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Introduction

In 2006, political scientists Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak teamed up with the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) to assess the role of religion in contemporary Turkish politics. Çarkoğlu and Toprak titled their study "Religion, Society, and Politics in a Changing Turkey," designing it as a follow-up to their earlier survey fielded in 1999. Their choice of title, with its focus on change, was a nod to recent events: despite deep secular (and secularist) roots derived from Kemalist *laïcité* (*laiklik*), Turkey was now led by the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), a party that made clear and repeated references to religion.

The right-of-center AKP won a surprisingly easy victory in the 2002 general election and were able to form a single-party government. Both the party's dominance at the polls and its use of Islamic themes were remarkable: on the one hand, Turkey's fractionalized electoral system had almost always resulted in coalition governments; on the other, the Turkish constitution explicitly prohibits the use of religious language in politics. In succeeding as an explicitly Islamic-based political movement, the AKP seemed to be part of a broader phenomenon taking place across the Muslim world: a growing set of large, mostly mainstream and increasingly successful Islamic social, political, and economic organizations, a group that includes the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, the Malaysian Islamic Party, and the Islamic Corporation for Development of the Private Sector, among others.

What defines all these organizations as "Islamic-based" is more about means than ends. They couch their appeals to supporters in Islamic terms, making regular and explicit use of religious language and symbols. For example, at a large rally leading up to the 2019 local election, AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan told the crowd that his party is "determined to keep Istanbul as a city of Islam and as a city of Turks until eternity" (Hürriyet Daily News 2019).[1] And in courting Kurdish voters in Diyarbakır just before the 2011

[1] Most notoriously, during the campaign, Erdoğan read aloud a poem, proclaiming "the mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets, and the faithful our soldiers."

general elections, he implored that "the community in Istanbul's Süleymaniye Mosque turns to the same *qibla* as the community here in the Ulu Mosque. Our *qibla* is the same. Is there any difference? No" (Korkmaz 2015). This is little different than the traditional slogan of the Muslim Brothers – "Islam is the solution" – revived by Mohamed Morsi during his 2012 campaign for the Egyptian presidency (Kirkpatrick 2012).

For the AKP and its leadership, the 2002 victory proved to be the first of many successes. For decades, the Turkish electoral system had developed a reputation for instability in which political parties – especially those of the center-right – rose to prominence only to quickly lose hold on power (Hazama 2004). But the AKP, occupying a similar policy position to these other parties, but distinctive in its regular reference to Islam, was able to reverse this trend: it held on to its support base, maintaining and even expanding its vote share over time. Indeed, the party has managed to singularly rule the country ever since, ushering in a period of one-party dominance unparalleled in Turkish democratic history (Esen and Ciddi 2011; Müftüler-Baç and Keyman 2012).

Back in 2006, perhaps sensing the sociopolitical shift that was underway, Çarkoğlu and Toprak wanted to assess the causes of the AKP's dramatic rise and the consequences of its rule. In particular, they were interested in interrogating a widespread assumption that a religious resurgence within Turkish society could explain the party's initial success, as well as its remarkable staying power. On the morning following the 2002 election, the front page of *Sabah*, one of Turkey's largest newspapers, described the AKP win as an "Anatolian Revolution" (*Anadolu'nun İhtilali*), a nod to the country's more religiously conservative periphery, where support for the party was especially high. Similarly, international media outlets focused almost exclusively on the party's Islamic roots, proclaiming "Party Tied to Islam Wins Big in Turkey" (*Washington Post*) and "Islamic Party Sweeps Turkish Poll" (*Guardian*) (Christensen 2005). Two electoral cycles later, I myself witnessed a similar response among average citizens in the wake of an AKP win in 2011: the morning following that election, many residents of Istanbul's more secular neighborhoods donned black, half joking with me that they were attending a funeral for "secular Turkey" (*laik Türkiye*).

