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Do Men Strategically Leverage Women's Intersecting Identities? Intersectional Symbolic Inclusion as an Electoral Competition Strategy in Polarized Turkey

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Do Men Strategically Leverage Women's Intersecting Identities?

Intersectional Symbolic Inclusion as an Electoral Competition Strategy

in Polarized Turkey

by

Elif Sari Genc

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Do party elites use intersectionality as an electoral competition strategy? In this dissertation, I study this question in the context of mayoral elections in Turkey by focusing on the competition between the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the People's Republican Party (CHP). Examining the gender and religious orientation of candidates from these parties, local variations in party affiliations, and partisan polarization that is decisive in vote choice at the district level, I argue that the Islamist AKP strategically selects secular-appearing women to leverage their intersecting identities in races where secularist partisan polarization against this party is high.

Drawing on the original candidate dataset and qualitative interviews with political party elites, I find that the Islamist AKP leverage stereotypes associated with women and their intersectional identities to appeal to voters of the secularist CHP in races where negative partisanship against the AKP is high. The findings reveal that the AKP nominates secular-appearing women candidates to signal tolerance to the voters who are concerned about Islamization and the government's intervention in secularist lifestyle choices. I also find that the party selects these candidates to mimic democracy in districts where voters are concerned about recent authoritarianism under the AKP regime, as secular-appearing women are stereotyped as Westernized, modern, and democratic. These findings make significant contributions to the women's representation literature. They show that women with intersecting identities are selected strategically to run in challenging districts when their intersectional identities provide party elites with strategic benefits to signal to voters of the rival party in highly polarized elections on social identities. These findings show

that, in electoral contexts where women's identities play a central role in symbolic contestations between two opposing partisan groups, the symbolic value attached to women's identities increases and creates incentives for party elites to leverage women's intersecting identities.

To the women who stand up against the patriarchy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is a well-known meme of a woman holding a sign that says, "I can't believe I still have to protest this." I felt the same when I first started pondering my research question. The controversy over the headscarf in Turkey has been exhaustively studied and, yet again, I found myself questioning whether women's images, veiled or unveiled, are used by men to advance their power in politics. The headscarf issue made the headlines in Turkey again during my study. Meanwhile, men's attempts to control women's bodies continue worldwide, as do women's fight against it. During the summer I conducted my fieldwork, women took to the streets in the United States to defend their reproductive rights. A few months later, women in Iran put their lives in jeopardy and stood up against the compulsory hijab. Concurrently, I was, as a Ph.D. student, looking for accountability against institutionalized sexual harassment, discrimination, and control. Hence, I want to start by acknowledging women across the world who fight side by side against male domination and control. I thank you and dedicate this dissertation to you.

Next, I want to thank my adviser, Dr. Lindsay Benstead, who is the chair of this dissertation. I am so grateful for your support and guidance throughout my study at PSU. This dissertation would have been impossible if you hadn't made time to meet me whenever I needed, patiently answer my questions, encourage me, and provide feedback on my drafts. I am so grateful to be your student and appreciate everything you've taught me.

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Here comes the toughest one because no words can fully express my gratitude to my husband, Utku. I couldn't have made it to this day without you. Thank you for being the greatest partner in life and ally to women. I appreciate you for the countless dinners you cooked and the housework you did while I was writing this dissertation. Also, thanks to you, our garden and cat survived this process. I will always be indebted to you for your sacrifices. Last but not least, thank you for nourishing my soul with great European movies and introducing me to Kurt's Casio Vanguard when I was losing my mind. These were critical moves. I am so happy to live my life beside you.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

In the 2019 mayoral election in Turkey, the authoritarian Islamist party, the AKP, nominated women candidates across the strongholds of the secular party, the CHP. These women appeared as modern, well-educated, secular working women, which contradicts the AKP's general approach to women's issues. Since coming to power in 2002, the AKP has created a conservative gender climate based on traditional norms and religion and has undermined gender equality. The consecutive AKP governments have reshaped gender relations along the lines of a neoconservative and neoliberal economic agenda. Consequently, women's social and economic status has regressed overwhelmingly (Adak, 2019). In politics, the party argued against gender quota legislation and rejected the main opposition party's recent parity and zipper system legislation proposal.

What explains these candidate selection decisions by the AKP? Were these women candidates selected randomly to be placed in unwinnable seats? Or do AKP elites leverage these women's secular appearance as an electoral competition strategy?

These questions become even more relevant when considering that women's identities in Turkey have a consequential symbolic meaning regarding the Islamist-secularist cleavage, which is one of the most important social cleavages determining vote choice in the country in the last several decades. Starting from the Republic's early years, the Kemalist elites used modern, well-educated, secular-appearing women's visuals and their participation in politics to symbolize modernization and Westernization (Aslan,

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2020). In the 1930s, the single-party regime engaged in anti-veiling campaigns and finally, the headscarf was banned in public places in the 1980s (Adak, 2022). In response, Islamist parties used veiled women's images as a counter symbol to contest Kemalist ideology and promoted veiling as self-empowerment of Muslim women (Aslan, 2020). As a result, veiling or unveiling has become one of the most important signifiers of religious orientation, loaded with partisan symbols and shaped stereotypes associated with women's intersecting identities. Today, this secularist-Islamist divide overlaps with a newly emerged polarization between pro-democracy and pro-authoritarianism voters, especially in the western cities of Turkey, and determines the winner of the electoral competition between the Islamist AKP and the secularist CHP. Turkey ranks third among the countries with the highest mass-partisan polarization with negative sentiments towards the opposing party (Lauka, McCoy, and Firat, 2018).

In this dissertation, I study whether party elites leverage women's intersectional identities as an election competition strategy in the highly polarized electoral context. Despite being a Competitive Authoritarian Regime (CARs), there are remarkable differences in party support across regions of Turkey. Although the authoritarian AKP has dominated elections since 2002, the party's vote share in secularist districts has remained remarkably lower than their national average (Tosun, 2010). The AKP has consolidated the central-right votes in central and middle Anatolia as well as the Black Sea region. Nevertheless, the CHP still holds a competitive advantage in the elections in the provinces of the western and Mediterranean coastline from Thrace to Hatay (Konda, 2017). These districts are populated mainly by secularists, more educated, young, and metropolitan

voters with modern lifestyles (Konda, 2019, p.5). In CARs, when opposition party voters are clustered in an electoral district, winning elections in these districts also becomes harder for ruling parties (Harvey, 2016). How do party elites strategize their election campaigns when partisan polarization is unfavorable for their party? How do these conditions impact their candidate selection strategies? Do party elites leverage women's intersecting identities in polarized elections? My dissertation sheds light on party elites' strategic behavior towards women's nomination under such competition conditions.

1.1.1. Argument

This dissertation develops a framework and explains why and when political parties include women with intersecting identities in politics. By using the context of mayoral elections in Turkey, I argue that the Islamist AKP strategically nominates secular-appearing women to leverage their intersecting identities in races where high negative partisanship with secularist sentiments against this party is the primary determinant of vote choice, and the motivation behind this strategy is to attract voters from the other side of polarization. I argue that elites make such a strategic selection because the strategic value of including these women increases when the party is less competitive due to high partisan polarization, and leveraging intersecting identities of women candidates allows them to appeal to voters of the rival party.

The party elites' strategic behavior toward women's representation is a developing area of research. Existing studies point out that male elites strategically increase women's representation to advance their power by passing ineffective quota laws (Murray et al.,

2012) or to compete against new progressive parties (Week, 2018). Another study finds that men increase women's presence to regain legitimacy after corruption scandals and democratic backlash since women are stereotypically seen as honest and democratic (Valdini, 2019). However, these studies analyze women as a single category and do not account for intersectionality. I argue that analyzing strategic elite behavior requires us to apply intersectionality since women's ethnic, religious, and racial identities interact with their gender identity and shape stereotypes attached to their intersecting identities. I argue that male party elites pay attention to women's intersecting identities and leverage the strategic value attached to these identities.

I also argue that male elites' motivations to leverage women's intersecting identities depend on several contextual features, such as regime type that create limited competition conditions, partisan polarization over identities, and electoral systems that create incentives to generate personal vote. In political contexts in which women's identities symbolize social cleavages that are decisive in voting behavior, including these women provides party elites with a valuable tool as parties can signal to voters about their ideological and policy positions through their choice of candidates. Another contextual condition is a candidate-centered electoral system, which is an electoral system that generates personal votes (PV). In electoral systems prone to generating PV, the strategic value of candidates' identities becomes vital as parties can send information shortcuts to the electorate through candidates' visible identities. Thus, I also argue that candidate-centered electoral systems create incentives for party elites to include women with intersecting identities.

Political parties aim to win elections, and the main incentive for party elites to use electoral strategies is to increase their vote share. I argue that, by selecting secular-appearing women candidates, the party intends to appeal to floating voters who are dissatisfied with the candidate of their own party and would vote for another party whose candidate speaks to them because of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religious orientation. I argue that by leveraging women's identities, the party selectorate aim to send two information short-cuts to floating voters with one candidate. The gender axis of their intersecting identity, i.e., women, signals voters who are concerned about gender equality and commitment to democracy. Simultaneously, the secular orientation axis signals tolerance for secularist lifestyle choices. As the AKP competes in highly disadvantageous conditions in the CHP strongholds, the party relies on symbolic inclusion to improve the party's image in the eye of secularist voters.

1.1.2. Empirical Approach

To explain whether and why party elites leverage women's intersecting identities, I study the case of Turkey's mayoral elections. Several reasons make the mayoral elections in Turkey a suitable case for this study. First, the first-past-the-post system creates incentives to cultivate personal votes: a portion of candidates' votes they receive because of their personal qualities. Second, there is no gender or minority quota legislation—and thus sanction for noncompliance—in Turkey that would motivate parties to recruit women with intersecting identities, as in some Western democracies. By selecting a case with first-past-the-post electoral system that lacks quota legislation, I identify incentives of political parties to field women with intersecting identities while controlling for possible positive

effects of quota legislation and the PR-list system, a system known for being more women-friendly.

In this dissertation, intersectionality is applied as a methodological approach to studying women's candidacy as an electoral competition strategy. I use an explanatory sequential mixed-method design of quantitative and qualitative methods. To empirically test my hypotheses, I rely on an original district-level dataset of 1734 mayoral election candidates who ran in the 2019 elections in 519 districts of thirty metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, under the party labels of six electorally significant parties, the AKP, the CHP, the MHP, the HDP, the Good Party (IYIP), and the Felicity Party (SP).

I also rely on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 elites, men and women, from different political parties in Turkey to investigate what motivates political party elites to nominate women with intersecting identities. A snowball sampling method was used to recruit interviewees. Interviews focused on district-level factors that may play a role in the candidate selection decision-making of party elites and how candidates' gender and intersecting identities may affect these decisions. In addition, I use complementary data of content analysis of local news coverage on candidates mentioned by the interviewees, these candidates' TV interviews during the 2019 mayoral election campaigns, and party leaders' speeches that signal the rival party base when such data is available.

1.1.3. Chapter Outline

The chapters of this dissertation proceed as follows:

Chapter Two focuses on women's representation, intersectionality, and party competition literature. The first section of this chapter presents factors that impact women's descriptive representation. The second section reviews scholarly findings on how women's identities, other than gender, interact with factors that affect women's representation and create complex results for minority women. Works reviewed in this section primarily focus on multiple barriers versus strategic advantage discussions within intersectionality and election literature. The last section lays out party competition strategies literature with a particular focus on candidate selection.

Chapter Three contemplates women's representation and partisan politics in Turkey. The first section of this chapter focuses on scholarly explanations of women's underrepresentation and intersectionality in Turkey. The second section presents social cleavages that determine vote choice, and the last section focuses on the symbolic politics of veiling and unveiling in partisan politics in Turkey.

Chapter Four lays out the dissertation's theoretical framework, hypotheses, case selection, methodological approach, and data I rely on to test my hypotheses. In this chapter, I also explain the sampling strategy for in-depth interviews and the limitations of my qualitative and quantitative methodological choices.

Chapter Five quantitatively examines the predictors of nominations of secular-appearing women using multivariate models. I first explain empirical strategy and measurements and then present the results. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the quantitative results.

Chapter Six presents the findings from the elite interviews. The first section presents the findings on the candidate selection methods, candidates' traits, and district-level factors that impact elites' decision-making in this process. The second section presents findings on the AKP elite's incentives for nominating women with intersecting identities under highly polarized electoral competition conditions in the CHP strongholds. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

Chapter Seven concludes by summarizing the findings and implications of these findings. It also offers suggestions for future research and identifies gaps in the literature that require further attention.

CHAPTER 2

2.1. Literature Review

Women's underrepresentation in politics is a global phenomenon despite a few exceptions. Both national and local politics are dominated by men. As of 2023, the worldwide average percentage of women in national legislations is 26.8% (The Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023). The literature on women's representation identifies several factors that impact women's descriptive representation: institutional design of electoral and party systems, socioeconomic factors, and cultural factors. These factors interact in a political system and create various consequences for women's descriptive representation. Among these studies, intersectionality literature looks at how women's identities other than gender interact with these above-mentioned factors that affect women's representation and create diverse results for women. These studies question whether women's intersectional identities create multiple barriers or provide them with a strategic advantage in accessing power. Some of these intersectionality studies show that political parties recruit minority women to appeal to constituencies sensitive to gender and racial issues (Hughes, 2011; Murray, 2016; Mügge & Erzeel, 2016). In distinctive but related literature, scholars of elections show that candidate selection is utilized by political parties in electoral competition to challenge dominant parties. In this chapter, I present a literature review of these related works of literature and show that tailoring them can contribute to our understanding of how parties in dominant party systems utilize intersectionality as an electoral competition strategy.

