presented. A brief discussion of the results is followed by the conclusion. The results confirm that Islamic parties obtain support from a broad spectrum of voters and this support base is best understood in relation to the distribution of voter tendencies for rival parties along significant political cleavages. Furthermore, individual preferences for left-right and Islamism dimensions obtain the lion’s share in explaining the popular base of these parties.

Support for Islamic Parties

Students of party politics in the Muslim world developed three explanations to account for the remarkable rise of Islamic parties. The first explanation argues that
individuals vote for these parties because they want to show their reaction by voting Islamic. Given the incapacity of the incumbent regime and the existing political parties to deal with the worsening economic conditions, people may turn to these parties to protest (Onis and Keyman, 2003: 96; Tepe and Baum, 2008: 90). During economic crises, Islamic parties may fill a vacuum created by unable governments in provision of basic social services to broaden their constituency base (Ozdalga, 1997; Lust-Okar, 2005:154).

Reaction may also take a second form where the existing parties are perceived as agents of widespread corruption and patronage system. Islamic parties may take on these issues to present themselves as honest and moral contenders opposing the establishment (Willis, 2004: 57; Wegner, 2007: 84; Garcia-Rivero and Kotze, 2007: 627). While this approach is useful in explaining the initial success of Islamic parties, it does not explain their persistence in the system. The success of Islamic parties depends on their capacity in creating and maintaining large coalitions. Whatever the reaction is for, they exploit this behavior strategically to maximize their electoral support. Such coalition building makes Islamic parties appealing to large segments of society where losers and winners of globalization could be combined into a powerful electoral force (for an application of this approach to Turkey see Onis and Keyman, 2003; Tepe, 2007).

A second explanation concerns the utilization of Islamist ideology. Some scholars argue that Islam constituted a powerful challenge to the secular ideologies of the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. nationalism, pan-Arabism, and socialism) (Richards and Waterbury, 2008: 362-63). The diffusion of ideas generated by scholars like Qutb and Mawdudi (see Hamzawy (2005) and Nasr (1995)) and the Islamic revolution in Iran strengthened this challenge. Furthermore, Islam as a unifying force helps keep the Muslim identity
relevant in the global era (Lubeck, 2000; Murden, 2002: 204). Islamic parties, thus, use Islam to appeal to the voters. This explanation is limited because not everybody has an Islamist ideology or not everybody voting for these parties is religious.

A third approach develops a structural argument linking the preferences of emerging economic classes to new political formations. This approach is especially fruitful in explaining the rise of Islamic parties in Turkey. The proponents of this approach argue that Islamic parties provide a mechanism by which the demands of new economic sectors (particularly the owners of small and medium sized enterprises) are incorporated into the system (Yavuz, 1997). This explanation, although appealing, is inadequate for two reasons. First, it is applied to a single case and we do not know whether it is generalizable to other countries. Second, the structural explanation does not provide a causal mechanism by which the new economic classes mobilize microlevel support for Islamic parties. It is hard to assume that AKP of Turkey is deriving its support merely from voters associated with small and medium-sized enterprises as it is known to have a broader cross-class appeal (Onis and Keyman, 2003; Tepe, 2007).

While the explanations summarized above are useful, one needs to move beyond reaction or Islamist ideology variables to understand why non-reactionary or non-Islamist voters support these parties. I contend that the structure of electoral competition (i.e. cleavages) and its microlevel foundations should be the critical determinants of support for Islamic parties. Anthony Downs, for example, persuasively argued that “the distribution of voters is a crucial determinant molding a nation’s political life, [and] major changes in it are among the most important political events possible” (1957: 140). Using spatial analysis, he also demonstrated that parties will move their ideological
positions to adjust to this distribution. This approach also assumes that at least a group of voters have stable preferences to inform their vote choices (Zaller, 1992). Only under these conditions, democratic accountability (Powell, 2000) and dynamic representation (Stimson et al., 1995) can be possible. The underlying logic of this argument is that voters will prefer political parties which they perceive to be closer to their ideal positions on a given issue. Since it is plausible to assume that the most important issues will be tied to existing divisions (e.g. class, religion), one can argue that party support will be a function of the distribution of voter preferences along existing political cleavages.