While the link between Islamic politics and religiosity in Turkey is commonly presumed, the connection between the two has not been established empirically. A paucity of data on religion and religiosity in Turkey is largely to blame: part of the Turkish state's commitment to Kemalist secularism dictates that the topic remain largely absent from official statistics, with questions about individuals' faith removed from the national census after 1965 (Dündar 2000). Çarkoğlu and Toprak wanted to fill this gap. By assessing patterns of behavior and preferences across individuals in their survey, and by comparing these to the results of their earlier study, they sought to unearth the real relationship between Islamic fundamentalism and the AKP in Turkey. To capture cross-temporal changes in religiosity, they repeated questions about religious practice posed in their first survey; and to gauge public perception of these changes, they asked respondents to comment on them directly.

On a particularly hot-button issue, respondents were asked to estimate the change in popularity of head-covering among Turkish women over the previous decade (1996–2006). In line with the assumption of a religious resurgence in Turkey, an overwhelming majority of them – nearly 75 percent – said they noticed an increase over that time (p. 65). Further, those respondents who estimated an increase in head-covering were also more likely to note an increase in religious fundamentalism (p. 80). Indeed, when asked to explain why they perceived an uptick in fundamentalism, the most popular reason given was the rising popularity of the headscarf. In other words, the respondents' perceptions echoed the popular portrayal: the rise of Islamic-based politics reflected a change in the basic fabric of Turkish society, from secular to religious.

Despite these presumptions, when Çarkoğlu and Toprak examined the actual rates of head-covering among female respondents across their two studies, they found no evidence of an increase. Instead, they found that average levels of covering had *decreased* for nearly every demographic group: young and old, urban and rural, across all levels of education (p. 64).[2] In other words, the empirical pattern directly contradicted the common presumption. And some key concerns about measurement validity were unwarranted in this case. For example, social desirability bias towards feigned secularism would have weakened between the two studies, as years of AKP rule normalized public signs of piety (Özyürek 2006).[3]

In light of their results, Çarkoğlu and Toprak concluded that there is little evidence of a recent resurgence in religiosity in Turkey. In so doing, they challenged the widely held presumption to the contrary, bringing empirical evidence to bear on a topic of obvious social significance. This speaks directly to the power of the comparative method: examining variation across individuals, populations, or time, to identify patterns of change and covariation (Geddes 2003; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Whether based on qualitative or quantitative data, careful comparisons that leverage variation have the potential to confirm or upend even the most widely held assumption, including the supposed link between piety and Islamic politics, in Turkey and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Confronted with these empirical patterns, one is left with somewhat of a puzzle: on the one hand, the rise and sustained popularity of

[2] For an illustration of these cross-temporal trends, see Online Appendix Figure OA.1. Without disaggregated results or sample sizes within subgroups, it is impossible to know whether these changes are statistically significant, but the decline in head-covering among younger respondents appears to be particularly large in magnitude and importance. An ideal test of these changes would employ a panel survey – the same questions asked of the same respondents over time. Comparisons of two cross-sectional surveys could reflect differences in the samples rather than changes over time. Still, given that both samples were randomly selected and constructed using a very similar sampling method, this type of bias seems less likely.

[3] Social desirability bias pushes survey respondents to give the answer they think they should, rather than honestly reporting their beliefs, behaviors, and preferences (Fisher 1993; Maccoby and Maccoby 1954). In this case, the normalization of Islamic practice under AKP rule should have reduced any pressure women felt to hide their religiosity in this traditionally secular context.

the AKP is difficult to ignore, especially compared to the faltering of similar, but secular Turkish center-right parties; on the other, at least by one measure, there is little evidence of a religious resurgence to explain the comparative advantage of this Islamic-based party. So if the success of the AKP is not based on the religious faith of its supporters, what else could explain it?

It was precisely this question that led me to Turkey as I began pre-dissertation research in the summer of 2009. While there, I came to realize that the comparative advantage of Islamic-based movements extended well beyond party politics into other large-scale collective activities, including charitable giving (e.g., Sadakataşı Foundation), private education (e.g., *dershaneler*), and even business and finance (e.g., MÜSİAD). In other words, the rise of the AKP was remarkable in its own right, while also being a part of a broader phenomenon in Turkey, with potential implications beyond this single case into other parts of the Muslim world. More than identifying what organizational attributes made these different Islamic-based groups successful,[4] I sought to understand why they were so popular among their members and supporters, especially when similar but secular movements seemed unable to build or maintain such a steady base of support.