2.1.1. Women's Representation and Electoral Institutions

Scholars identify the institutional design of electoral and party systems as a primary factor impacting the electoral success of underrepresented groups (Krook, 2014). Perhaps one of the most agreed-upon assumptions of the descriptive representation literate is that closed-list proportional representation (PR) is more favorable for descriptive representation of women since it promotes party-centered multiparty competition that increases the incentives of parties and voters to support candidates from diverse backgrounds (Matland & Studlar, 1996; Moser, 2001). More specifically, party-oriented elections minimize the influence of personal vote[1] as an information shortcut and thus eliminate the effect of bias against marginalized groups. Meanwhile, more parties within a party system provide more avenues for underrepresented groups for inclusion (Krook, 2014; Thames & Williams, 2010).

However, there are some important nuances regarding the impact of PR systems on the representation of women and other underrepresented groups, such as minority women, which may be to one group's advantage while against the others. First, women are more likely to be elected from the lists of larger mainstream parties as these parties are likely to win more seats in a given district due to a greater party magnitude[2] and candidates further

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[1] Personal vote is defined as " that portion of a candidate's electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities and records (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina, 1987, 9, Cited in Clucas and Valdini,2015, p.81).

[2] Party magnitude is defined as the number of seats a party wins in a specific electoral district. "Party Magnitude and Candidate Selection —." https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pcc/pcc04/pcc04b (October 12, 2021).

down the lists, where women are usually placed, gain a better chance to achieve parliamentary representation than they would in smaller parties (Matland, 1993). Whereas smaller marginalized groups, such as ethnic minority women and men, are more likely to benefit from fragmented party systems that can lead to the emergence of ethnic parties. Thus, the size of the parties and the number of parties in a party system may have different consequences for women's and minorities' representation (Krook, 2014).

In contrast, majoritarian single-member district (SMD) systems create fewer incentives to support women's representation, as personal vote plays a determinant role in the electability of candidates in these systems. When a party system is prone to generate personal vote, i.e., is a candidate-centered system, voters pay more attention to the characteristics of candidates and tend to support candidates that are believed as more likely to win elections (Valdini, 2012; Krook, 2014; Thames & Williams, 2010; Wang & Muriaas, 2019). Also, in the cultural context where gender bias holds strong, gender norms interact with the candidate-centered open-list PR and SMD systems and bring about detrimental results in women's representation (Valdini, 2012; 2013; Moser, 2001) and minorities' representation (Moncrief & Thompson, 1992). Therefore, gender and racial stereotypes and cultural factors are more likely to be decisive in the electoral success of underrepresented groups in candidate-centered systems.

Furthermore, district magnitude is another determinant of women's representation since as district magnitude increases, party elites are more likely to slate women candidates into the party lists. When district magnitude is large in a closed-list PR system and a multi-

member district (MMD)[3] (Matland & Brown, 1992), the zero-sum game conditions that winners take all diminish, and male candidates from the majority groups who have stronger electoral support in constituencies do not need to be deposed in order for a woman candidate to receive a spot (Matland, 1993, p.738). For this reason, women have a better chance to get into party lists and be elected in districts in which the district magnitudes are relatively larger (Engstrom, 1987; Studlar & Welch, 1991; Matland & Brown, 1992; Rule, 1987).

Yet, even when electoral systems that are in favor of women are in place, it requires enough supply and demand for women candidates. In their seminal book, Norris and Levenduski (1995) develop the supply and demand model of candidate selection and show that both supply and demand sides of the recruitment processes are responsible for the underrepresentation of women, Black, and working-class candidates. On the one hand, the supply of possible candidates among these groups is restricted by various social and structural constraints. On the other hand, when candidates from these groups come forward, party selectorate behaves in a discriminatory manner as they tend to select middle-class, middle-aged male candidates (Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Thus, both supply of and demand for women candidates have crucial consequences for women's descriptive representation.

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[3]A multi-member district is an electoral district that sends more than one officeholder to a body. "Multi-Member District." Ballotpedia. https://ballotpedia.org/Multi-member_district (October 12, 2021).

On the demand side, party elites play pivotal roles in women's descriptive representation as they are the gatekeepers of political office and decide whose name gets into party lists. Thus, candidate selection methods and recruitment processes have been studied widely in the literature (Norris & Levenduski, 1995; Itzkovitch-Malka & Hazan, 2017; Rahat & Hazan, 2001; Celis et al., 2014; Hinojosa, 2012). Inclusive and exclusive candidate selection methods engender various results for women's representation.

Inclusive candidate selection processes are based on a few criteria and are mostly voter-driven processes. In contrast, exclusive processes are regulated strictly by party elites (Rahat & Hazan, 2001, p.298), and thus are elite-driven processes. The level of inclusiveness varies across the spectrum of these methods based on how widely and directly voters participate in the selection process. On the most inclusive end of the spectrum, parties select candidates through primary elections (Rahat & Hazan, 2011), in which voters cast votes for competing candidates. However, studies underscore that, although inclusive candidate selection methods are more democratic compared to exclusive methods, they may be disadvantageous for women in cultural contexts in which gender bias holds strong (Valdini, 2013; Luhiste, 2015; Medeiros et al., 2019) and in systems which gendered informal rules of candidate selections at local level replace centralized candidate selection (Baldez, 2007; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2016; Hinojosa, 2012; Luhiste, 2015; Hinojosa & Franceschet, 2012). On the other hand, in the most exclusive candidate selection process, the top level of party elites decide whether women are included on party lists and elected, as list placement is an important part of the story (Luhiste, 2015). In exclusive candidate selection methods, party elites'

rational decisions determine whether to include women in party lists (Murray et al., 2012; Week, 2018; Valdini, 2019).

Given that political parties are gendered institutions[4] (Acker, 1992), candidate selection methods create gendered consequences not only through formal selection institutions but also through informal gendered institutions (Bjarnegard, 2013; Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016; Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2019; Crowder-Meyer, 2013; Hinojosa & Franceschet, 2012; Krook, 2010). Bjarnegard (2013) argue that homosocial capital generated through male clientelist relations enables men to sustain their dominance in politics and their power to decide who is going to be selected. Moreover, women are more likely to be selected and elected in parties where candidates are chosen by centralized and exclusive procedures due to the fact that when inclusive and decentralized procedures are in place, local party leaders can influence the candidate selection processes and reduce the number of women nominated (Hinojosa, 2012).

On the supply side, the number of aspirant women running for office is another crucial factor that impacts women's descriptive representation. Scholarly discussions on candidate emergence and the gender gap in political ambition[5] focused on explaining why or whether women have less political ambition than men (Rule, 1981; Fox & Lawless,

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[4] Acker (1992) defines "gendered institutions" as institutions that "gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life" (567). Accordingly, as political parties and political office have been dominated by men, women's exclusion from political parties is embedded in the nature of political institutions. Thus, gender and politics scholarship sees these institutions, like all institutions, gendered.

[5] Political ambition is defined as a nascent interest in running for or holding elected office. (Piscopo and Kenny 2020, p.4)

2004; 2010). Findings show that women who share the same personal characteristics and professional credentials as men express significantly lower levels of political ambition to hold elective office (Fox & Lawless, 2004, p.275). However, recent studies on political ambition have critically evaluated the interaction between individual factors, institutional rules, and changing political contexts, which are gendered and impact women's decisions to run for office (Piscopo & Kenny, 2020; Piscopo, 2019). Rather than lacking ambition, women may rationally decide to opt out of candidacy, as gendered political opportunity structures favor majority men. (Piscopo & Kenny, 2020, p.4).

Moreover, scholars find that cultural bias against women's political leadership is another factor impacting women's descriptive representation (Fulton, 2012; Valdini, 2013; Crowder-Meyer et al., 2015). Cultural bias interacts with electoral systems and is more likely to manifest itself in systems that generate Personal Vote Earning Attributes (PVEA)[6] such as open-list PR and SMD systems (Thames & Williams, 2010; Valdini, 2013). Valdini (2013) finds that when there is a strong cultural bias against women in society, personal vote lowers the likelihood of being elected for women. In a cultural context where fewer negative traits are associated with women and women's leadership is more accepted, the presence of a personal vote has no effect. On the other hand, in a cultural context in which bias against female leaders is strong, personalizing the election tends to have a detrimental effect on the success of female candidates. Yet, there is no evidence of a positive effect of

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[6] Candidates are more likely to exhibit PVEA in systems that have open candidate lists alongside large district magnitudes. In such systems, PVEA is used by voters as informational shortcuts (Shugart, Valdini, Suominen, 2005). Therefore, the existence of personal vote in a system allows us to track cultural bias against women's political leadership as voters use these information shortcuts in elections.

the personal vote on women's electability, "when bias is quite low, the effect of this institution is neutral, but not positive" (Valdini, 2013, p.87). Thus, in electoral systems prone to generate personal vote and gender bias against women's leadership hold strong, political parties are less likely to select women candidates as party elites tend to avoid risky candidates.

Another compelling theory related to gender stereotypes and women's representation is the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice introduced by Eagly and Karau (2002). Accordingly, female leaders have disadvantages due to the perception of women as possessing less leadership ability than men and less favorable evaluation of behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leadership role when a woman enacts this behavior compared with a man (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p.588). Thus, women face greater difficulty attaining leadership roles and being recognized as effective in these roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p.589). Moreover, Benstead, Jamal, and Lust (2015) apply this theory to transitional Tunisia and find that voters tend to prefer leaders who look like the leaders of the past, who are secular male politicians (Benstead et al., 2015, pp. 86-87).

Furthermore, socioeconomic factors interact with electoral systems, leading to mixed results in women's representation across countries (Rule, 1987; Matland, 1998; Rule, 1994; Rosen, 2011). For instance, when controlled for indicators of development[7], PR systems return higher results of women's representation, but this is significantly higher

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[7] These development indicators are the average income, available wealth afforded to groups, and the resources and opportunities that stem from this wealth, including higher education, work experiences, specialized training, life-expectancy. In addition, regime type and level of development of a country are investigated by Rosen to shed light on the factors of women's underrepresentation (Rosen, 2011).

in developed countries. Moreover, women's access to social and economic capital affects the supply side of women's representation (Rosen, 2011). Since political elites often have higher education and professional experience, women who can get a higher education and acquire top-level jobs are more likely to seek political office (Rosen, 2011, p.312). Thus, a country's socioeconomic development level and women's access to higher education and economic resources appear as significant as institutional and cultural factors that impact the level of women's descriptive representation.

A broad literature also engages how gender quotas[8] interact with electoral systems and candidate selection processes in different cultural contexts and how different gender quota designs produce various outcomes regarding women's descriptive representation. Scholarly findings show that gender quotas create optimal outcomes in closed-list PR systems. A national quota law is likely to be most effective in large-magnitude districts using a closed-list PR and less effective in small-magnitude districts using open lists to the extent that gender bias holds strong (Jones, 1998). Similarly, quotas, particularly reserved seats[9] and voluntary party quotas, together with PR systems, are the best predictor of an increase in women's legislative representation (Tripp & Kang, 2008). Yet, when designed well, gender quotas can generate favorable outcomes and gradually facilitate an increase in women's descriptive representation in SMD systems as well (Christensen & Bardall,

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[8] A gender quota is defined as a rule that requires a minimum number of women candidates up for elections. (FitzGerald and Valdini, 2020, p.11)

[9] Reserved seats stipulate the number of women or representatives of an under-represented sex to be elected to legislative bodies. Gender and Elections,Legislated Reserved Seats." Retrieved October 14, 2021 https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge2/ge22/gender-quotas-in-elections/legislated-candidate-quotas

2016). Moreover, in mixed-member electoral systems[10], in which gender quotas are adopted only on the PR tier, some scholars find a spill-over effect of the PR tier into the SMD tier, which leads to overall increases in women's representation. (Davidson-Schmich, 2014; Shin, 2014), while others argue that the gender quota's empowering effect for the PR tier is limited to the candidate selection stage due to a leaky pipeline (Lee, 2019). Furthermore, it is mostly agreed that gender quotas are more effective when a placement mandate[11] is in place (Krook, 2014; Schmidt, 2009). Yet, a gender quota without a placement mandate can still have a positive effect on the number of elected female candidates (Jankowski & Marcinkiewicz, 2019).

Last but not least, the party elite's behavior toward women's representation is a developing area of research that interacts with all the abovementioned factors and produces important consequences for women's representation. Murray, Krook, and Opello (2012) explain why male party elites had adopted gender quotas, a policy against their self-interests. They argue that quota reforms are the results of political parties' pragmatic actions to maximize gains and minimize losses. As a result, these laws were created ineffectively, allowing parties to place women in the least winnable seats while placing men in favorable districts (p.535). Similarly, Week (2018) argues that interparty and

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[10]In a mixed member proportional system, a proportion of the parliament is elected by plurality-majority methods, while the remainder is constituted by PR lists. "Electoral Systems, Mixed Member Proportional." Retrieved October 14, 2021 (https://aceproject.org/main/english/es/esf03b.htm).