Parties have the goal of maximizing their votes in the electoral market (Mair, 1998; Mair et al., 2004) and those positioning themselves closer to the preferences of voters along different cleavages are more likely to be successful (Downs, 1957). Two conditions need to be met for a party to be a winner. First, a party should exploit the distribution of voters along multiple issues of competition by building cross-cleavage coalitions. Second, based on the distribution of voters a party should be able to appeal to the constituency base of the rival parties in a way to capture their traditional voters. Utilizing this approach, now I describe the contours of party competition in Turkey and Morocco.

The Contours of Party Competition in Turkey and Morocco

Turkey and Morocco have a better democratization record than most other countries in the region. While recent political liberalization reforms in Morocco² earned this country the Freedom House ranking of ‘partly free’, the Turkish system has a turbulent
and long history of democratization characterized by consolidation periods and cyclical breakdowns (Ozbudun, 2000).

Morocco’s democratization and human rights record, as Turkey’s, has improved significantly within the last decade. Both countries have anchored their economies to global actors such as the IMF and the EU. It is within this context that both countries witnessed the rise of Islamic parties, AKP and PJD. The former is the governing party since 2002, while the latter is the third largest party in the system. Despite different historical trajectories, the political cleavages in Turkey and Morocco are strikingly similar. In both countries, the conflict between regime and peripheral elements, Islam, ethnic identity, and left-right ideology tend to shape voter preferences in the electoral market. Islamic parties capitalize on the distribution of voter preferences along these cleavages to maximize their votes.

Regime-Opposition/Center-Periphery

Morocco gained its independence in 1956 partly thanks to the efforts of Parti Istiqlal, but the King concentrated all power in his hands. This created a deep cleavage in Morocco (Willis, 2002; Shahin, 1997) between the palace (i.e. regime) and the oppositional forces. From the earlier days of independence, King Muhammed V promoted a multiparty system to undermine the power of the then dominant Istiqlal (Willis, 2002: 3). He formed many regime parties and trusted them to loyal elites against the oppositional forces. Three of these parties, formed to divide the voter base of opposition parties, were Mouvement Populaire (MP), Rassemblement National des Independents (RNI) and Union Constitutionnel (UC).
A second strategy used by the King to consolidate his power was to encourage splits from opposition parties. The most important of these splits took place in 1959 from Istiqlal with the formation of Union Nationale des Forces Populaire (UNFP) that later became Union Socialiste des Forces Populaire (USFP). This newly formed party along with smaller opposition parties like Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS), continued to collaborate with Istiqlal. Recently, the alliance of these parties regained importance after they formed the opposition bloc or the Kutla (Willis, 2002: 5).

The monarchy enjoys widespread legitimacy in Morocco which makes it difficult for the opposition to mobilize a large segment of the electorate. Furthermore, with the alternance, the opposition parties face the danger of being incorporated into the regime. Under these conditions, the Islamic PJD made a strategic move and posed as genuine opposition locating itself between the Makhzen and alternance (Willis, 1999) to capture the support of the opposition-minded voters.

A similar dichotomy known as center vs. periphery (Mardin, 1973) exists in the Turkish political system. This framework refers to the divisions between the state and society as well as those within elites. In Turkey, the modernization process estranged the well organized and educated center from the periphery where the latter increasingly associated itself with religious rituals and tradition (Mardin, 1973: 170).

This dichotomy remained prevalent in Atatürk’s Turkey when the center elites forcefully imposed the Kemalist values at the expense of alienating the periphery (Mardin, 1973: 183; Sunar and Toprak, 2004: 160). The manifestations of this tension included the secularist-Islamist conflict, the military interventions and more recently the ban of Islamic and Kurdish parties -appealing to the periphery- by the judicial elites. In
1990s and 2000s, the Republican People’s Party (CHP) obtained support from the “center” voters, whereas the Islamic parties and Kurdish parties appealed individuals carrying identities that did not fit well in the Center’s modernization project.

Two propositions may follow insofar as individual support for Islamic parties is considered. One can argue that the success of Islamic parties in Turkey and Morocco will depend on their ability to mobilize the voters who oppose the center or the regime. Alternatively, it can be argued that the success of these parties will depend on their ability in forming coalitions that override the division of preferences along the center (regime) and periphery (opposition) ideologies.