LESSONS FROM THE TURKISH CASE

Turkey represents a great opportunity for examining the broader phenomenon of Islamic-based politics and economics because the relative success of large-scale, mainstream Islamic movements is both clear and surprising. Clarity comes from the availability of different data sources, useful in tracing the popularity of these movements. Official statistics paint a clear picture of the social and economic realities of Turkey, across space and time. Similarly, representative surveys are able to assess changes in preferences and beliefs across individuals. In addition, almost seventy years of roughly competitive democratic elections allow one to gauge popular support for different political movements in various districts across decades. As the Muslim world's oldest democracy and one of the few with a long-standing bureau of statistics, Turkey is unmatched in terms of data quality and availability. And yet the Turkish case is not wholly unlike other countries in the Muslim world in terms of population, national income, and politics. Indeed, the AKP, in particular, has been explicitly used as a model by Islamic parties in other Muslim-majority contexts (Tepe 2005; Tuğal 2016).

In addition to being easier to identify in data, the success of Islamic-based movements in the Turkish case is also quite puzzling given the country's staunchly secularist history. The socio-political reforms led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s effectively severed Turkey's ties with its more religious,

[4] Excellent work on Islamic-based politics and economics in Turkey has been done at the organizational level, examining networks of recruitment into the AKP (Ocaklı 2015) and how leaders of Islamic business organizations relate to the state (Buğra 1998).

Ottoman past. They removed key Islamic symbols and practices from everyday life and established a clear division between mosque and state, with the former strictly relegated to the private sphere (Berkes 1998; Çağaptay 2006; Kuru 2009; Yavuz 2009). More recently, an official commitment to maintaining these secularist policies led Turkey's Constitutional Court and its military to shut down a string of Islamic-based political groups in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, making the subsequent success of the AKP even more unexpected.[5]

Given political obstacles to the success of Islamic politics in Turkey, it is easy to see why so many presume that the AKP's rise reflects a religious resurgence among the Turkish people. By this view, the popularity of the AKP and Turkey's other Islamic-based political and economic organizations reflects the support of pious Turks, whose relative share of the population has increased to roughly coincide with the support-base of each group. This link between faith, on the one hand, and the success of Islamic-based movements, on the other, is similar to those made in other Muslim contexts (Wickham 2002; Wiktorowicz and Kaltenhaler 2006). But over the course of my field research – in conversations with AKP field organizers and party supporters, with leaders of Islamic-based student organizations, and with members of Islamic-based business associations – I rarely heard anyone mention that they felt a religious duty to support these movements. Indeed, I found that many of the participants in these ostensibly Islamic groups freely admitted that they were not particularly motivated by God or their religious faith when it came to the practice of politics or economics.

Instead, they were much more likely to emphasize the group itself – the community of AKP supporters, the mass of Islamic-based student activists across the country, the set of firms that comprised the business association – and what they believed they were able to accomplish together: a sense of unity and efficacy that my interlocutors said they rarely felt in their other social endeavors. It was as though there was an obstacle to working together, more generally, in their local communities; and yet this obstacle had been addressed within their Islamic-based organizations. Although they rarely focused on the fact that their organization happened to make regular use of Islamic language and symbols, I wondered what role these religious references were playing in supporting the high levels of participation and cooperation among members of the Islamic-based groups.