[11] A placement mandate is a rule about the rank order of candidates that requires not only a certain percentage of women on the electoral list, but also prevents the women candidates being just placed on the bottom of the list with little chance to be elected. An example of a placement mandate is the zipper system in which women candidates occupy every other place throughout party lists. (International IDEA Gender Quotas, n.d.)

intraparty competition motivate male elites to introduce gender quotas. Parties threatened by a new, more progressive competitor on the left are more likely to pass gender quota laws, and party elites use these laws to gain power over candidate selection against local party monopolies.

Finally, Valdini (2019) analyzes men's motivations in facilitating women's presence in politics. She argues that elite men are rational opportunists who calculate the cost and benefits of including women in politics and let women in when the benefits of women's inclusion outweigh its cost. Thus, Valdini argues, women's inclusion creates strategic value for male elites after corruption scandals, democratic backlash, and loss of legitimacy due to women's association with honesty and democracy. By increasing women's presence, elite men regain legitimacy and maintain their domination in politics (Valdini, 2019, pp. 145-147).

The literature review presented in this section shows that factors impacting women's descriptive representation and the consequences of their interaction are widely studied. The next section focuses on the concept of intersectionality and reviews studies that analyze how women's intersecting identities impact their representation.

2.1.2. Intersectionality and Elections

Studies on women's representation question to what extent women who are included in politics reflect differences among women and how these differences impact women's experiences in politics. The concept of intersectionality has been used as a valuable analytical tool to address these questions in women's representation literature.

Thus, tackling differences other than gender, this literature has enhanced our understanding of women's access to political power.

The concept of intersectionality allows us to critically investigate the ways that gender interacts with other forms of marginalization and create diverse outcomes for women in politics. As grounded in black and multiracial feminist theories, intersectionality goes back to 1851 when Sojourner Truth made her "Ain't I A Women" speech at the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohia (Brah & Phoneix, 2004; Jordan-Zachery, 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006). Yet, the prevalent scholarly use of the concept started in the 1980s and 1990s in the U.S. and expanded outside of the U.S. context.

In the U.S. context, Crenshaw (1991) conceptualizes intersectionality as "the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color" (Crenshaw, 1989, p.1244). She demonstrates that women of color face multiple barriers due to the intersection of their gender and racial identities and argues that to illuminate their marginalization, one should look at the intersection of sex and race rather than thinking of these categories separately. Thus, she criticizes feminism and antiracism because of having conflicting agendas regarding the experiences of women of color and falling short of capturing multiple ways of their marginalization. As women of color experience racism in ways different from men of color and sexism different from white women, Crenshaw argues that a political response to each form of these subordinations must be a political response to both, which requires intersectional lenses (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1252).

Although Crenshaw (1981; 1991) coins the term intersectionality, contemporary scholars advance the conceptualization of intersectionality. Combahee River Collective, founded by a group of black feminists, states that struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression requires the synthesis of these oppressions, as these major systems of oppression are interlocking. They argued that sex oppression cannot be separated from race and class oppression and that racial-sexual oppression is neither solely racial nor solely sexual (Combahee River Collective, 2014, p.271, 274). Moreover, Collins (2015) defines intersectionality as "the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (p.2). Collins specifically focuses on family relations as a core of power relations. She explains that the traditional family ideal constructs gender, race, and nation intersections. Collins suggests that maneuvers to challenge social inequality might require an intersectional understanding of the family as a powerful ideological construction reproducing inequality (Collins, 1998, p.78). Furthermore, Yuval-Davis (1997) applies an intersectional lens to citizenship studies. She questions the situation of those members of civil society who do not share the hegemonic value systems of the majority regarding sexual, religious, and other matters. She states that the liberal definition of citizenship constructs all citizens as the same and considers class, ethnicity, gender, and other differences irrelevant to citizenship status. As a result, she argues, those outside the hegemonic value systems cannot become full members of the hegemonic national community (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p.7).

Intersectionality in elections is another significant component of contributions to the concept within women and politics literature. In recent years, scholars of women and politics have increasingly applied intersectional analysis to their work to address how gender intersects with other forms of marginalization and creates divergent political experiences and outcomes. They have recognized the context dependence of intersectionality research and adopted intersectionality as an analytical tool to study women's exclusions for reasons other than gender. For example, in a special edition on intersectionality and political representation edited by Mügge and Erzeel (2016), prominent scholars of women's representation research present works on "how the intersection of age, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, generation, and ethnicity" influence entrance in politics (p.499).

The double burden experienced by minority women is evident in the scholarly findings. For instance, scholars find that minority groups' access to political power as newcomers was restricted due to the biased nature of recruitment processes since they need to countervail negative stereotyping and serious barriers (Black, 2000, p.164). Hughes (2013) shows that minority women are considerably underrepresented in national legislatures overall. In almost one-quarter of countries included in her study, minority women are not represented in the national legislature, whereas majority women and minority men hold seats. Yet, the level of exclusion varies geographically (p.489). Moreover, when sexual identity is taken into account, those minorities who are openly identified as members of the LGBT community are substantially underrepresented. While eighty-one percent of LGBT politicians worldwide are gay men (Reynolds, 2013), most

are members of majorities (Paxton et al., 2020). Thus, sexual minority women also face double barriers in accessing political office.

Although the concept of intersectionality is derived from the idea of multiple barriers faced by minority women, many studies point out that intersectional identities provide women of color with strategic advantages in pursuit of political office. Studying the mechanisms of political representation intersectionality enables scholars to explain how and why some (sub)groups in society can access representative institutions more than others (Mugge & Erzeel, 2016, p. 9). Thus, it is controversial whether women's intersecting identities create multiple barriers or strategic opportunities for women's descriptive representation (Mügge & Erzeel, 2016). Indeed, studies show that under some institutional designs and in some electoral contexts, minority women can leverage their multiple identities to gain electoral advantages compared to majority women and minority men (Bejarano, 2013; Fraga et al., 2008). Moreover, some works point out that political parties utilize women's intersectional identities to maximize electoral gains and maintain male dominance. These male party strategies are shaped by the electoral system design in which these parties operate (Murray, 2016; Mügge, 2016; Janssen et al., 2020; Scola, 2013). Indeed, the intersectional identities of minority women can become an advantage or disadvantage is not structural and static but context-dependent and varies based on broader trends and hot issues within political parties and society (Mugge, 2016, p,527).

Scholarly literature on the United States describes how multiple identities of Latina and Black women allow these women to achieve political power more than white women,

Latino, and Black women. Fraga et al. (2008) find that minority women's dual identities can sometimes provide strategic opportunities by emphasizing their gender or minority status in different institutional contexts to enhance electability. Similarly, Darcy and Hadley (1998) question the scholarly hypothesis suggesting that black women are doubly disadvantaged in politics and found that black women are more successful in elections compared to white women due to a combination of factors, such as their greater political ambition derived from activism in the long civil rights struggle, the political opportunities resulting from the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the creation of black majority political districts.

Moreover, the descriptive data on the number of African American men and women legislators in the U.S. House and Senate shows that African American women have achieved elective offices more than African American men since 1990 (Orey & Brown, 2014). Furthermore, states with higher percentages of the minority population and that fall closer to traditional political cultures tend to have more women of color legislators. In contrast, men of color benefit from less professionalized legislatures and higher levels of liberal ideology in a given state (Scola, 2014). In the case of Latina representation, qualified Latinas enjoy electoral advantages because of their multiple identities since they are most likely to win elected office in states with large numbers of racial/ethnic minorities and Hispanic-owned businesses. (Bejarano, 2013). Thus, theories of double burden for minority women due to their intersectionality in achieving political power do not necessarily explain the experiences of Latina and Black women candidates in all electoral contexts across the United States. Other factors, such as demographics and traditional

versus liberal ideology in districts, political experience of candidates, and political culture, interact with intersectionality and create advantages for minority women to win elections.

Scholars of intersectionality also acknowledge that multiple identities of women candidates interact with the electoral system designs. A substantial number of studies have analyzed the impact of gender quotas on intersectionality and women's representation. Hughes (2011) argues that the support for double burden or multiple advantage perspectives on the representation of women with intersecting identities depends on the structure of quota systems. Specifically, Hughes (2011) states that which groups are targeted (women, minorities, or both) and the level at which quotas are regulated (national level, party level, or both) explain how quotas impact minority women's legislative representation. Accordingly, minority women are more likely to benefit from national gender policies alongside minority quotas, e.g., tandem quotas. When tandem quotas are adopted, adding minority women to the national legislature helps to satisfy both gender and minority quotas, which means their elections unseat fewer majority men (Hughes, 2011, pp. 604-605). However, unlike Hughes, Bird (2016) shows that dual quota systems increase the representation of minority women only when ethnic and gender quota systems are entirely and reciprocally nested. In other cases where ethnic reserved seats and gender quotas are implemented fully or partially independently, gender quotas benefit ethnic majority women while ethnic seat reservations benefit ethnic minority men. Moreover, scholars find that party elites' strategies to maximize electoral support are decisive in the minority women's representation. As selectors aim to represent numerous identities by a limited number of candidates whom the electorate can identify on the list, ethnic minority

women were seen as a complementarity bonus because their identity counted both for gender and ethnicity. Ethnic minority, female and young candidates complement the dominant ethnic majority, male, and senior candidates and maximize candidate lists' representativeness (Celis et al., 2014; Celis & Erzeel, 2017). Thus, selecting individuals who tick boxes for both gender and race enables parties to appear more inclusive while conserving the maximum number of seats for white men (Murray, 2016).

Electoral systems impact the inclusion of minorities, too. Hughes (2016) compares the influence of PR, Mixed-PR, and plurality-majority electoral systems on the political representation of male and female Muslim immigrants. She finds that Muslim women have been increasingly elected in PR systems, while plurality-majority systems may be particularly disadvantageous for Muslim ethnic minority women. She stated that such an outcome is primarily the result of party leaders' strategic calculations based on how they believe voters will respond to Muslim candidates. Party leaders assume that including Muslim women in the PR list is perceived as progressive due to stereotypes of Muslim women being oppressed by Muslim men. Through this strategy, party elites seek to attract highly gendered anti-Muslim sentiments.

Intersectionality plays a vital role in minority women's nominations in local elections as well. Janssen et al. (2020) examine the effect of party strategies on minority men and women nominations. They show a gender imbalance toward minority men's advantage, which varies across right-wing and left-wing parties and in districts from a higher to a lower concentration of minority population. Yet, minority women have an

advantage in being placed in visible positions in all party lists. However, the proportion of minority women decreases in both left and right party lists as the minorities from the same origin concentration in a district increase.

Whether an intersectional identity of men and women is advantageous or disadvantageous depends on the stereotypes attached to these identities in a given cultural context. Scholarly findings on selections of Muslim men and Muslim women present the best examples of these nuances. Studies on intersectionality of Muslim women in Europe, in the US, and in the Muslim world make distinctions between veiled Muslim women and unveiled Muslim women regarding their chance of getting elected and stereotypes associated with secular-appearing Muslim women and conservative-appealing Muslim women. For instance, Murray (2016) finds that in France, the inclusion of Muslim women "is conditional on their willingness to act as symbols of secularity and assimilation" (p.586). As the French state relies on the principle of secularity ('laicite'), the interaction of gender, ethnicity, and religion in this country creates incentives for party elites to select well-integrated, unveiled Muslim women since veiling is perceived as an unacceptable practice of Islam by the French public while the secular appearance of Muslim women symbolizes well-integration and assimilation of Muslim immigrants.

Similarly, Dancygier (2017) finds that party elites' strategic behavior towards the gender of the Muslim candidates depends on whether party elites aim to increase their vote share among Muslim voters, or to appeal to Muslims minorities without alienating their cosmopolitan party base. She finds that, in the first case, parties select Muslim men who

are well-known in the Muslim community and can drag block votes of Muslim minorities to the party. However, in the second case, parties are mainly interested in the symbolic inclusion and tend to select candidates who can signal to non-Muslim voters that these candidates are well-integrated. Dancygier argues that this type of symbolic inclusion leads party elites to select "Muslim women (especially if they do not wear a headscarf) who can signal that they are not bound by conservative, patriarchal constraints" (p.19).

Such distinctions between Muslim men, secular-appearing Muslim women, and conservative-appearing Muslim women are not unique to the Western world where Muslims are a minority. These distinctions are also relevant in Muslim-majority countries that experienced top-down secularization and modernization such as Turkey and Tunisia. For example, Benstead, Jamal, and Lust (2015) conduct a survey experiment in Tunisia and find that, among secular-appearing men and women and conservative-appealing men and women, voters tend to prefer leaders who look like the leaders of the past, who are secular male politicians (Benstead et al., 2015, pp. 86-87). Similarly, in Turkey, symbolic politics of veiling and unveiling has shaped stereotypes associated with the secular-appearing women and conservative-appealing women in politics (Aslan, 2022).

