

MEASURING THE POLITICAL IDENTITIES OF CITIES OVER THE VOTING BEHAVIOR: SAMPLE OF THE PROVINCE KONYA *

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It is obvious that there is an interaction between political identities and cities which can be said as a result of socializing trends and gregariousness of the needs of people. Because individuals who live in society cannot merely define their identity with the relations between the other members of the society and influenced by socio-cultural factors. Individual's political identity also as a result of relations which are established by individuals with objects, places and environment. In this context, environment and thus cities can be said to be significantly effective on political identity.

History of the communities is formed with cultures and geography which communities are kneaded in. The identity of the city, occurs in this historical process, happens influenced by every changed and transformation in society. Thus cities on the one hand host tangible environment and social life on the other hand creates a character as a result of every socio-cultural changing which lives in society. For this reason, any case is reflected both from society to city and from city to society, any differentiation affects the city's identity and raises new results. In this sense, the identity of the city express a complete structure which is as the image of natural, socio-economic and built environment.

In this study primarily examined the concept of city and urban identity and discussed the effect of the urban identity on the political identity and political behaviors. Thereafter, starting from the thought that the elections which political identities concretizes and then turn into behavior, for the Konya province recent years local and general elections were examined and was tried to make a political identity analysis from the results.

Key Words: Urban identity, Political identity, Political behaviors

Introduction

The cities have become the living areas over history, in which the innovation, culture, thought, technology, and information are produced and spread(Aslanoğlu, 2000:102). The cities that are host of pluralist culture have a feature encompassing “indicators and images”, spaces and, in this meaning, identity and culture, and social life.

In determining the political identities, the city lived in gives the serious clues For, the element forming the core of ideology determined by the dominant class in society also becomes determinative of the formation of the urban space. Therefore, the phenomenon of urban identity will provide the important data to us in determining the political identity of the public living in Konya

The Concepts of the City and Urban Identity

We can define the city as a space and settlement that reached a certain population density, the economic, social, and cultural development, and that can manage this reach; that incorporates the discrepancies; and in which many technique, economic, social, political, and cultural issues are under consideration(Özdeş, 1985:15-18).

Urban identity is a meaning charged entity that affects the urban image; that carries the idiosyncratic attributes with the different scale and interpretations in every cities; that are shaped by the physical, cultural, socioeconomic, historical, and formal factors; that is formed by the civic people and their living style; that develops continuously and gets the concept of sustainable city experienced; and that is released by a great process dating from past to future(Çöl, 1998:26).

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The integration of city with the concept of identity, defined specific to human being, strengthens the discussions that the cities have an identity that is idiosyncratic, specific to it, makes it different from the others. City, in the framework of dynamics it incorporates, includes an idiosyncratic identity. Urban identity, although it develops depending on many factors, holds a characteristic that is dynamic and always changeable. Urban identity is shaped in a long slice of time. The geographical content, cultural level, architecture, local traditions, and life style, as a mix of attributes, give a form to city.

The cultural accumulation, habits, values, and beliefs those dwelling in city formed in the historical process play important role in the formation of space and the acquirement of identity(Can,1999:17)

In the formation of urban identity, the role of social interaction is large, because urban identity is not only defined by the physical and natural elements. Another important element forming the identity comes to our face as urban life. The identity formations of cities, besides the physical structure that is not only enough alone, also encompass the variation, /transformation processes that occur in a spiral structure including the physical, social, political, economic, cultural, and many other elements from macro environment to micro environment they are in. The socio-cultural structure of the city and society consists of the social experiences, views, beliefs, and behaviors. These elements directing the social behaviors of city play an effective role in the formation of urban identity(Güvenç, 1991:19-28).

While the definition of political identity of a city is made, it is necessary to thoroughly follow that city, that is, to define its natural environment, geography, cultural process it experienced, customs, belief system, economic structure, and political, legal, and administrative framework. The interpretation to emerge as a consequence of this follow up and perception of this interpretation will have be defined the political identity of city.

The Effect of Urban Identity on Political Identity and Political Behavior

One of the elements having importance in terms of describing the political identity is the cultural, political, and economic features of the settlement unit, where the people dwell. These political identities exhibited according to the society to be city or village, its demographic features, and socio-cultural structure also show distinction. On the relationship between the settlement style and political behavior, there are two different views(Tacar, 1996:148). According to the first view, the urban life increases the interest to politics and political participation. Urbanization is accepted as a dimension of modernization and the socio-cultural environment forming the political identity and enabling it to transform into a political behavior remarkably forms in the urban life together with modernization. As the society modernizes, the new levels and forms of political participation emerge(Yılmaz,1996:53). In addition, urban life, with the educational facilities it provides, presents a broad framework to the people in terms of following the political events and participating in the political decisions. According to the second view, the size of settlement place reduces and, furthermore, can completely eliminate the political motives that are necessary for political identity of any individual to form and for him/her to participate in the political life. As the settlement place becomes larger, since the political system, in which the individual live, becomes complex, the reflection of individual he/she has to the political decisions to be made will become difficult. The differentiation of social interaction, intensive communications and organizations are the attributes specific to a city and these are features increasing the participation of those dwelling in the city in the political life. However, according to the approach of attenuation of community we call community culture seen in cities, the political participation of individual becomes less in the city, compared to the rural area(Çukurçayır, 2000:81). Regarding to the explanations around these two different views, due to the fact that the urban life has both encouraging and impeding effects on the formation of political identity and political behaviors, a general rule cannot be introduced associated with the settlement place.