A TRUST-BASED THEORY OF ISLAMIC-BASED MOVEMENTS

As a scholar, it was my challenge to translate these initial conversations into a falsifiable theory, to identify the obstacles to political and economic cooperation my interlocutors alluded to, and to explain why Islamic-based groups were particularly well-suited to overcome them. I would then need to design

[5] If anything, the frequent closure of Islamic-based parties by Turkey's Constitutional Court may serve to *under*-estimate the movement's appeal.

a test of my hypothesis, leveraging variation in the outcome I was trying to explain. The outcome I focused on first was individuals' willingness to join different political and economic movements; but I also became interested in how these individuals came to cooperate with one another and how this cooperation was sustained. I thought that, together, these could explain the success of Islamic-based organizations and their comparative advantage relative to their secular rivals. Overall, I wanted to be able to explain why Islamic-based parties, like the AKP, were able to outpace other center-right parties and why Islamic-based economic groups, like the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği, MÜSİAD), were able to support the growth of small- and medium-sized firms in Anatolia. In both cases, an Islamic-based group seemed to have reversed a decades-old pattern: electoral instability and an incumbency disadvantage, in the first instance, and the dominance of large, vertically integrated firms, in the second. To understand how they were able to do this, I wanted to look beyond the organizations themselves and their leaders, because I suspected that their comparative advantage rested in their individual members – specifically, in their superior willingness and ability to work together.[6]

My trust-based theory of Islamic-based politics and economics was sparked by what I observed during the course of my fieldwork. For example, I noticed that members of different Islamic-based groups spoke remarkably highly of each other, *even if they had never met one another or worked together before*. They emphasized that attendance rates at their events tended to be higher than at others' because their members tended to follow through on promises to attend. Similarly, business owners who were part of an Islamic-based association often mentioned that their organization was made up of "good people." When pressed for more details, they explained that this was not a reflection of their character but rather was based on their dedication to the group and to one another. Nowhere was mention made of a sanctioning system that helped

[6] Throughout the book, I use a number of terms interchangeably: "politics" and "economics" are meant to refer to political and economic activities that are *collective* by definition. As such, I often group the two types of activities together under the heading "collective action." At times, I focus on the decision by one individual to take part in the activity, in which case I discuss the phenomenon of "participation," although in collective economic activities, it can be described as a "transaction." At other times, I focus on the result of many individuals taking part in the same activity and working together, a phenomenon that I define as "cooperation" or, at times, "coordination." I emphasize that the decisions of individuals to participate and their collective capacity to cooperate and coordinate often serve the interests of entities that mobilize and organize these individuals towards a particular end. At times, I call these entities "movements" or "organizations," but they are often parties, interest groups, and associations, to be more specific. Similarly, I refer to their supporters, generically as "members," or "participants," although, in specific cases, they may be activists, voters, or investors. I often refer to attempts by the leaders of these collectivities to recruit and organize individual supporters as the act of "mobilization," although I am more concerned with the process through which individuals *become mobilized* – that is, the decision to participate in a collective activity, cooperating or coordinating with other individuals – than I am with the ways that organizers go about mobilizing, beyond their use of Islamic language and symbols.

to uphold these behaviors and rationalize these positive expectations. Instead, it seemed that the expectations were self-fulfilling: each member showed up, in large part, because they knew that others were counting on them to do so.

This feeling – that others will follow through on their promises, even when they may have reasons not to – is the essence of trust. More technically, trust is the expectation of honesty or reciprocity in the face of incentives to be dishonest or to defect (Hardin 2002). In social situations, trust comes in a number of different forms. Particularized (or relational) trust reflects direct knowledge of the entrusted and her past behavior, while non-particularized forms of trust extend to individuals or groups with whom one has never interacted before. Best known of the different types of non-particularized trust is so-called "generalized" trust, which is extended to "most people," including to perfect strangers. Although related to other forms of trust – including to trust of politicians and in political institutions – particularized and non-particularized trust are decidedly *interpersonal*, an expectation that one individual has of another.