Islam

A second cleavage dominating the electoral markets in Turkey and Morocco is Islam. In Turkey, the implementation of a radical version of secularism created a rift between secularist elites viewing Islam as an impediment to modernization and the traditional elites defining secularism in terms of separation of state and society (Yavuz, 1997; Ayata, 1996).

Islam has been a powerful force in Turkish Society and it gained momentum following the political liberalization in 1980s. Next to non-political movements, it found representation in the parties formed by Erbakan. After the 1995 elections, the Islamic Welfare Party (RP) formed a coalition government with the right-wing True Path Party (DYP). The Islamist discourse of the party leaders and especially the hawkish style of Erbakan in the headscarf issue disturbed the secularist establishment. In response, the party leaders moderated their positions to show their commitment to democracy and
secularism (Heper, 1997). The military eventually forced the government to resign after what is known as a post-modern coup in 1997 and the Welfare party as well as its successor Virtue Party (FP) were banned.

In 2001, a group of young reformers under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan split from Erbakan to form AKP with the old guard establishing Felicity Party (SP). Following the political and economic crises of 2001, AKP managed to win two thirds of the seats in the earthquake elections of November 2002. Describing themselves as conservative democrats and stressing their commitment to secularism and democracy, AKP leaders managed to win a second victory in 2007 legislative elections with a landslide vote (47%).

Although AKP was formed by pro-Islamic leaders, the party discourse was not openly built on Islamist ideology. Taking a moderate position, pushing for EU membership, and implementing significant reforms, AKP was able to appeal to a broad spectrum of Turkish electorate. The party found itself in conflict with the military and judiciary establishment over the election of the president in 2007 and about an appeal to the Constitutional Court for its closure in 2008. In both cases, the party emerged victorious and strengthened its claim to be a system party loyal to the principle of secularism.

The rift between secularist and the Islamist forces forms an important cleavage in Turkish politics. In this system, the leftist CHP competes for the votes of secularist voters while an offshoot of Welfare party, Felicity Party (SP) is targeting Islamist voters. AKP, on the other hand locates itself at the center to capture the median voter along the secularist-Islamist dimension. Its rivals are ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party
and parties approaching the center from both left (Democratic Left Party (DSP)) and right (True Path Party (DYP) and Motherland Party (ANAP)).

In Morocco, the Islamic movements have been strong but they rejected to participate in elections which they viewed as “staged” events. The Justice and Development Party (PJD) did not emerge until the 1990s following the splits and realignments in Morocco’s larger Islamic movement (Shahin, 1997; Willis 1999, 2002, 2006).

In the 1970s, al-Shabiba (Islamic Youth) emerged as an important force growing in size and militancy. The Rabat branch of the organization split to form Al-Jama’a Al-Islamiyya in the 1980s, the founders of which made clear that they wanted to participate in the public life and politics (Willis, 1999:47). The organization changed its name to Al-Islah wa At-Tajdid (Reform and Renewal)⁸, formed a new party, and applied for recognition in 1992. This application was denied but theIslah leaders sought to participate in elections under the banner of Mouvement Populaire Democratique et Constitutionnel (MPDC)⁹. The party was eventually taken over by the Islah and it was named Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in 1998. PJD made significant gains in 2002 elections and emerged as the third party from the elections despite competing in only selected districts. The party positioned itself as the new opposition in Morocco after the 2002 elections.

PJD is not as strong as its counterpart in Turkey or as the more comparable cases of Islamic parties in Tunisia and Algeria (Willis, 2006). Three reasons may account for this electoral underdevelopment as it relates to the Islamist cleavage. The first one concerns the reluctance of the largest Islamist movement, Al-Adl, to participate in the
elections. A second reason is the Islamic character of monarchy where the King carries the title of the Commander of Faithful. In addition, Istiqlal, too, appeals to the Islamist oriented voters (Shahin, 1997). Thus, PJD finds itself in competition with the monarchy (i.e. regime parties) and Istiqlal over the votes of Islamists. The party distinguishes itself from others by taking positions that are more overtly Islamic, such as its opposition to reformation of Mudawwana. A final reason concerns the cautious stance taken by the PJD leadership. The party always used the low gear and made sure not to cross any boundaries defined by the regime in elections. From the beginning it made clear that it wanted to participate to public life under regime’s precepts (Willis, 1999: 47; 2004: 60). PJD leaders understand that any party challenging his majesty’s authority faces the danger of being closed and hence they play the electoral game very safely.