Everything experienced in the society, experiences, views, beliefs, behaviors form the socio-cultural structure of the society. The political identity of city is shaped in the frame of the socio-cultural structure and ideology prevailing in that city, economic structure of city, and especially the religious belief of the dwellers of city. These elements that are effective in the formation of political identity also orientate the political attitudes and behaviors of individual in the society unavoidably. That the political views forming in this framework become a political behavior only becomes observable, when they turn into the vote. Hence, indicator that will enable us to be able to analyze will be the vote rate reflecting to the results of election. In the following, through the results of election for the province Konya, it is attempted to make an analysis of the political identity.

According to the Results of the General Elections, the Political Identities Observed in Konya

Konya, in respect with its political identity and image, is a city commemorated in the right identity with the political Islam. Beginning from the period, when the political Islam begins to rise, that the vote rates of the parties representing this identity in Konya are above the average of Turkey is an important factor in this image.

In this section, assessing the general parliamentary elections carried out since 1980, the vote numbers, vote percent and the numbers of deputies they gained for all parties that took vote in Konya, are listed in the tables. The tables were prepared, in the direction of information provided from the webpage of Turkish Statistics Institutes (tuik.gov.tr).

Table 1: 1983 Results of General Parliamentary Election (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of deputy
Motherland Party/Anavatan Partisi (ANAP)	56,6	8
Populist Party/Halkçı Parti(HP)	21,7	3
Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP)	19,4	2
Other	2,3	-

As seen, in 1983 election, Main Land Party has a clear superiority. ANAP, after military intervention, participated in the election as a representative of central right and, as in all Turkey, turned out as the leading party from the elections. However, this vote rate may be misleading about identities, because only 3 parties could be participated in the elections due to prohibition. The other parties of right wind could not meet their voters, due to the fact they were either closed or were vetoed by MGK (National Security Council)

Table 2: 1987 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Numbers of Deputy
ANAP	38,4	12
True Path Party/Doğru Yol Partisi (DYP)	17,1	2
Social Democrat Populist Party/Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti(SHP)	17	-
Welfare Party /RefahPartisi (RP)	15	-
Other	12,5	-

The participation of the parties and their candidates, whose prohibitions were abolished, in 1987 elections, led to a regression and division in the votes of central right in power and the voters from Konya, who themselves defines in the central right had a possibility to make a preference between these parties. DYP arguing that it is the successor of Justice Party, and RP addressing to Islamist section give struggle for taking back their own voters. On the other hand, SHP and DSP, reaching the total votes of 23%, give a signal that they are address of the voters with the left identity.

Table 3: 1991 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of Deputies
RP	33	6
DYP	26,6	6
ANAP	19,4	1
SHP	13,3	-
Diğer	17,7	-

We can say that 1991 General Elections are the elections causing the image that Konya is “the fortress of national view” to emerge. For, in these elections, RP took a vote from Konya above the average of Turkey. The fact that the second and thirds parties are also central right and that total votes of right , reach 70% give an important clue about the identity of Konya. Also in the local elections, ranking did not change and the rise of RP in Konya continued. What it is interesting is that the left votes show a decrease in the large rate. The parties having the left identity experienced a loss of approximately total 6% from the general election to the local election.

Table 4: 1995 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote rate %	Number of Deputies
RP	41,7	9
DYP	14,4	3
ANAP	13,3	2
Nationalist Movement Party Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi	12	-
Democratic Left Party/ Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP)	8,4	1
Republican People’s Party / Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi(CHP)	5,9	1
Other	4,3	-

The most remarkable feature of 1995 General Elections is that while ANAP and DYP, central right parties, lost their votes, RP and MHP, two parties of right at more extreme, seriously increased their votes. That the general heads of party of ANAP and DYP exchange and that the new leaders were inexperienced and their remote attitudes to the conservative Islamist section became advantageous for right wind parties. RP having the political Islamist ideology became the first party, while nationalist conservative MHP, even though it did not overcome the electoral threshold across Turkey, took a vote of 12%. It is clearly seen from the table that the left parties can no longer take considerable amount of votes in Konya and are not considered the alternative of power by the voters.