Trust is necessary to sustain cooperation in a diverse set of interpersonal interactions. Essentially, trust is needed whenever the behavior of the entrusted directly impacts the one who trusts and wherever there is an open question about what the entrusted is likely to do (Zand 1972). In other words, trust is required in the face of interdependence – that is, when the best outcome for any one is a function of what others do – and uncertainty – that is, when what others are likely to do is not immediately clear. Both interdependence and uncertainty are at play in many political and economic activities (e.g., everyday political activism, voting in local and national elections, investing in conventional banks and micro-financing institutions). Each of these activities is only successful when enough individuals take part and where most of these participants do not know each other personally.[7]

In these activities and in the organizations that support them – what Mancur Olson (2002) calls "latent" groups – uncertainty can be traced back to the so-called "free-rider problem." Because individuals benefit from a group's success irrespective of whether they actually contributed to it, they are incentivized to free ride off of others' efforts. The fact that there is heterogeneity in what individuals prefer to do – so that only rational egoists are incentivized to free ride, while more trustworthy "conditional cooperators" want to contribute to the group, as long as others will do the same – means that reciprocal cooperation is possible.[8] Ultimately, whether cooperation actually occurs depends on the expectations of those conditional cooperators: only if they feel confident that

[7] There are other types of political and economic movements – smaller, less mainstream, even violent – for which this trust-based model is less relevant. In contrast to the latent groups discussed here, these groups are "privileged" or "intermediate" in scope (Olson 2002, p. 50), and participation in them is better understood using a club-goods model (Berman and Laitin 2008; Carvalho 2016; Iannaccone 1992).

[8] In addition to "free riders" and "conditional cooperators" are a small number of "altruists" who strictly prefer to cooperate, under all circumstances.

other participants are trustworthy like them, will they opt in. In other words, they must expect that they are working with other conditional cooperators, who are worthy of being trusted.

For this reason, I argue that robust interpersonal trust expectations are a necessary condition for political and economic cooperation among individuals.[9] The need for trust is perhaps easiest to see in the case of mass politics: grassroots organizations and large-scale demonstrations of the type witnessed during the Arab Spring and the protests in and around Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013. Here, there is safety (and success) in numbers, and the free-rider problem is also quite acute (Chong 1991). But I also posit that interpersonal trust is relevant for other political activities, including voting. In fractionalized electoral systems, where not every party is likely to win enough support to gain representation, voters may have to vote strategically, for a second- or third-best party, whenever they believe their most-preferred one will fail to win a seat (Cox 1994). Whether they are able to do so successfully, to make their votes count, hinges in large part on whether they trust what they hear about others' vote intentions (Myatt 2007). And beyond politics, there is an important role for trust in economic transactions: because the vast majority of trades and purchases are not simultaneous, there are opportunities for one party to defect on the other, especially when economic conditions are likely to change between agreement and delivery (Williamson 1985).

I contend that interpersonal trust is needed for cooperation and coordination in all these forms, and different types of trust are able to support collective action at different scales. Particularized trust – based on first hand knowledge of another's past behavior – is perhaps the strongest form, but is also most limited in its ability to support cooperation. In a latent movement, where participation is largely anonymous and extends well beyond any one participant's social circle, I would argue that *non-particularized* trust becomes necessary. This broader, more anonymous form of trust is also useful when beginning a long-term, repeated interaction through which particularized trust can eventually develop. Going back to my notes from the field, I came to realize that non-particularized trust was a common theme in my conversations with different interlocutors: they would emphasize how they expected that others in their group were "good people," who would do right by them, even if they had never met before; this was in sharp contrast to out-group members, who they deemed to be less reliable. I had a feeling that these robust interpersonal trust expectations could help explain why the members of the different Islamic-based groups I interviewed and observed were able to work together so effectively. But I had yet to identify the basis for this mutual trust and whether it could really account for the comparative advantage of these groups relative to their non-Islamic counterparts.

[9] This is in addition to sufficient information and motivation, which are both necessary though insufficient conditions for participation.

To explain the higher trust expectations among members of Islamic-based groups, I recalled the extensive literatures in social psychology, behavioral economics, and political science that emphasize the benefits of a shared group identity. Experimental evidence indicates that members of the same group are more likely to cooperate with one another (Tajfel 1974), in large part because they tend to trust (and be honest with) one another (Habyarimana et al. 2009). This "group-based trust" is especially prevalent when the shared identity is commonly recognized by everyone (Yamagishi, Jin, and Kiyonari 1999), in cases where individuals are actively encouraged to think about their shared identity through implicit or explicit priming (Pechar and Kranton 2017), and among those whose attachment to the group identity is especially salient (Charness, Rigotti, and Rustichini 2007). Unlike particularized trust, group-based trust does not depend on direct knowledge of, or experience with, other group members. Instead, it is a non-particularized form of trust, one conditioned on a shared identity. It appears that humans tend to react to group identities with this type of trust and trustworthiness, either as the result of an evolutionary process (Bowles and Gintis 2004) or simply because their trust expectations are reciprocal and therefore self-fulfilling (Hertel and Kerr 2001).