When the features of party competition along the Islamist ideology are considered one can expect this cleavage to significant only in a limited sense in Morocco. In other words, PJD should be able to mobilize Islamist voters only on the margins of this cleavage. In Turkey, the conflict between radical secularist forces and the Islamist movements should make this cleavage more relevant. AKP should be able to mobilize a larger segment of electorate by playing to the middle and by supporting moderate solutions for the incorporation of Islamic brand into the system.

Ethnic Cleavage

The ethnic divisions and their representation in Turkish politics are obviously more prominent than those in Morocco. The intensification of the conflict between Turkish armed forces and the separatist PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) in 1990s contributed to the deepening of an ethnic cleavage. The two ends of this conflict were an
assimilationist Turkish and a separatist Kurdish nationalism. The social and economic problems of Kurdish populated regions and the repressive state policies did not help ease the tension.

The formation of Kurdish parties made the ethnic cleavage a vibrant component of the Turkish electoral market. The success of Islamic parties in Turkey can partially be attributed to their cross-ethnic appeal originating from Islamist ideology. In 2007, AKP and the independent candidates of Democratic Society Party (DTP) emerged as the strongest parties in the districts with a large Kurdish population. Thus, the distribution of voter preferences along the ethnic cleavage and the competition between AKP and DTP are likely to affect support for Islamic party in Turkey.

Conversely, a low-intensity ethnic cleavage characterizes the party competition in Morocco. The division between Berber (Amazigh) and Arab populations has not turned into a violent conflict in this country. The first Berber party, Mouvement Populaire (MP) was formed as an instrument of notables and rural Berber interests against the predominantly Arab Istiqlal (Willis, 2002:11). MP has been one of the regime parties and been criticized by some elites for not representing the Amazigh culture (Willis, 2002:12). Nonetheless, it is able to attract a large number of Berber votes and hence is capable of preventing the encroachment of Islamic parties in its own electoral domain. Ethnic voting, in other words, is the privilege of a regime party in Morocco. Alternatively, one may argue that Islamist ideology may override the ethnic identity and hence increase support for PJD.

Left-Right
It is argued that left-right ideology is not relevant in a Western fashion in Morocco (Willis, 2002: 17; Korany, 1998: 161) or Turkey (see Carkoglu and Hinich (2006) for a review). Notwithstanding this skepticism, research using expert judgments of party positions indicates that the left–right continuum may still account for a significant portion of variation in party ideologies cross-nationally (Benoit and Laver, 2007).

Left and right may have different meanings in Turkey and Morocco compared to Western democracies (e.g. economic policy and class). For example, the left-right cleavage may overlap with a modernist-traditionalist dimension and hence may still serve as a useful reference point in Turkey (Ciftci et al., 2008:322) and possibly in Morocco. In Turkey, the meaning of left and right is well-established in electoral competition (Carkoglu, 2006). CHP, DTP and DSP define themselves as the parties of the left and currently ANAP, DYP, MHP and AKP are considered parties of the right. In Morocco, USFP and PPS establish themselves as leftist parties. Both have ties with the trade unions and do well among urban voters (Tachau, 1994: 419-20).

One can expect that leftist or rightist ideological preferences will be important determinants of support for Islamic parties to the extent of their appeal along these ideologies and other parties’ success in mobilizing voters along this cleavage.

Univariate Analysis

The Fifth Wave of the World Values Survey is used to carry the empirical analysis. Since the distribution of individual preferences along significant cleavages is crucial to the main argument, I first conduct a univariate analysis to explore ideological positions of the electorate. To measure preferences along government-opposition
cleavage, I calculated the mean of four items asking the respondents whether they have confidence in selected political institutions on a four point scale ranging from none at all (1) to a great deal (4). In Morocco, confidence in military, the police, the judiciary and the government was retained whereas in Turkey, confidence in government was not included in the calculations. Figure 1 represents the distribution of voters (standardized scores) along this dimension for Turkey-AKP and Morocco-JDP pairs.