These studies indicate that parties are responsive to how voters evaluate minority women's candidates. Although studies engaging with intersectionality to explain voting behavior towards women candidates with multiple identities outside the West are limited in the literature, a work by Kao and Benstead (2021) is an exception. Kao and Benstead analyzes voter choice when they faced women candidates with intersecting identities and

find that women can improve their chances relative to men from their group by leveraging an intersecting trait, such as shared tribal identity or Islamism (p.429). Still, little is known about the party selectorate's attitudes toward the nomination of women with intersecting identities. Do they leverage a candidate's gender, ethnicity, and religious orientation as an electoral competition strategy? The following section reviews the party competition strategies in dominant party systems and presents what has been said about intersectionality as a party competition strategy so far.

2.1.3. Party Competition Strategies

Scholars of elections point out various party strategies used by both ruling and opposition parties in both democratic and authoritarian dominant party systems and explain how these strategies are utilized to challenge ruling parties in these systems. Among these strategies[12], activist recruitment and regime mobilization strategies have important implications for women's representation and intersectionality. As pragmatic institutions, political parties[13] aim to win elections[14]. Each political party adopts various strategies to reach this goal. However, dominant party systems provide ruling parties with a competitive

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[12] Although used by ruling parties as well, opposition parties, in both democratic and authoritarian dominant party systems, commonly use several strategies under dominant party systems: first, candidate selection and activist recruitment; second, spatial and ideological competition through regime mobilization; third, opposition alliances (see White, 2011; Arriola 2012)and forth, effective service delivery in local government(see Farole, 2021).

[13] There are numerous definitions of parties in the political party literature. Sartori (1976) defines a party as "any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free) candidates for public office" (p.63).

[14] To win elections, political parties pay significant attention to voters' concerns and factors affecting voters' decisions to use these pieces of information for signaling potential voters, providing information short-cuts to facilitate their decision-making process, organizing like-minded voters under their party, and thus maximizing votes (Clucas & Valdini, 2015, p. 88). Thus, it is vital for political parties to select the right strategies to achieve these goals.

advantage in winning elections (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2010). Thus, challenging the ruling parties depends on the skills of opposition parties in utilizing competition strategies available to them in these types of political systems.

There are several definitions of the dominant party and dominant party systems. Sartori (1976) defines a dominant party system as a system in which party alternation does not occur for at least three consecutive elections (p.199).[15] To assess a dominant party system, Duverger (1964) emphasizes a political party's relative influence and strength in the system. A dominant party has the leading role in determining access to most political offices; has powers over policymaking, patronage distribution, and political appointments; and uses privileged access to public resources to maintain its position in power (Reuter & Remington, 2009 p.503). Moreover, Pempel (1990) defines a dominant party as a party that dominates the electorate, other political parties, the formation of governments, and the public policy agenda (p.4).

There is a spectrum within dominant party systems regarding the level of democracy. While some dominant party systems are democratic regimes, some dominant party systems are competitive authoritarian regimes (Diamond, 2002; Levisky & Way, 2010), while others are hegemonic authoritarian regimes (Diamond, 2002). Some of the examples of dominant parties are the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party—hereafter PRI) in Mexico (from 1918 to 2000), the Indian National Congress (hereafter the INC) in India from independence until the 1980s, the Sveriges

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[15]In the present study, a dominant party system refers to Sartori's definition.

Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti (Swedish Social Democratic Workers Party—hereafter the S/SAP) in Sweden (from mid-1930s to 1980s and 2014 to present) and the Democrazia Cristiana (the Christian Democracy—hereafter the DC) in Italy (from1943 to 1994). Again, some of the contemporary examples of democratic dominant party systems are the Liberal Democratic Party (hereafter the LDP) in Japan (from 1955 to present except 1993 to 1994 and 2009 to 2012), the African National Congress (hereafter the ANC) in South Africa (since 1994). In contrast, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi—hereafter the AKP) in Turkey (since 2002) and United Russia in Russia (since 2003) are examples of dominant party systems under authoritarian rules.

One of the primary features of dominant party systems in hybrid regimes, such as CARs, is that electoral competition is skewed toward incumbents (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2010). In these systems, alternating governments depend on the skills of opposition parties to utilize party strategies under limited competition conditions. Opposition party competitiveness is primarily determined by the two advantages of a dominant party: First, the incumbent's resource advantage, i.e., the ability to outspend on campaigns and supplement policy appeals with patronage goods to increase voters' support. Second, the advantage of raising the costs of joining the opposition for candidates and activists through marginalization of the opposition while offering better career opportunities to promising candidates (Greene, 2007, p.139).

In hybrid regimes, dominant parties adopt various tactics to ensure their competitive advantage (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Reuter & Remington, 2009). For instance,

they can pressure courts and election commissions to deny opposition parties opportunities to register or deny their access to the media, whereas they themselves enjoy extensive and favorable publicity. Further, dominant parties can manipulate court rulings on the fairness of electoral campaign tactics, intimidate voters, and pad vote counts. Although some opportunities for opposition forces to compete may exist under these systems, these forces are primarily marginalized (Reuter & Remington, 2009, p. 503). The marginalization of opposition parties is central to the maintenance of one-party dominance. Dominant parties use strategies and resources to build a permanent social coalition among supportive interest groups. They reward those faithful to the regime while excluding opposition and curbing the possibility of a challenger of power emerging (White, 2011, p. 660). As ruling parties want to keep their hegemonic coalition united and deter potential splitters, they offer ambitious politicians sufficient material rewards and access to a government office (Magaloni, 2006, p.15). As a result, opportunities for opposition parties to alter the power are less than it is in a competitive system.

One of the most valuable strategies for opposition parties to unseat ruling parties is recruiting activists and attractive candidates. Opposition parties under dominant party regimes suffer from a lack of promising candidates running under their party label. On the one hand, candidates that can attract voters are more likely to be recruited by a ruling party since ruling parties have an overwhelming advantage in offering career opportunities and political posts, access to material benefits, and recognition for candidates. On the other hand, as ruling parties tend to marginalize oppositions, running under opposition parties can be costly for candidates (Greene, 2002; Greene, 2007). Thus, opposition parties under

dominant parties tend to recruit activists that are willing to pay such costs. White (2011) elucidates the rationale for such a strategic choice of opposition parties. First, he states that activists provide a pool of potential candidates loyal to the party's ideology and social base. Second, activists can provide information short-cuts to voters about the party and minimize the lack of publicity. Third, in cases when dominant parties refuse to accept the electoral outcome of losing powers, activists can organize post-electoral support (White, 2011, p. 662).

However, activist recruitment comes with a trade-off. To attract activists to run under their party, opposition parties must adopt a radical programmatic position that appeals to these candidates. But such a strategy could alienate the average voters who are more likely to vote for parties with moderate programs. Parties can overcome this problem by differentiating themselves from the incumbent with alternative economic programs or regime mobilization strategies since these issues cross-cut a wide range of voters across the political spectrum (Greene, 2002; 2008). For example, in Mexico, where opposition candidates and activists had gradually built parties over decades, one of the opposition parties, the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, hereafter the PAN), distinguished itself from niche parties[16] and managed to craft a broad centrist message that focuses on change (Greene, 2007). As a result, the PAN won the election in 2000, and the PRI lost the legislative plurality in Mexico after nearly eighty years.

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[16] Niche parties refer to new political parties which have emerged and gained popularity on the basis of previously overlooked issues such as environment, immigration, and regional autonomy (Meguid, 2005, p.347).

Activist recruitment and candidate selection strategies can provide opposition parties with a competitive advantage, especially in cases in which ethnic and racial identities are the primary concern of voters. For example, in the case of South Africa, voters support parties along ethnic lines (Farole, 2019). Therefore, activist recruitment and candidate selection are used effectively by the Democratic Alliance (DA) to challenge the dominant party of South Africa, the ANC. The political system in South Africa ensured that any opposition party with ambition would need to garner support across race, ethnicity, and class (Southall, 2019, p.199). Thus, the DA, the predominantly white party, adopted a strategy to appeal to black constituencies by selecting candidates to attract voters from multiple ethnicities and races. The number of DA's black representatives in 2014 in parliament doubled compared to 2004. The party elected its first black leader Mmusi Maimane in 2014, while its mayoral candidates in some municipalities have come from black communities (Mac Giollabhuí, 2018). Along with other strategies, the candidate selection strategy to appeal to racially motivated black voters enabled the DA to achieve considerable success in major municipal areas (Mac Giollabhui, 2018, p.166). Moreover, while parties can use candidate selection to appeal to ethnic voters, it can also be utilized by niche parties to transform an ethnic, regional party into a national party. Since 2010, The Peoples' Democratic Party (Halklarin Demokratik Partisi—hereafter the HDP), the pro-Kurdish party in Turkey, has increasingly included marginalized groups, such as women, religious minorities, and LGBTQ members, in their candidate lists. As these identities cross-cut party lines and geography, the HDP has increased its voters outside the Kurdish region (Celep, 2018).

Candidate selection strategies are used by ruling parties as well. Ferree (2006) explains that the ANC has utilized race in elections since 1994 because voters use race as a cognitive shortcut during elections (p.803). Thus, the manipulation of racial credentials has become a significant battle in electoral campaigns of both the opposition and the dominant party in South Africa. Although performance evaluations matter in voters' decisions, these evaluations are related to voters' beliefs about the racial credentials of parties (Ferree, 2006, p.814). Moreover, the AKP in Turkey, the ruling party that comes from a radical Islamist background, has used candidate selection to break itself away from its Islamist past and appeal to moderate, centrist voters. Self-identified as a conservative democratic party supporting a liberal economy, the AKP leadership replaced some of its more religious candidates with new candidates from the liberal and center-left sectors of Turkish politics and candidates with Alevi and Kurdish backgrounds (Rabasa & Larrabee, 2008).

Moreover, spatial and ideological positioning as democratic alternatives of ruling parties allows opposition parties to appeal to voters across cleavages. The demand for change and democracy tends to rise across cleavages under dominant party systems. Thus, the regime mobilizing strategy becomes one of the most crucial strategies that opposition parties can utilize. Opposition parties have constant incentives to change competitive dynamics by mobilizing new cleavages that cut across the incumbent's electoral coalition. When this strategy is successful, opposition parties cleave the ruling parties' winning coalition and establish a foothold in a partisan competition (Greene, 2008, p.29). In other words, cross-cutting cleavages allow opposition parties to criticize the incumbent as

authoritarian and corrupt while promoting themselves as a democratic alternative to the ruling party. This strategy allows opposition parties to differentiate themselves from dominant parties without radicalizing their party programs and alienating median voters. A well-known example of utilizing a regime mobilizing strategy was used by the Mexican opposition party, the PAN, under the leadership of Fox in the 2000 elections. Greene (2007) states that Fox solidified his reformist credentials by campaigning heavily and effectively on the issue of democratic change, which he defined as turnover. Fox's campaign became widely recognized for its emphasis on change, and he convinced democracy-seeking voters that his party had a better chance to win against the ruling party than the other opposition party, the PRD (Greene, 2007, pp. 234-244; Greene, 2008, p. 16).

As evident in this chapter, intersectionality literature and party competition literature offer new avenues to explore how political parties utilize women's intersectional identities as an electoral competition strategy. In the following chapters, I tailor these works of literature and apply them to the case of Turkey to contribute scholarly understanding of how parties leverage intersectionality.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. (Un)veiling as a Symbol in Partisan Politics: Women's Representation, Intersectionality, and Social Cleavages in Polarized Turkey

Women's clothing, political rights, and participation has been a subject of controversy in Turkey since the beginning of the modernization process in late Ottoman Era. In the early years of the Republic, the Kemalist elites instrumentalized women's political rights to gain legitimacy in the eye of the West and used unveiled, modern, working women image as symbols of modernization. After the 1980s, due to the headscarf ban in public places and the rise of Islamist parties, the headscarf has become a polarizing issue in politics. Since the 1980s, party competition has been shaped by the secularist-Islamist divide. In such context, veiling or unveiling of women has become a significant signifier of religious orientation in partisan politics and determined stereotypes associated with women's intersecting identities. The first section of this chapter focuses on scholarly explanations of women's underrepresentation and intersectionality in Turkey. The second section presents social cleavages that determine vote choice, and the last section focuses on the symbolic politics of veiling and unveiling in partisan politics in Turkey.

3.1.1. Women's Representation and Intersectionality in Turkey

Women are underrepresented in Turkey. Currently, the percentage of women in the Turkish Parliament is 17.33 percent.[17] The picture at the local level is even worse; women

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[17] Data on women in the national parliament of Turkey. Parline: The IPU's Open Data Platform. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://data.ipu.org/node/177/data-on-women

constitute only 3.2% of mayors and 10.7 percent of councilors after the last local election in 2019 (Kabasakal Arat, 2020). Contemporary scholarship on women's representation identifies three groups of domestic factors that impact the supply and demand side of women's descriptive representation: cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors (Paxton et al., 2020). These factors play a role in women's representation in Turkey.