Table 5: 1999 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of Deputies
Virtue Party/Fazilet Partisi (FP)	30,2	6
MHP	26	5
DYP	13,9	2
DSP	10,7	2
ANAP	7,2	1
CHP	5,3	-
Other	6,7	-

In 1999 general election, FP, in the successor of RP closed, turned out as a winner again from Konya, while MHP, with a wind the wave of Turkish nationalism rising in the face of the developments related to PKK gives, caught an important vote rate. The decrease of the votes of DYP and, especially, ANAP can be deemed a sign of that the voters from Konya separated from the central right in the meaning of political identity and they themselves in the conservative right. On the other hand, the left identity loses points in every election and the total left votes that are in 30s % in all over Turkey regress to totally 10s % in Konya.

Table 6: 2002 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of Deputies
Justice and Development Party/ Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)	54,9	14
CHP	8,6	2
MHP	9,5	-
DYP	7,3	-
Felicity Party/Saadet Partisi(SP)	4,8	-
Other	14,9	-

Turkey entered 2002 General Elections in a very different atmosphere. When the ballot boxes are opened, an earthquake was experienced in Turkish politics in full meaning. All of parties (DSP, MHP, ANAP, DYP and SP) that are in power and whose representatives are in national assembly remained out of national assembly, AKP, only founded one years ago, with a vote rate of 34%, became an explicit winner of elections(Gökçe and others, 2002:2). The economic crisis experienced led three parties in power to be punished by the public. AKP, founded by an innovative group separated from SP, became the first party, as in all Turkey, also in Konya with a high vote difference. The voters from Konya first time casted vote to a party more than 50% in 1983 elections. However, it is difficult to say that this elections is an election of identities, because economic crisis, as said earlier, pushed the voters to the behavior of punishing the government in power.

Table 7: 2007 Results of General Parliamentary Elections (Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of Deputies
AKP	65,30	13
MHP	13	2
CHP	8,2	1
Diğer	13,5	-

2007 general elections were experienced in the framework of a full identity conflict. However, this conflict occurred in the form of the conflict of laic –anti-laic, not in the form of right-left. AKP using very well the crisis of election of president of republic and e-memorial event turned out from the election with a victory even itself does not hope. At which part Konya will be in a laic- anti-laic polarization is a question not that is not very difficult. It showed its reaction by casting votes of 65% to a party in the first time in its history and used its preference on the part of AKP.

Table 8: 2011Results of General Parliamentary Elections Konya)

Parties	Vote Rate %	Number of Deputies
AKP	69,6	11
MHP	13,1	2
CHP	10,2	1
Other	7,1	-

In 2011 general elections, AKP in power caught the highest vote rate in all over Turkey in Konya with 69.6% . While that AKP intensively uses the religious elements and conservative rhetoric to that central right parties did not refer provided the voter from Konya to interlock around AKP, the steps taken in the issues such as democratic opening etc. toward the ethnic groups led central right voters to view AKP as a “catch all party” and show favor.

Conclusion

Cities are the large and complex spaces, which many technical, economic, political, and socio-cultural elements affected; in which the people live in; which they shaped then according to their life styles; and which incorporate many social and cultural situations. In this meaning, it is a reality which cannot be discussable that they have an identity. The urban identity depends on some factors that makes a city different from the others; becomes single; only presents attributions specific to it, and affects the formation and development of these attributions. In this meaning, it is possible to mention about a natural and artificial environment for a city. With the common effects of the natural and artificial environment and the psychological states they create on the society constitute the socio-cultural elements. Since the values and life styles of every society have features different from each other, depending on the environment, the elements forming the urban identity can also show some distinctions according to the region.

The formation of the urban identity is also an historical phenomenon. The relationships of the society and human being that are continuously in change require this identity to be continuously redefined or to be produced. The political, economic, military and, especially religious structuring the societies have period by period form the political identity of time and affect the urban identity. The social changes the cities experienced in a certain periods, also influencing the social life in the city, change the life style of people dwelling in the city.

Also in the sample of the province Konya, emphasized in the study, according to the analyzes of election results conducted, it is possible to say that the political identity of city is shaped in parallel with the conflict of center –environment. Relatively conservative Konya voters, who are continuously viewed as “other” and excluded, over time, shifted to a Islamist line as a political identity. In this radicalization, there are also a large share of political crises experienced in Turkey Especially, with the crisis, of February 28, 1997, the press policies applied by the army and bureaucratic elites on the conservative sections led the groups characterized as environment to be suffered and them to be clustered around the suffered political parties. Also Konya, as a city, was labeled as religionist conservative and excluded by the center. Hence, we can say that the political identity Konya has today is a reactive identity that it developed against the look of the center to the environment in a sense.

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