Figure 1 Here

In Morocco, the distribution approximates to symmetry with a slight left-skew indicating that the preferences are evenly divided along the regime-opposition cleavage. While PJD is able to draw support from individuals who locate themselves on both ends of the distribution, as expected, a larger share of its supporters are located on the left side of the curve implying that this party has a slight edge among the opposition minded voters.

In Turkey, the distribution is left-skewed pointing to the widespread confidence in the state institutions. Given this consensus and the fact that the distribution of AKP supporters perfectly mirrors the larger electorate, it is hard to conclude that AKP is a party of the periphery. The validity of the center-periphery distinction has already been questioned (Gole, 1997: 54; Ahmadov, 2008: 34) and the evidence in Figure 1 supports this skepticism.

To measure Islamism, I calculated the mean of four items asking the respondents whether they agree or disagree to a set of statements on a five point scale (politicians who do not believe in good are unfit for public office, religious leaders should not influence the vote, it is better if more religious people held administrative positions, and the
religious leaders should not influence government decision). Higher values represent stronger Islamist preferences. Figure 2 shows the standardized distribution of voters along the Islamism cleavage.

Figure 2 Here

The overall distribution of the electorate is symmetric in both countries pointing to an even split between secularist and Islamist preferences. The PJD supporters are concentrated in the right half of the curve and this implies that they have stronger Islamist preferences. AKP, interestingly, gets its support from individuals who have median preferences along this dimension. Contrary to my expectations, PJD appears to be exploiting this dimension more successfully than AKP.

To measure preferences along the ethnic cleavage I calculated the mean of two items. The first item asks the respondents to state their preferences along a continuum ranging from ethnic diversity is bad for national unity (1) to ethnic diversity enriches the life (10). The second item asks whether they want to have a neighbor speaking a different language (0 do not, 1 would like to). Higher scores indicate more tolerant attitudes toward ethnic diversity.¹²

Figure 3 Here

The distribution of voter preferences along the ethnic cleavage is left-skewed (more strongly in Turkey) showing the large number of individuals with tolerant attitudes. AKP is able to draw support from more tolerant voters, while PJD appeals to voters on both sides. Nonetheless, both parties are able to draw support from all individuals along this cleavage. Thus, one can expect that they will engage in a rivalry
with ethnic parties (DTP in Turkey and MP in Morocco) and their support will rely on the strength of individuals’ attachment to these parties.

To explore the distribution of voters along the left-right cleavage, I used an item asking the respondents to locate themselves on a ten-point scale from left (1) to right (10). Figure 4, shows the distribution of voter preferences (standardized scores) along this cleavage.

Figure 4 Here

In Morocco, a significant portion of individuals locate themselves at the center with only small percentages at the tails of the distribution. This picture, combined with the distribution of preferences for PJD supporters, shows that left-right cleavage may not be a significant determinant of vote for Islamic party in Morocco. In Turkey, individuals locate themselves more evenly on both sides of the symmetry line, yet a concentration on the far-right is noticeable. The distribution of preferences for AKP supporters is left-skewed distinguishing AKP from the parties of the left.

Multivariate Analysis

Since the dependent variable is nominal, multinomial logistic regression is used for estimation. This model also allows comparison of Islamic party supporters to other parties in the system. The dependent variable is party choice asking the respondents which party they would have voted first or which party appeals them most if elections were held tomorrow. Since some parties have a small number of respondents choosing them, I combined some categories before running the analysis. Table 1 presents the combined categories and the number of observations in each group.
In addition to individual preferences along the major cleavages (mean values of multiple items for each cleavage), I also include variables measuring discontent with the economic conditions. A dummy variable measuring an individual’s employment status (1 if unemployed 0 otherwise) and the overall economic status of the household (a four-point scale ranging from the family saved money to family asked for debt to survive) are used to test whether reaction to economic conditions is related to Islamic party support. I also included a variable measuring religiosity with an item asking the respondents to state how frequently they go to the mosque (1 never, 7 more than once a week). The models also include dummy variables for ethnic groups (Kurd and Berber) and demographics (age, gender, educational attainment).