Cultural attitudes towards women's leadership influence women's decisions to run in elections and their electability. Scholars pay attention to the history of women's political participation and gender norms in a given political context to analyze the effect of cultural factors. Although Turkey is located in the Middle East, the history of women's political participation and activism in Turkey is different from the rest of the region. Since the late Ottoman era, women actively took part in the modernization[18] of Turkey and reached the highest representation rate among European countries in 1935. However, Turkey lost this momentum in 1946 after transitioning to multiparty elections. Moreover, the Kemalist single-party regime did not combat patriarchy but instead replaced the Islamic patriarchy with a secular one (Arat, 1994, p.59). These reforms created a new ideal Turkish woman image as modern, educated, and loyal to the regime and affirmed maternity as supreme

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[18] Turkey has been in a modernization process since the 18th century, and women have been an integral part of the Turkish modernization project. All reforms aiming at disintegrating Turkish social structures from the Ottoman and Islamist past, were significantly important in terms of their impact on Turkish women. The modernization of Turkey led by Atatürk and Kemalists in the early republican era was a magnificent transformation of formal and informal structures of society. Following the war of independence, the new government in Ankara started to take steps towards secularization and westernization of the Turkish state. In 1924 the caliphate was abolished as the first step of secularization, and other important reforms followed. Some of the reforms were closing and banning medreses and tekkes. Also, the Gregorian calendar and international calendar were adopted in 1925. More importantly, the Civil code was replaced with Sharia rules in 1926, and the Latin alphabet instead of Arabic was adopted. All these reforms aimed to disengage with Ottoman cultural life, westernize, secularize the Turkish state and society. (Zurcher, 2004).

female duty (Drechselová, 2020, p.48). Thus, patriarchal gender norms hold strong in modern Turkey despite these modernization efforts.

During the Westernization process in the early Republican era, women were attributed to a significant role by Kemalist leaders. The Kemalist single-party regime organized and instrumentalized women's activism to use it as a modernization force and to legitimize the regime in the eyes of the West, and suppressed it when women's demands conflicted with the interest of the new regime (Tekeli, 1982; 1996; Arat, 1997; Zihnioglu, 2003). As a part of modernization reforms, Turkish women were gradually granted electoral rights between 1930 and 1935. In 1935, women represented 4.5% of deputies (Drechselová, 2020, p.49). However, after transitioning to multi-party elections in 1946, women's representation dropped to 0.3% and remained lower than 5% until 2007.[19]

Since the 1980s, women's issues have become a part of public discussions due to the efforts of new feminists, the so-called second feminist wave.[20] The second feminist wave consists of three simultaneous movements: the leftist feminist movement, the Islamist feminist movement, and the Kurdish feminist movement (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). These identities represent the main intersecting identities of women in Turkey. Thanks to these

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[19] Data on women in the national parliament. Turkey. (2018). Parline: The IPU's Open Data Platform. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://data.ipu.org/node/177/data-on-women

[20] There are two waves of Republican Feminism in Turkey: The first wave feminist started from the 1890s under the Ottoman Empire and continues under the new Turkish Republic. The second wave started as a critic of the first wave by the 1980s. According to second wave feminists, Kemalist discourse provided legitimacy for women's claim to equality with men in the public realm and those who have access to that realm could benefit from this privileged equality. However, this artificial equality in the public realm has not transformed the hierarchical relationships between men and women in the private realm. Besides modernist reforms, as second generation feminists point out, the state was [and still is] patriarchal, endorsing and legitimizing patriarchal institutions such as the family, the media, and the education system. (Arat, 1997, p.103).

women's movements, especially the Kurdish feminist movement, women's presence in politics has gradually increased since 2010 (Adak, 2019). Yet, the progress is slow due to other factors negatively impacting women's representation.

Despite the relatively early achievement in political rights and representation, gender bias against women's leadership remains strong and negatively affects the political representation of women in Turkey. Between 1994 and 2009, approximately 60% of the Turkish society agreed or strongly agreed that men make better political leaders than women do; this percentage increased to 68% in 2014 and decreased to 51% in 2020 (World Value Survey, n.d.) These indicators have striking implications for women's representation. As Eagly and Karau (2002) point out in their Role Congruity Theory, female leaders have disadvantages due to the perception of women as possessing less leadership ability than men. Therefore, women face greater difficulty attaining leadership roles and being recognized as effective in these roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p.589). As in many other countries, studies about women in Turkey show that politics is highly male-dominated and considered as men's expertise (Joppien, 2019; Massicard & Watts, 2019; Uysal & Oguz, 2010; Sumbas, 2020). In recent years, the conservative gender climate based on traditional norms of family and motherhood in reference to religion under the Islamist AKP has further undermined gender equality in society (Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017). As Matland and Tezcür (2011) argue, the prevailing cultural expectations about women's role in Turkey and women's relative lack of human capital discourage women from participating in politics (Matland & Tezcür, 2011, p.383). Moreover, a study finds that compared to less educated women, more educated women in

Turkey do not prefer being a political party member as they are more aware of prevailing barriers and reluctant to lose their energy in politics unless they come from politically active families (Kasapoglu & Özerkmen, 2011) or participate in politics as proxies of their male relatives (Gunes-Ayata, 1995). Therefore, socioeconomic factors are as important as culture and gender bias in women's presence in Turkish politics.

Socioeconomic factors affect women's political participation and the supply of potential women politicians. Scholars emphasize that gender inequality in terms of access to education, participation in the labor force, unequal economic power, and violence against women prevent women from running for office (Adak, 2019; Drechselová, 2020; Joppien, 2019; İlyas Tolunay, 2014). Although the modernization project in the early Republican era remarkably transformed socioeconomic factors for some of the women, those who benefited from these reforms were limited in numbers. A significant number of women who lived in cities obtained access to education and work and internalized modernity. However, most of the Turkish women who lived in the rural parts of Turkey or at the peripheries of big cities could not benefit from modernists' reforms (Arat, 1997, p.103). Since the early years of the Republic, the number of women in higher education has increased from 0.73% in 1914 to 47.5% in 2019. But, rural women are still the most underrepresented group in the higher education system in Turkey. (Çakıroğlu Çevik & Gunduz Hosgor, 2020, p.49-54).

Moreover, female labor force participation continues to remain as low as 34.4% in 2019. As of 2017, the percentage of women in senior and middle management positions in

companies is only 17.3%, while 56,1% of the women work in the service sector.[21] These numbers indicate that women are underrepresented in managerial positions as well. Furthermore, in recent years sexual violence against women in Turkey has skyrocketed and targeted women across all ages and social backgrounds. In 2022, 579 women were victims of femicide or suspicious death, while the total number of women killed by a current or ex-partner/spouse was 410 in 2020[22]. Overall, Turkey ranked 130th among 149 countries in terms of gender equality in 2019[23]. Indeed, many female politicians experience discrimination as a result of shouldering responsibilities to provide care for children, families, and the elderly and as a result of the dominant social conviction that politics is not for women (Alemdar et al., 2020). As gender scholars state, all these gender inequality indicators show that women's social and economic status are in a downward trend due to the overwhelming impact of the ideological reshaping of gender relations along the lines of a neoconservative and neoliberal economic agenda of the AKP (Adak, 2019; Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017; Arat, 2021; Cindoglu & Unal, 2017; Kandiyoti, 2016). Altogether, these socioeconomic factors are likely to prevent women from running for office.

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[21] For more data on this, see Turkish Statistical Institute. March 6, 2019. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Istatistiklerle-Kadin-2018-30707

[22] For more data on this, see Kadin Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, Veriler. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from http://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/kategori/veriler

[23] For more data on this, see UN Women Turkey. (2019). Brochure on UN Women's work in Turkey. UN Women, Europe and Central Asia. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2019/08/UNWomen_StrategicNoteBrochurePRINT_compressed.pdf

On the demand side, institutional factors determine the demand for women candidates. As the gatekeepers of political office, political parties play a significant role in women's representation, and their demand for women candidates is shaped by the electoral systems under which they operate. At the national level, Turkey has a proportional representation (PR) electoral system, with closed lists across 87 electoral districts (The Law on Parliamentary Elections, n.d.). Individuals vote for a party list in their province, and electoral campaigns revolve around national party platforms and party leaders (Matland & Tezcür, 2011). In the local elections, while metropolitan and district mayors are elected through FPDP electoral system, municipal and provincial councilors are elected with a closed-list PR system The Law on Local Administrations and Neighborhood Headquarters and Elections of Boards of Elders, n.d.). Although the benefits of closed-list PR systems for women's election is well-established in the literature, the low number of women's representation in both national and local legislatures indicates that other factors interact with the closed-list PR system and create unfavorable results for women's representation in Turkey.

Scholars studying women in politics in Turkey argue that the low level of women's representation may result from the list placements of women in major parties with high party magnitude. Marschall et al. (2016) find that the percentage of female winners is less than half the percentage of female candidates. According to the authors, this difference can be attributed to party magnitude and list placements. While major right-wing parties with high party magnitude tend to have lower shares of female candidates compared to smaller parties, these parties are also more likely to place women lower on their list in the districts

where they are more likely to win compared to districts dominated by leftist parties (Marschall et al., 2016, p.44). In addition to these factors, demographic characteristics such as low education level and the prevalence of traditional gender norms negatively impact the level of women's representation at local levels (Marschall et al., 2016, p.46). Similarly, Alemdar et al. (2020) find that the overwhelming majority of female politicians were listed in low rows that were impossible to be elected, and those candidates who were able to get elected, or were nominated from a better ranking, mentioned that men in the party made it possible (p.8).

Moreover, candidate selection methods adopted by political parties bring about different results for women's inclusion in politics. In Turkey, political parties are highly centralized, and usually, top-level party elites make the last decision on who will get into party lists and their placements (Bayraktar & Altan, 2012; Joppien, 2019). Although some parties rarely hold primary elections, the competition between candidates mainly takes place in the capital city, Ankara, for local and national elections (Bayraktar & Altan, 2012, pp. 23-24). As women in politics literature inform us, centralized candidate selection procedures are more likely to increase women's representation than decentralized candidate selection methods, especially in cultural contexts in which gender bias holds strong (Luhiste, 2015; Medeiros et al., 2019). However, the Turkish case seems contradictory to these findings. Therefore, the picture in Turkey is more likely to be explained by gendered informal rules of candidate selections (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2016).

Gendered political networks prevail in Turkey. Drechselová (2020) finds that having intraparty networks, both at local and national levels as well as bringing campaign finance to the party, are decisive factors for being elected as candidates. As in many other countries, parties tend to select candidates from intraparty networks. Women are more likely to be selected through a nomination by male party elites with strong ties in national headquarters and power over local party units. (Drechselová, 2020). However, women usually lack these networks and thus are less likely than men to be included in party lists at winnable places (p.99-100). Moreover, informal rules of candidate selection allow local party elites to resist top-down formal rules regarding women's inclusion, especially in local elections. As it is harder for headquarters to have necessary local knowledge for each district and candidate when compared to national elections, they rely on information from local party elites, which enable these elites to use political conjuncture, conservative sensitivities, or lack of qualified women candidates as an excuse for excluding women. Thus, women candidates usually find out at the last minute that their names are either moved lower or removed from the lists altogether (Drechselová, 2020, p.101).

Furthermore, the absence of legislated gender quotas at both local and national levels constitutes another institutional reason for women's underrepresentation in Turkey. Although most of the political parties in Turkey have formal or informal provisions regarding women's representation, these are often disregarded in practice (Cansun, 2012; Değirmenci, 2015; Drechselová, 2020). Right-wing parties, the MHP and the AKP, are reluctant to introduce any party gender quota officially (Cansun, 2012), but the AKP has a de facto rule of including at least a woman in candidate lists on an electable seat, who is

usually the head of its local women's branch (Drechselová, 2020). On the other hand, parties on the left, the secular CHP and the pro-Kurdish HDP, have voluntary party quotas, although the percentage of the quotas varies across these parties. The main opposition and the party of modernization, the CHP, adopted a 33% voluntary quota, which concerns only 15% of the candidates on the candidate lists, but the targeted percentage has not been met yet. However, the pro-Kurdish Party, the HDP, has a gender quota of 50% along with a co-chair system, which is a joint presidency by a woman and man across all the leadership positions (Burç, 2019; Sahin-Mencutek, 2016). As of the last election in 2018, 41.7% of HDP's MPs are women, while the percentages of the women MPs in the two biggest parties, the AKP and the CHP, are 18.82% and 11,85%, respectively.[24] Indeed, scholars argue that the HDP and its predecessor pro-Kurdish parties have had a contagion effect and played the leading role in the increase of women's representation in the 2010s (Sahin-Mencutek, 2016; Burç, 2019). Thus, the HDP example indicates that if implemented effectively, gender quotas can increase women's political presence in Turkey, especially because Matland and Tezcür (2011) find no significant voter bias against women's candidacy. Along the same lines, Yildirim and Kocapinar analyze and find that women's underrepresentation in local elections in Turkey is mainly due to party bais as parties nominate women in places where they are very likely to lose (Yildirim & Kocapinar, 2019, p.241).

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[24]For more on this see, Distribution of Deputies of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://www5.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.dagilim

These findings point out that one of the primary reasons for women's underrepresentation in both Turkey's national and local elections is likely to be party bias. In addition, gender bias, democratic backlash, conservatism, informal institutions, socioeconomic factors, and lack of a legislated gender quota are likely to be detrimental to women's political presence despite the fact that the PR electoral system and formal candidate selection methods are likely to be favorable for women's inclusion. However, a more nuanced explanation of women's representation in Turkey requires intersectionality research to elucidate who are those women that are more likely to be selected by party elites and why they are selected.