This concept of group-based trust seemed consistent with my observations from the field. It could bolster cooperation among members of Islamic-based organizations, whether or not they knew each other personally; and these trust expectations, based on a shared group identity, could be made salient by organization leaders through their use of Islamic language and symbols. A focus on Islamic identity, rather than piety, could also help explain why most members of the Islamic-based groups I spoke with were not particularly faithful and why few described working to serve God. Perhaps, instead, they had a salient *Islamic group identity*. Most of the existing research on in-group cooperation and group-based trust I was familiar with focused on ethnic groups rather than religious ones.[10] Meanwhile, studies of religion usually conceived of it as faith or piety – that is, a set of personal beliefs or preferences – rather than as a group identity (i.e., a social label that conditions individual behavior, especially as related to in-group and out-group members). But I could not see a reason why religion could not function as both.

The more I thought about it, and especially as I started to speak with my interlocutors, the difference between personal piety and a religious identity became increasingly clear. People could be deeply invested in their religious communities, irrespective of the intensity of their personal faith. For example, I met plenty of Turks who regularly attended mosque, particularly on Fridays, but who rarely prayed at home. For them, the point in attending mosque was the collective nature of the gathering, rather than the basic religious prescription or the individual connection they were forming with God. In other

[10] For notable exceptions to this general trend, see Ruffle and Sosis (2007) and Tan (2006).

words, it was about community more than faith. Based on this, I hypothesized that regular participation in religious group activities might serve as a good indicator of a salient religious group identity. (This was in contrast to personal religious beliefs and practices, which would speak more to the depth of personal piety.) If right, this would imply a different interpretation of the political significance of religious service attendance, which the existing literature usually sees as an opportunity for gathering information (Patel 2007), becoming more personally motivated (Wald, Owen, and Hill Jr. 1988), or developing the skills and resources needed to become politically active (Jones-Correa and Leal 2001). In contrast, I could argue that religious group activities of all types – including service attendance – supported political participation because they strengthened the salience of religious group identity.

If Islam could function as a group identity – bolstering trust expectations among those with an attachment to their religious community, especially when religious references primed them to think of themselves and others in terms of their shared identity – it could well explain the success of Islamic-based organizations. But to understand why these organizations succeeded where non-Islamic ones have struggled, there had to be some obstacle to political and economic cooperation, more generally, that Islamic-based groups were able to address via group-based trust. I wondered whether trust – part of the appeal of Islamic-based groups – might also be undermining cooperation and coordination in other organizations. In particular, if generalized trust expectations were low, this could pose a challenge for any organization unable to invoke a shared identity and prime group-based trust. While distrust would keep most participants sidelined, references to Islam could generate group-based trust among those with a salient religious identity, supporting cooperation and coordination, *even among those who generally distrust*.

My trust-based theory of Islamic-based politics and economics implies a number of patterns. Across individuals, those with low levels of generalized trust (in most people) should be less likely to participate in large-scale, latent political and economic movements, on average. At the same time, those with a salient religious identity, who have higher levels of in-group trust, should be more likely to participate, on average. Moreover, if group-based trust can indeed function as an effective substitute for generalized trust, a salient religious identity should support participation and cooperation even among those who generally distrust others. This substitution effect should be particularly effective when religious group identity is being actively primed. In the aggregate, this would imply that political and economic movements that do not reference Islamic identity and that cannot rely on group-based trust will struggle to build and maintain a following, especially where and when generalized trust is low. In these same places and times, Islamic-based groups will be comparatively advantaged, particularly where Islamic identity is salient and group-based trust is robust.