Results

Table 2 presents the multinomial logit estimation. The reference categories are PJD for Morocco and AKP for Turkey. The cell entries include coefficients, standard errors and relative risk ratios (RRR). The risk ratios give the likelihood of voting for a party relative to the reference party as the variable of interest increases by one unit when other variables are held constant. Table 2 here

The significant effects are scarce in Morocco, whereas the electoral competition appears to be more vibrant in Turkey. However, ethnic and regime-opposition cleavages appear to have limited relevancy in Turkish electoral market. Kurdish DTP is less likely to be supported by individuals with more confidence in state institutions relative to Islamic AKP. Conversely, an individual with strong ethnic tolerance is 2 and a Kurd is
78 times more likely to vote for DTP compared to AKP. These results may be indicative of AKP’s move to the center in contrast to the anti-system stand of Kurdish party forming the new periphery.

Islamic party support is clearly distinguishable from others in the electoral market along the Islamism and left-right cleavages. One unit increase from leftist to rightist ideology decreases the probability of voting for CHP by half (RRR=.48) and for DTP by a factor of .68 relative to voting for AKP. Not surprisingly, an individual locating herself at the extreme right position is 6.4 times (1.28*5) more likely to vote for MHP relative to AKP when compared to an individual at the center of the ideological spectrum (a score of 5).

The support base of AKP is significantly distinguished from rival parties (with the exception of right wing ANAP and DYP) along the distribution of Islamist preferences. The rival parties are supported less by individuals with strong Islamic preferences. For example, an individual with a very strong Islamist orientation is 1.5 times (.33*5) less likely to vote for CHP relative to AKP. Furthermore, religious individuals are more likely to vote for AKP compared to other parties. These results imply that AKP has an edge over other parties in exploiting Islamic orientations.

As for Morocco, PJD’s support is distinguished from other parties only along the left-right dimensions and by religiosity. Individuals with a right ideology are more likely to vote for PJD relative to USFP/PPS, UC/RNI, and MP. Religious individuals are less likely to vote for USFP/PPS (a decrease of .4 for each unit increase in religiosity) and UC/RNI (decrease by a factor of .37) relative to voting for PJD. The only other relevant cleavage appears to be the regime-opposition cleavage, yet in a limited way.
individual with more confidence in state institutions is more likely to vote for MP (a regime party) relative to PJD. Overall, neither regime-opposition nor ethnic diversity or Islamism cleavages are utilized by the larger electorate to distinguish Islamic party support in Morocco. These results imply that ethnic or Islamic voting is not as prominent in Morocco as it is in Turkey. Finally, as expected, Moroccan voters do not distinguish between PJD and Istiqlal along any of these cleavages. This is not surprising given the fact that both parties appeal to the religious, right-wing and opposition-minded voters.

Unemployment and satisfaction with household finances does not reach statistical significance in Turkey indicating that economic discontent does not distinguish Islamic party support. In addition, more educated individuals are more likely to vote for CHP/DSP and MHP compared to AKP. None of the control variables reach statistical significance in Morocco.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that the support base of Islamic parties can be explained by examining the distribution of individual preferences along main cleavages in the electoral market. In Turkey, AKP appeals to religious and to Islamist-minded voters. Therefore, it is able to steal the voters of center right and extreme right parties and distinguish its electoral base from the secularist CHP and DSP. Since both the King and Istiqlal exploit Islamism in the Moroccan electoral market parties (Willis, 1999, 2004), PJD is not able to form a large support base along this cleavage to distinguish itself from other.
The distribution of voters along the regime-opposition cleavage has only limited significance in both electoral markets. In Turkey, center-periphery framework is of dubious value (Gole, 1997: 54; Ahmadov, 2008: 34) whereas in Morocco’s controlled democracy it is next to impossible to form a genuine opposition to the regime (Willis, 1999).

While the results of the multivariate analysis shows that Kurds and ethnically tolerant individuals are more likely to vote for DTP, the univariate analysis demonstrates that AKP is also able to obtain some support from individuals favoring ethnic diversity. The cross-ethnic Islamic discourse may be the main reason for the success of AKP along this cleavage. Unlike the Turkish case, no violent ethnic conflict is observed in Morocco between the Berbers and the regime. Therefore, the distribution of voters along this cleavage does not differentiate PJD’s support base from that of other parties.