The concept of intersectionality is quite relevant to the context of Turkey and is a valuable tool for analyzing the multidimensional oppression of women in the country (Mutluer, 2019; Ayata & Tütüncü, 2008; Göker & Şimga, 2017). The contemporary feminist movement in Turkey, which consists of the leftist, Islamist, and Kurdish feminist movements, presents the main intersecting identities of women in Turkey (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). While Kemalist feminists and leftist feminists are mostly white Turkish women who are relatively modern, well-educated, and belong to the upper-middle class, Islamist and Kurdish women have experienced oppression differently than these groups. As two marginalized minorities, Islamist women and Kurdish women have faced multiple barriers and political violence, and they have expressed these multidimensional oppressions within the women's movements starting from the 1980s.

Islamist women problematized the headscarf ban in universities and government offices as a violation of freedom of religion, and women's right to education and employment (Kabasakal Arat, 2020), while Kurdish women, who are the most affected by the burden of conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military since the 1990s, organized to defend their rights as Kurds and women (Kabasakal Arat, 2020). Both Kurdish and Islamist women have played significant roles in the political sphere since the 1990s. As the Islamist movement was co-opted by the AKP (Tuğal, 2009), Islamist women couldn't translate their activism into parliamentary representation. In contrast, Kurdish women have been the frontrunners of women in Turkish politics.

Against this backdrop, these multiple identities have constructed distinctive experiences for women in Turkey and led to the emergence of stereotypes associated with these women. As a result, women's identities have become a subject of symbolic politics regarding social cleavages and partisan politics in Turkish politics. Thus, applying intersectionality as a methodological tool to analyze differences in Turkish politics provide fruitful findings and enhances our understanding of intersectional symbolic inclusion as an electoral competition strategy. The next section summarizes historical and contemporary social cleavages and polarization in Turkey.

3.1.2. Social Cleavages and Polarization in Turkey

With its roots deep in the socio-cultural and territorial legacy of the Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey was founded as a diverse country. Based on this past, the main cleavages that occurred by the beginning of Ottoman modernization continued in the early

Republican era. With the transition to democracy and the introduction of multiparty elections in 1950, these cleavages have become the main determinants of voting behavior in Turkey for decades.

One of the most agreed-upon frameworks that explain voting behavior in Turkey is Serif Mardin's (1973) center-periphery framework. According to this framework, Turkey inherited the socio-cultural cleavages of the Ottoman Empire in which ruling elites, such as military and judiciary bureaucrats, state-led capitalist class, and intellectuals, constitute the center, while parochial, traditional, ethnic, and religious groups constitute the periphery. Mardin (1973) argues that this divide shapes the party system and the electoral competition in Turkey. The center constituencies are characterized by having a higher level of education, being upper-middle class, and having Western and secularist lifestyles. These constituencies vote for the CHP and other central-left parties. In contrast, the peripheral constituencies are religious, lower-class populations that mostly live in rural Turkey and have a low level of education. The periphery supports central-right parties (Aytaç, 2020).

In addition to center-periphery cleavage, the right-left ideological division became one of the main cleavages that determined voting behavior in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the military intervention in 1980 redesigned Turkey's political, economic, and social structures and institutions, including the electoral system. Thus, these new socio-cultural and economic dynamics and institutions have shaped existing cleavages in the last four decades and created multilayered factors determining voters' party choice in elections, such as secularism versus Islamism and Turkish nationalism versus Kurdish nationalism.

In the 1990s, antisystem sentiments of socially and economically-excluded groups led to the rise of Islamist parties, Turkish Nationalist Right, and pro-Kurdish parties (Esmer, 2002). Ethnic and religious parties have received significant electoral support from poorer urban and rural populations. Thus, the major social and political cleavages between the Alevi and Sunni Muslims, Turks and Kurds, and Islamists and secularists intensified and created a highly fragmented party system during the 1990s. (Gunes-Ayata & Ayata, 2002). In 2002, a newly founded Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, AKP), won the majority of the seats in the parliament and has been ruling Turkey since then. In its early years in power, the AKP has appealed to various social groups: Islamists, conservatives, central-right voters, conservative Kurds, and liberals. Under the early AKP governments, economic voting further complicated the voting behavior in Turkey. Voters with more positive economic evaluations have voted for the AKP regardless of socio-demographic factors, ideological self-positioning, and partisanship (Aytaç, 2020). Moreover, starting from 2013, the AKP has taken an authoritarian turn, and the democratic backlash has led to the emergence of a new social cleavage, namely pro-democracy versus pro-authoritarianism (Selçuk & Hekimci, 2020; Konda, 2019).

Studies on social cleavages and voting behavior in Turkey indicate that identities are crucial in voters' decision-making. Among others, the Turkish-Kurdish cleavage and Secular-Islamist cleavage have been two main determinants of voting behavior. In addition, there is an Alevi-Sunni cleavage among Muslim people (Gunes-Ayata & Ayata, 2002). Moreover, the recent authoritarian turn under the AKP government has created a new pro-

democracy versus pro-authoritarianism polarization between democracy supporters who vote for opposition parties and supporters of Erdogan and the AKP regime. Today, this new polarization overlaps with the secularist-islamist divide and shapes electoral competition between the Islamist AKP and the secularist CHP in Turkey. In the next section, I will explain the secularist-islamist divide and the symbolic politics of veiling that is at the center of this divide.

3.1.1.1.   Symbolic politics of (Un)veiling The Secularist-Islamist Divide, and Partisan Polarization in Turkey

During the modernization process in the early republican era, Kemalist leaders attributed significant roles to women. (Tekeli, 1982; 1996; Arat, 1997; Zihnioglu, 2003). The Kemalist modernization project portrayed women as Westernized, modern, and professional and promoted them as the symbols of the new nation-state, both internally and externally (Aslan, 2020, p.392). As a part of these efforts, Kemalists initiated unveiling campaigns (Adak, 2022). As they perceived the veil as an indicator of submissiveness and imagery of the old and backward Ottoman era, they promoted unveiled women in educational and professional settings in propaganda posters, lifestyle magazines, or in beauty contests organized by a national newspaper (Adak, 2022; Shissler, 2004).

In addition, women's political participation and activism were instrumentalized by the Kemalists to legitimize the regime in the eyes of the West. As a result, women in Turkey were gradually granted political rights and included in politics. However, after transitioning to multi-party elections in 1946, women's representation dropped to 0.3% and remained lower than 5% until 2007. Currently, the percentage of women in the Turkish

Parliament is 17.33% (Data on women in national parliament n.d.). The picture at the local level is even worse; women constitute only 3.2% of mayors and 10.7% of councilors after the last local election in 2019 (Kabasakal Arat 2020).

The secularist-Islamist divide has impacted women's political participation in Turkey as it has shaped party politics since transitioning to competitive elections. In the 1980s, public debate around veiling started to become a political issue as a result of a ban on the headscarf in public institutions, which meant exclusion for veiled women from the public sphere, including universities. In the 1990s, Islamist parties owned the issue of the headscarf ban and used veiled women imagery as a counter-symbol to contest Kemalist ideology and promoted veiling as self-empowerment of Muslim women (Aslan, 2022; Göle, 2003). In this period, antisystem Islamist parties achieved remarkable electoral success, and one of these parties became a coalition partner in 1996. In 1997, however, the coalition government was forced to resign due to a military memorandum, a so-called "postmodern coup" against the anti-secularist threat in the country (Aydin & Taskin, 2014). In 1999, the first headscarved member was elected as a deputy from an Islamist Party but was prevented from taking her oath because of wearing a headscarf in the Parliament.[25] Against this backdrop, the headscarf ban has taken a central role in the electoral competition between secularist and Islamist parties.

In 2002, an Islamist party, the AKP, came to power, which further exacerbated the secularist-Islamist divide, as secularists had been concerned about drifting apart from the

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[25] For more on Merve Kavakci incident, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merve_Kavakc%C4%B1

modernization reforms and direction toward Islamization in the country under AKP governments (Aydin-Duzgit, 2019, p.17). In 2007, when the parliament was about to elect an Islamist candidate whose wife wore a headscarf as the President of the Republic, mass rallies called "Republics Rallies" took place across the big cities. The main motive of the protesters was to prevent the government from altering secularism and turning Turkey into an Islamist state. Meanwhile, the AKP has repeatedly referred to the headscarf ban in its electoral campaigns in the last twenty years.[26] Consequently, the divide between seculars and Islamists has deepened and become one of the dominant cleavages in contemporary Turkey, and the headscarf has become the symbol of this division.

Today, Turkey ranks third among the countries with the highest mass-partisan polarization with negative sentiments towards the opposing party, i.e., negative partisanship (Lauka, McCoy, and Firat, 2018). Research conducted in 2019 on polarization finds that Turkish society is divided on secularist versus conservative values, which is the determinant of people's voting behavior in some parts of Turkey. (Konda 2019). Accordingly, a high number of secularists, who are more educated, young, and metropolitan, belong to the middle and upper class, and have a modern lifestyle, have said that they will never vote for AKP. Similarly, most of the conservatives, who are less educated and more religious, are from rural/small city backgrounds, with traditional

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[26] To see an example of AKP's Veiling Ban Campaign Commercial During 2015 national elections see://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXHMts

lifestyles, and belong to the lower and middle classes, have said that they would never vote for the CHP (Konda, 2019, p.5).

These individual differences overlap with regional divisions as well. About 70 percent of the Aegean region have identified themselves as secularists, whereas in the East and South East of Turkey, only about 30 percent and about 50 percent of the Black Sea region have identified as so. Numbers appear to be in the opposite direction when people were asked about whether they identified as conservatives. On the other hand, about 70 percent of the East and South East and about 50 percent of central Turkey have said that women should veil, while people who say that women should veil remain around 20 to 30 percent in the Aegean region (Nisanci, 2023).

Such regional differences in attitudes regarding secularism, conservatism, and veiling have manifested themselves in the election results in the last two decades. Although the AKP has dominated elections in Turkey since 2002, the vote share of the party in secularist districts has remained remarkably lower than their national average (Tosun, 2010). The AKP has consolidated the central-right votes in Central and Middle Anatolia as well as the Black Sea Region. Yet, the CHP still holds the competitive advantage in the elections in the provinces of the Western and Mediterranean coastline from Thrace to Hatay (Konda, 2017).

The democratic backlash under the AKP governments in the last decade has further divided voters of these two parties. Pro-democracy voters who vote for the CHP support parliamentary democracy and democratic values, whereas pro-authoritarianism voters

support Erdogan's single-man rule under the new presidential system (Konda, 2019; Selçuk & Hekimci, 2020; Somer, 2022). This divide was obvious in the result of the 2017 Constitutional Referendum on changing the parliamentary system into a strong presidential system. Referendum results indicate that in the regions where the CHP is strong, the "No" vote rates and the turnout rates were high, and almost all of the CHP voters said "No" to constitutional change (Figures 1 and 2). Similarly, most of the "No" voters identified themselves as modern and less religious, and all of the "No" voters said "no" to the headscarf status (Konda, 2017). Conversely, almost all of the AKP supporters who primarily identify themselves with conservative values and lifestyles voted "Yes" in the referendum (Figures 1 and 2).

These indicators suggest that the new democracy-authoritarian polarization overlaps with the secularist-Islamist divide in Western cities of contemporary Turkey. Such polarization has consequences for women's political participation since veiling or unveiling has become one of the most important signifiers of religious orientation, loaded with partisan symbols and determined stereotypes associated with women's intersecting identities in distinctive ways. Thus, in Turkey, partisan polarization between supporters of the AKP and the CHP creates incentives for parties to leverage women's gender and religious identities as an electoral competition strategy. Next, I will present a theoretical framework to explain this strategy.

Figure 1 Yes/No Distribution of the 2017 Constitutional Referendum by Party Preference

Yes/No Vote Distribution by Political Party Preference
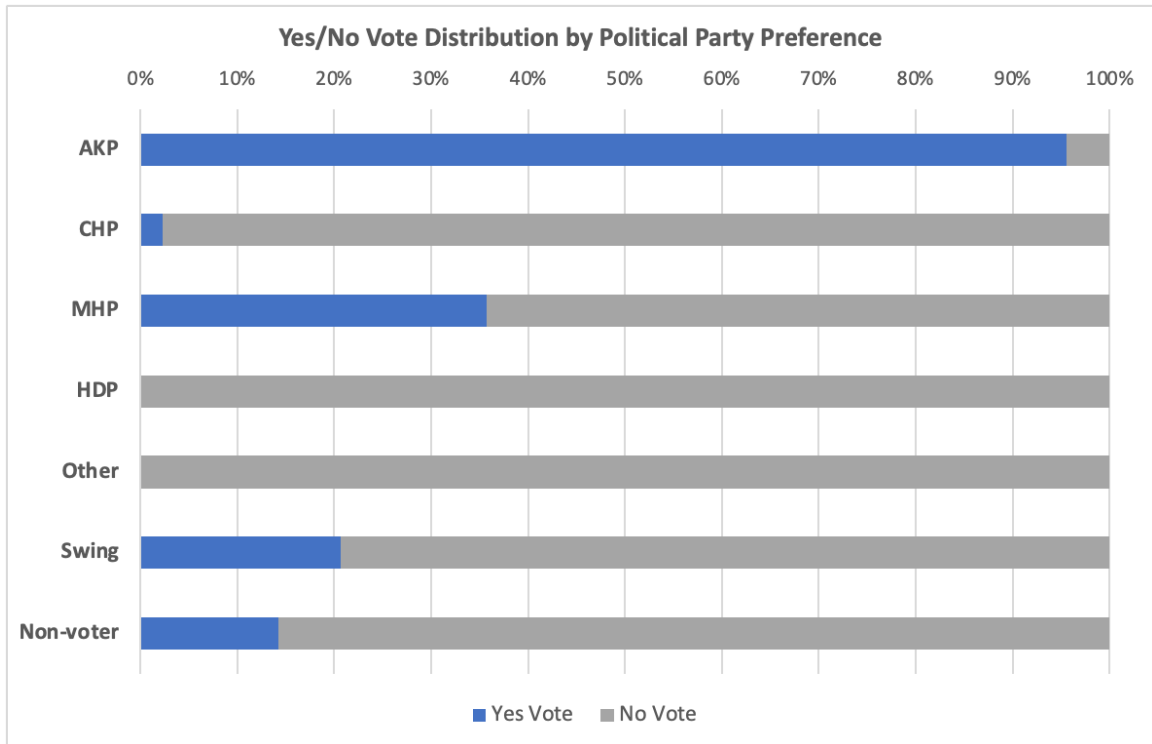
Source: KONDA April'17 Barometer

Figure 2 Lifestyle Identification of Yes/No Voters

Yes/No Voters' Lifestyle Choices
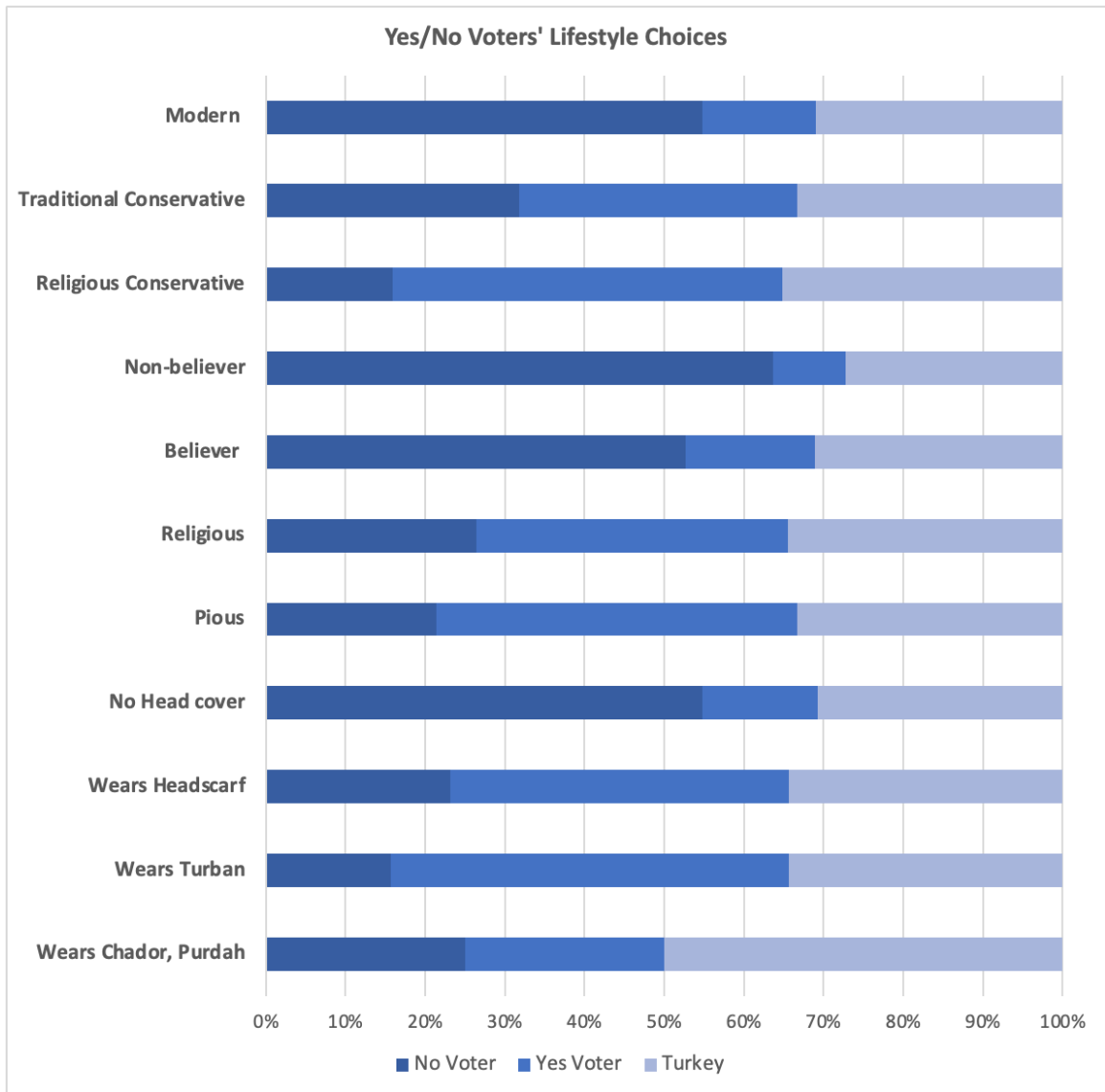
Source: KONDA April'17 Barometer

CHAPTER 4

4.1. Theory of Intersectionality as an Electoral Competition Strategy

4.1.1. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The history of secularist-Islamist polarization in Turkey raises questions about how it influences political party elites' attitudes toward the inclusion of women with different religious orientations across Turkey's diverse regions. Existing literature suggests that male elites strategically increase women's representation to advance their power. I argue that the Islamist AKP strategically nominates secular-appearing women to leverage their intersecting identities in races where high negative partisan polarization with secularist sentiments against this party is the main determinant of vote choice, and the motivation behind this strategy is to attract voters from the other side of partisan polarization.

The incentives that male elites have to leverage women's intersecting identities depend on several features of the context, including regime type, partisan polarization, and electoral systems. First, regime type shapes the competition conditions and the opposition parties' chance to win elections (Diamond, 2002; Levitsky & Way, 2010). Second, partisan polarization strengthens partisan identities (Lauka et al., 2018; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021) and incentivizes party elites to apply symbolic politics in order to appeal to voters emotionally and mobilize them by employing symbolic practices in highly polarized societies (Aslan, 2022). Third, when these conditions occur within electoral systems that

generate incentives to cultivate Personal Vote (PV),[27] nominating the right candidate becomes a crucial part of parties' electoral competition strategies. Therefore, I argue, depending on the electoral contexts, these factors shape political elites' attitudes toward women's inclusion and create various incentives for party elites to leverage the inclusion of women with intersecting identities.

In political contexts in which women's identities symbolize social cleavages that are decisive in voting behavior, the decision to include these women or not provides party elites with a valuable tool as parties can signal to voters about their ideological and policy positions through their choice of candidates. For example, in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes (CARs), in which democratic backsliding gives rise to democracy-authoritarianism polarization (Selçuk & Hekimci, 2020; Lauka et al., 2018; Somer, 2022), increasing women's representation allows governments to mimic democracy (Valdini, 2019). I argue that the same logic applies to opposition parties, too, since presenting themselves as democratic alternatives to ruling parties and mobilizing demand for change as being more inclusive becomes one of the most crucial strategies that opposition parties can utilize (Greene, 2002; 2008). Moreover, when signaling democracy, women's intersecting identities play a role, too, because the ethnic, racial, and religious identities of

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[27] The personal vote refers to the share of electoral support, which originates in candidates' personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and records (Cain et al., 2013, as cited in Poyet, 2021, p.1) The personal vote can be found in both SMD and PR systems to varying degrees. The level of the personal vote tends to be high in systems under several conditions. These conditions are SMD with inclusive candidate selection that parties cannot control ballot composition, in systems lacking vote pooling, in systems where voters cast more than one vote for the party, fraction, or candidate(s), or one vote to any member on the party list, and in closed-list PR systems with low magnitude (Clucas and Valdini, 2015, 81-82).

women may send distinct information shortcuts to different groups of voters, depending on how partisan identities overlap with social cleavages and polarization in a given society.

Also, candidates' visibility is key to the strategy of utilizing women's identities, and thus, it requires an electoral system that generates Personal Vote (PV). In electoral systems prone to generate PV, the strategic value of candidates' identities becomes vital as parties can send information shortcuts to the electorate through candidates' visible identities. Political situations such as those found in Turkey, where women's secularist and Islamist identities lie at the heart of political contention, show clearly how women's gender and religious orientation are intertwined in terms of symbolic politics. During the 2019 Mayoral election campaign, secular-appearing women mayoral candidates of the authoritarian and Islamist AKP, who ran in the secularist CHP's strongholds, emphasized their secular appearance and identified themselves as an "Ataturk's woman" or a "Republic's woman," expressions that appreciate Kemalist reforms for the emancipation and westernization of Turkish women including unveiling the female body. They also presented AKP's choice of running with a woman candidate as a sign of commitment to democracy and argued that those who are concerned about democratic backlash and Ataturk's principles should support the AKP.[28] These statements illustrate that the secular

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[28] Ayda Mac. "Ayda Mac (AK Parti Karşıyaka Belediye Başkan Adayı)." Interviewed by Burak Cilasun. *Rota Siyaset,* Ben TV. March 12, 2019..https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6aFwzT9Vlo; Melek Eroglu. Interviewed by Asli Eren. Gunaydin Ege. Sonsoz TV. February 21, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/egedesonsozcom/videos/409908296245368/; Özgül Özkan Yavuz, Interviewed by Saynur Tezel. *Haber Global.* Haber Turk. March 15, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vm1EKBqcAY

appearances of these women are meant to signal to voters who are concerned about the democratic backlash and secularist lifestyle choices under the AKP.

Moreover, although opposition parties in CARs are less likely to win elections due to constant unfair competition and polarization (Levitsky & Way, 2002; Reuter & Remington), the competitiveness of a party varies at district levels. Opposition parties can also dominate local elections, where opposition groups, democracy supporters, or marginalized groups are clustered (Harvey, 2016; White, 2012). When opposition party voters are clustered in an electoral district, winning elections in these districts also becomes harder for ruling parties. I argue that when negative partisanship[29] against a party is high in an electoral district, that party will include more women whose identities stereotypically appeal to the dominant constituent in the district to attract voters of the leading party. This is an inevitable choice for a party like the AKP when the impact of veiling on secularist voters in Turkey is considered. Party leaders know that if they nominate a woman wearing a headscarf in CHP strongholds, voters will refuse this candidate immediately.[30] Also, PV generated from the FPTP system of mayoral elections incentivizes the party selectorate to nominate secular women rather than men in secular districts because a male candidate

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[29] Negative partisanship is defined as voting based on hostility toward the opposing party and its leaders. (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019). In other words, negative sentiments toward those identifying with the opposing party determine the vote choice. These sentiments are affective, rather than an ideological, and thus create affective polarization between opposing parties' supporter (Iyengar et al., 2012; Abramowitz & Webster, 2018).
[30] Interview with a woman MP of the AKP, Ankara, June 21, 2022

would need to explain himself to voters as secular and modern, while a secular female candidate would be seen automatically as secular, well-educated, and democratic.[31]

The question is, then, do political elites pay attention to women's intersecting identities and to the symbolic impact of these identities when they nominate women candidates? I argue that party elites pay attention to women's perceived religious orientation and the interaction between these identities and district-level factors in the case of local elections in Turkey. In order to identify such interactions, I apply intersectionality as an analytical tool rather than analyzing women as a single category. Accordingly, I argue that in districts dominated by leftist parties, party elites from all parties will nominate more secular-appearing women than conservative-appearing women and test hypotheses below in the context of Turkey:

H1a: In districts dominated by leftist parties, party elites from all parties will nominate more secular-appearing women than conservative-appearing women

H1b: In districts dominated by leftist parties, the number of secular-appearing women nominations by party elites will be the same as in districts dominated by right-wing parties.

Another question is what electoral gain do parties aim to get from this strategy? I argue that, by selecting secular-appearing women candidates, parties intend to appeal to floating voters who are dissatisfied with the candidate of their own party and would vote

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[31] Interview with former AKP election office worker in multiple cities, Istanbul, July 2021

for another party whose candidate speaks to them because of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religious orientation, as voters would see these candidates as "one of their own."[32] I expect the party selectorate's calculation to be sending two information short-cuts to floating voters with one candidate. The gender axis of their intersecting identity, i.e., women, signals voters about the commitment to democracy, while the secular orientation axis is utilized to signal tolerance[33] for secularist lifestyle choices. As the AKP competes in highly disadvantageous conditions in the CHP strongholds, the party relies on symbolic inclusion to improve the party's image in the eye of secularist voters.

Based on these expectations, I test the following hypotheses in the case of Turkey's mayoral elections:

H2a: In districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high, party elites will nominate more secular-appearing women than they do in districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is low.

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[32] Interview with an MP from the AKP and AKP's Women Branches in the Headquarters, Ankara, June 23, 2022).