Finally, ‘left-right’ is a significant cleavage in both countries. AKP’s main support comes from the centrist voters. The party also distinguishes itself from the parties of the extreme left and left (DTP, CHP), and the extreme right (MHP) along this dimension. These results indicate that AKP became a party of the center and captured the voters of the centrist parties (from both the center left and particularly the center right). Contrary to the argument stating that left-right cleavage is irrelevant in Morocco (Willis, 2002; Korany, 1998), the results of the empirical analysis demonstrated that it is, indeed, a vibrant dimension of the electoral market. While PJD supporters are distinguished from those of USFP and PPS, PJD also manages to steal voters from the regime parties (RNI, UC and MP) on the right side of this cleavage. The utility of the left-right construct in non-Western settings has been questioned (Willis, 2002; Carkoglu
and Hinich 2006). My analysis shows that this cleavage has some value in explaining the electoral competition in non-Western settings.

Conclusion

Voter preferences about significant issues shape the electoral competition (Downs, 1957). I argue that the popular base of Islamist parties can best be understood by examining the distribution of voter preferences along the main cleavages in the electoral market. Although random shocks such as economic conditions may help explain the initial success of Islamic parties, they fell short of explaining their continued survival. Islamic parties gain electoral support because they pursue two strategies in the electoral market. Firstly, these parties are able to form a voter base that resembles the preference distribution of the larger electorate along the main cleavages. Accordingly, they are able to steal voters from all parties in the system. Secondly, Islamic parties strategically appeal to the constituency base of similar-minded parties that exploit the preferences of individuals locating themselves on one side of a cleavage (e.g right, opposition, Islamism). Thus, they are able to steal the voters of rival parties investing on similar individual preferences.

The absence of better measures and the lack of temporal data are two main weaknesses of this paper. In addition, the analysis is limited to the extent that it investigates the distribution of voter preferences along the main cleavages as they relate to support for Islamic parties. As such, it does not look into the party ideology and its congruence to the voter preferences across different dimensions. Furthermore, it is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate how globalization (Onis and Keyman, 2003) or the newly emerging classes (Yavuz, 1997) may alter the distribution of voters.
along the main cleavages. Lack of temporal data is the main impediment for this kind of investigation.

Notwithstanding its limitations, this paper contributes to the existing research by providing an empirical test for understanding the electoral base of Islamic parties. It is one of the few studies (Garcia-Rivero and Kotze, 2007; Tepe and Baum, 2008) providing a comparative empirical assessment for understanding the support base of these parties. Finally, the paper invites scholars to investigate the dynamics of party politics in Muslim democracies by help of such conceptual tools as the electoral market (Mair, 1998), party competition, and political cleavages.
## Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>Ethnic Diversity (mean)</td>
<td>1192</td>
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<td>Kurdish</td>
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<td>Center-periphery (mean)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Finances</td>
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Figure 1: Government-Opposition (Center-Periphery)
Figure 2: Islamism
Figure 3: Ethnic diversity
Figure 4: Left-Right
Table 1: Party Choice in Turkey and Morocco

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turkey</th>
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<th>Morocco</th>
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<td>DSP/CHP</td>
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<td>USFP/PPS</td>
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<td>ANAP/DYP</td>
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<td>PI</td>
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<td>DTP</td>
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<td>UC/RNI</td>
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<td>MHP</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>AKP</td>
<td>445</td>
<td></td>
<td>PJD</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48</td>
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### Table 2: Multinomial Logit Estimation

<table>
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<th>TURKEY</th>
<th>CHP/DSP</th>
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<th>DTP</th>
<th>MHP</th>
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<td></td>
<td>RRR</td>
<td>RRR</td>
<td>RRR</td>
<td>RRR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regime-Opposition</td>
<td>0.28 (0.24)</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>-0.34 (0.31)</td>
<td>0.71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Islamism</td>
<td>-1.11*** (0.25)</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.52 (0.34)</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>0.13 (0.13)</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>-0.10 (0.15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Left-Right</td>
<td>-0.72*** (0.08)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.02 (0.10)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-0.27*** (0.08)</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-0.26** (0.11)</td>
<td>0.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>-1.06 (1.28)</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.26 (0.36)</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>-1.19** (0.54)</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.02 (0.01)</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.03** (0.02)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.22*** (0.07)</td>
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<td>-0.68 (1.08)</td>
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<td>0.05 (0.27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N=612 Pseudo R2=.36 p(Chi2)&lt;.000</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOROCCO</th>
<th>USFP/PPS</th>
<th>PI</th>
<th>UC/RNI</th>
<th>MP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime-Opposition</td>
<td>0.19 (0.34)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.30 (0.30)</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamism</td>
<td>-0.04 (0.32)</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.28 (0.28)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>0.25 (0.20)</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.17 (0.17)</td>
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<td>Left-Right</td>
<td>-0.89*** (0.15)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.11 (0.11)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
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<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>-0.73*** (0.26)</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.24 (0.24)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berber</td>
<td>-0.30 (0.73)</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.81 (0.81)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.15 (0.47)</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.43 (0.43)</td>
<td>1.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.02)</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.02 (0.02)</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.04 (0.09)</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.08 (0.08)</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Finances</td>
<td>-0.17 (0.34)</td>
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<td>N=335 Pseudo R2=.14 p(Chi2)&lt;.000</td>
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</table>

Cell entries are coefficients and relative risk ratios. Standard errors are in parentheses. *p< .1, **p< .05 ***p< .01, “other” category for Turkey is omitted.
References


NOTES

1 Downs also argues that as rational agents, parties will attempt to move the voters toward their positions. Examining the second part of this argument is beyond the scope of this paper.

2 In 1990s King Hasan II started a new wave of political reforms which continued under the reign of his son King Muhammad VI. Following the 1997 legislative elections, Morocco witnessed three free and fair elections (Willis 1999; Howe 2005, p 231). Nonetheless, the public is largely alienated from the system as the voter turnout remained around 30% in 2007 elections.

3 The typology and discussion of Morocco largely relies on Willis (2002). The study also greatly benefits from Carkoglu (2006) and Carkoglu and Hinich (2006).

4 In Morocco, opposition parties were excluded from the government regardless of their votes and seats. This situation has changed when King appointed a long term left-wing opposition leader Abderrahmane Youssoufi to form the alternance government in 1997 (Willis 1999; Howe 2005, p 231).

5 Makhzen is a term used to describe Morocco’s ruling elite (military, notables, bureaucrats etc.) loyal to the palace (Willis 1999).

6 The first Islamic party, National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi-MNP) was formed in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan. This party was banned from politics in 1971 and Erbakan formed the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi- MSP) in 1971. MSP benefited from political instability and exploited the coalition governments throughout 1970s until it was closed down following the military coup of 1980.
None of the parties that were in the parliament during the previous term won any seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly after these elections.

Morocco’s larger Islamist movement is Al-Adl wa Al-Ihsan (Justice and Charity) and it refuses to participate in elections (Shahin 1997). The success of PJD in those areas where Al-Adl is strong made many to believe that the two groups entered an alliance during the elections (Willis 1999).

MPDC was formed by Dr. Abdelkrim Khatib in 1967 as a breakaway party from Mouvement Populaire. Despite its leader’s strong political career, the party was not able to become a significant force in Moroccan politics. Failing to win any seats in 1977, Khatib boycotted the elections until the merger with Islah (Willis, 1999, p. 48).

Mudawwana is Morocco’s civil law managing marriage, divorce, child custody and guardianship based on Islamic precepts. In 2004, reforms to Mudawwana were enacted with a prospect to improve women’s rights. PJD positioned itself against the reforms on the ground that they were anti-Islamic.

The fieldwork was conducted in 2007 with 1346 respondents in Turkey and 1200 in Morocco. Descriptive statistics are provided in appendix A.

I prefer to keep the original values of the variables in constructing this index for obtaining a continuous variable.

One problem associated with the models is the endogeneity of the left-right variable. It can be argued that variables measuring preferences along other cleavages are related to this variable (making this variable endogenous). The Hausman test conducted in STATA did not confirm endogeneity for either country with the exception of one panel in Turkey (AKP versus CHP/DSP).
Note that unemployment is dropped for Morocco due to the small number of observations. I also ran the models including unemployment for Morocco. Although this variable turns to be significant, the small number of observations (only 25 cases in total) generates extremely large coefficients with very small standard errors which makes this coefficient unreliable. The good news is that other results do not change with or without the inclusion of this variable.