[33] Utilizing women to show tolerance is found in the literature about feminine stereotypes associated with women politicians. Valdini (2019) points out that the stereotypical association of women with being more honest, naive, and uninterested in deceit and corruption plays an important role in voters' decision-making. For example, in Chile, women politicians claimed to be non-partisan political outsiders to mobilize voters against the opposition parties (p.44). Valdini argues that this political strategy was effective because the voters did indeed assume that women are political outsiders. In addition, Valdini conducts an original survey to present how voters perceive feminine stereotypes in leadership. Accordingly, the most common descriptors for women leaders were "sensitive," "tolerant," and "pacifying/peace-making" (Valdini 2019, p.48-54).

H2b: In districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high, the number of secular-appearing women nominations by party elites will be the same as in districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is low.

However, the CHP party label already signals secularism, and thus, there is no incentive for the CHP elites to appeal to secularist voters by improving party image. Therefore in the case of CHP, I expect CHP elites to nominate less secular-appearing women than the AKP elites.

H3a: In districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high, the CHP elites will nominate less secular-appearing women than the AKP since the party label signals secularism.

H3b: In districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high, the number of secular-appearing women nominations by the CHP elites will be the same as by the AKP.

4.1.2. Case Selection, Method, and Data

I test my theory in the context of Turkey's 2019 Mayoral elections. The mayoral elections in Turkey provide a suitable case for this study because the first-past-the-post system creates incentives to cultivate personal vote, a portion of candidates' votes that they receive because of their personal qualities. Moreover, there is no gender or minority quota legislation—and thus sanction for noncompliance—in Turkey that would motivate parties to recruit women with intersecting identities, as in some Western democracies. Thus,

studying the Turkish mayoral elections enables me to identify incentives of political parties that field women with intersecting identities while controlling for possible positive effects of quota legislation and the PR-list system, a system known for being more women-friendly.

In this research, intersectionality is applied as a methodological[34] approach to studying women's candidacy as an electoral competition strategy. As a subfield of feminist methodology and methods, intersectionality refers to the various ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality intersect in shaping women's social and political experiences. The term emphasizes the mutually constitutive nature of these identity categories. It requires feminist researchers to recognize that gender, as the primary focus of feminist research, interlocks with the other aspects of identities. (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000, "Intersectionality," 2007; The Combahee River Collective, 2014; Junn & Brown, 2008). As the feminist researcher of this study, I recognize the importance of intersectionality in shaping women's experiences and apply it as a methodological approach to analyze women's candidacy as an electoral competition strategy.

In this dissertation, I used an explanatory sequential mixed-method design of quantitative and qualitative methods. To empirically test my hypotheses, I rely on an original district-level dataset of 1734 mayoral election candidates who ran in the 2019 elections in 519 districts of 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey, under the party labels

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[34] Methodologies are defined as rationales for how research should proceed, including the assumptions that underlie the research process, while methods are specific techniques adopted to gather evidence (Tripp & Hughes, 2018, p.241)

of six electorally significant parties, the AKP, the CHP, the MHP, the HDP, the Good Party (IYIP), and the Felicity Party (SP)[35]. In Turkey, provinces are the highest local administrative divisions. There are 81 provinces and 30 of them are metropolitan municipalities. In other words, there are 30 metropolitan municipalities across all seven regions of Turkey. As of 2023, the total number of district municipalities in provinces is 922, and 519 of these districts are metropolitan municipality districts[36]. According to Law Act No 5216 Metropolitan Municipality Law, any province with a population in excess of 750,000 is declared a metropolitan municipality (Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kanunu, 2004). The population in the 30 provinces makes up 77% of the population of the country. The dataset I use in this dissertation includes all 519 districts of all 30 metropolitan municipalities. Comparative statistics of provinces in terms of population, Yes/No Vote share in the 2017 Constitutional Referendum, and percentage of female high school graduation are presented in Appendix E.

The unit of analysis is the district municipality. Also, I combine data on election results of the 2009, 2014, and 2019 local elections, as well as the 2017 Constitutional referendum results at district levels. I obtained all of this data from the Supreme Election Council of Turkey (SEC), which is the official institution that manages elections in

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[35] Since 2018, the ruling AKP and its ally the MHP have entered the election as an electoral alliance, the People's Alliance, while opposition parties has contested this pro-government alliance by forming the Nation Alliance. Parties in Nation Alliance are the CHP, the IYIP, the SP and the DP. To see more on these alliances: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nation_Alliance_(Turkey)

[36] This recent data is obtained from the database of the Ministry of Interior of Turkey. For more detail, see https://www.e-icisleri.gov.tr/Anasayfa/MulkiIdariBolumleri.aspx.

Turkey.[37] To code control variables, I used statistical data from the Turkish Statistical Institute.[38]

The dataset contains the gender identity of all candidates and the religious orientation of women candidates. To construct such a dataset, I coded all of the candidates' gender based on their first names. For unisex names, I utilized a Google search and identified the gender of the candidates. To validate the coding accuracy, I compared the number of women candidates in the dataset with the official total number of women and men released by the SEC. Then I coded women candidates' intersectional identities, that is, candidates' visible religious orientation, based on whether women candidates wore headscarves. To do so, I used Google search to find public visuals of these candidates and coded them as conservative-appearing if the woman wore a headscarf, or as secular-appearing if not. For a detailed description of the dataset, see Appendix A.

I also conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 elites, men and women, from different political parties in Turkey to investigate what motivates political party elites to nominate women with intersecting identities. In addition, I use complementary data of content analysis of local news coverage on candidates mentioned by the interviewees, these candidates' TV interviews during the 2019 mayoral election campaigns, and the party leader's speeches that signal the rival party base when such data is available.

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[37] Supreme Election Council's database, Open Data Portal Https://acik veri.ysk.gov.tr/anasayfa
[38] Turkish Statistical Institue, https://www.tuik.gov.tr/

4.1.3. Sampling Strategy and Interview Data Collection

The party elites were recruited as interviewees according to their roles in the candidate selection process, proximity to the party leader, or whether they experienced a selection process such as running for candidacy or elections. At least one term of election experience within the same party was required as recruitment criteria for the interviewees. Who makes decisions on candidate lists is strongly related to intraparty democracy and how the candidate selection process is held. In parties that use centralized candidate selection methods, the top-level leaders decide who will get into the candidate list (Rahat & Hazan, 2001). In the Turkish case, these parties are the AKP and the MHP. In parties holding primaries, the CHP and the HDP, the candidate selection is a relatively democratic process since most of the party elites— as in the case of the CHP, or all of the members— as in the case of the HDP, have the right to vote for selecting candidates. Therefore, when recruiting interviewees, I aimed to select the top leaders and elites working close to party leaders from these parties.

The case study of this research focuses on local elections, and local elites may influence the centralized decision-making process because they know local dynamics better than party headquarters (Drechselova, 2020). Therefore, I interviewed elites from local party branches as well. The interviewees were mostly from high-profile political elites such as vice presidents, executive board members, mayors, members of the National Assembly of Turkey, heads of women branches of these parties, members of party organizations' election offices, as well as nominees, and those who ran for candidacy but

were not selected as candidates (for a detailed description of interviewees and interviews, see Appendix D.

A snowball sampling method was used to recruit interviewees. Snowball sampling is a suitable sampling strategy in qualitative studies, especially when it serves a reasonable purpose (Robichau & Sandberg, 2022, p.126). One of the primary reasons for using the snowball sampling strategy in this research was to build trust with the interviewees since I conducted these interviews in a highly polarized authoritarian country with political party elites who are typically reluctant to reveal the strategies of their parties and "it is very difficult to get political party elites to talk candidly about their inclusion motives" (Dancygier, 2017, p.13). Snowball sampling enabled me to create a trusting environment with these elites and have them open up about their parties' strategies. I applied a two-step sampling strategy. First, I reached out to a party gatekeeper from each party and asked them to put me in contact with a high-profile elite within their party. Then, I scheduled interviews with those who met the above-mentioned sampling criteria. Next, at the end of each interview, I asked interviewees to recommend other contacts who meet my criteria and requested to initiate the first interaction with them to introduce me. Interviews were conducted until I achieved saturation.

I collected interview data from the electorally relevant parties in contemporary Turkey. These parties are the AKP, the CHP, the HDP, and the IYIP. The interviews were conducted between May and August 2022 in various cities in Turkey: Ankara, the capital city; Istanbul, the biggest metropolitan and the most diverse city; Izmir, the third largest

and the most secular city of Turkey; and Trabzon, one of the regional capitals of the Black Sea region, known for its nationalist and conservative constituents. The interviews were held in Turkish, lasted about an hour to an hour and a half, and were audio-typed if interviewees agreed. In cases when interviewees disagreed with being audio-typed, I took notes during and immediately after the interviews. I transcribed and translated the data myself.

The candidate selection process is known as the secret garden of party politics and the critical stage of electoral strategy. Thus, interviews focused on district-level factors that may play a role in the candidate selection decision-making of party elites and how candidates' gender and intersecting identities may affect these decisions. While quoting from interviews, I chose a pseudonym for each interviewee. Also, I excluded all of the identifiers from the data. Then I transcribed the data verbatim and translated it into English. To increase the validity, I reviewed transcriptions and edited data for accuracy before coding. Then I identified the themes and patterns from each participant's responses, classified these themes thematically, and traced their interactions. Next, I proofread the data against the transcribed data for data verification. The creation of a codebook followed this process. I created the codebook based on the literature on candidate selection, gender stereotypes, and intersectionality. The research questions guided the coding process. In total, there were 203 pages of coded data. Multiple readings of the raw data were done in order to ensure alignment with the codebook. During this process, I updated the codebook as new codes emerged. Although I mostly rely on deductive coding on candidate selection methods, candidates' identities, and district-level factors, interview data regarding party

elites' motivation for nominating secular-appearing women candidates were coded inductively (see Appendix F for more detail on coding strategy). As the research is about intersecting identities and how they are stereotyped and leveraged in electoral contests, I regret that I couldn't escape using stereotypes to describe my interviewees when I discuss their identities.

4.1.4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Methods

The methodological choices that are made for doing this research have strengths and weaknesses. As intersectional dynamics are highly context-dependent due to variations in how voters perceive minority identities in a given cultural context (Mugge, 2016; Mugge & Erzzel, 2016), the selection of a single country as a case increases the internal validity and allows me to keep the electoral system, gender quotas, cultural and socioeconomic factors constant. In other words, the research design allows me to avoid the small-N problem.

However, this dissertation is subject to some data and sampling strategies limitations. As it focuses on a single country and particular competition conditions, the external validity of this research is expected to be low. Thus, the findings of this research should be interpreted cautiously in terms of generalizability. Future research may test the main hypothesis of this study in other cultural contexts and increase the generalizability of findings.

There are also limitations to the dataset I use in quantitative analysis. The sample is limited to the latest mayoral elections to fix the electoral competition conditions since

the level of partisan polarization has increased, and a new polarization emerged after the previous mayoral elections in 2014. The current authoritarianism in Turkey emerged gradually and intensified after the Gezi protests in the summer of 2013 and the vast corruption scandal of December 2013. In 2014, the AKP government increasingly curtailed freedom of expression in mainstream and social media, and repressed the opposition and freedom of assembly. Meanwhile, state institutions have been politicized, including the Supreme Electoral Council (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). Turkey drifted further from democracy as Erdogan consolidated its power following the failed coup attempt in 2016 and changed the parliamentary system into a strong man presidential system in 2017. This gradual authoritarianism is evident in Turkey's annual scores of Freedom House reports. While Turkey was partly free in 2014 (Freedom's Biggest Gains and Losses in 2014, n.d.), the status of the country declined to not free in 2018 (Turkey: Freedom in the World 2018 Country Report, 2018). Simultaneously, partisan and social polarization in Turkey gradually increased, and Turkey has become the third most polarized country in the world (Somer, 2020; Lauka et al., 2018). As polarization over regime change is a crucial component of the argument of this dissertation, I focus on only the 2019 elections instead of including 2014 and 2009 local elections data.

Second, I rely on the original dataset I created by coding the 2019 mayoral election candidates' gender and religious orientations. To code religious orientation, I use candidates' public visuals, which are available online. However, coding the religious orientation of women candidates who ran in the 2014 and 2009 elections has been difficult due to the lack of online presence of many of those candidates. As a result, I could not use

longitudinal data in this analysis. These factors exacerbate the particularistic nature of this study.

Also, the snowball sampling strategy of in-depth interviews limits the representation and randomization of the sample. Elite interviewing is inherently subject to limitations of low representation and a low number of participants as they are hard to access. Yet despite limitations, elite interview data on party elites' strategic behavior toward women's nomination is novel and provides rich and detailed insight into the secret garden of candidate selection. The following two chapters will present the findings of qualitative and quantitative findings.

CHAPTER 5

5.1. Predictors of Nominations of Secular-Appearing Women: A Quantitative
                                       Analyses

In this chapter, I examine the impact of partisan polarization in which women's identities constitute the core of symbolic contestations between two opposing partisan groups on women's nominations. In the last several decades in Turkey, electoral competition has predominantly been shaped by the secularist-Islamist divide, and Turkey has become the third most-polarized country in the world (Lauka et al., 2018). Women's religious identity and symbolic politics of the headscarf lay at the heart of this partisan division. The recent democratic backlash in the country has added yet another layer to this historically-rooted division and complicated the puzzle of intersectional symbolic representation in Turkey's elections. Thus, I apply intersectionality as an analytical tool to empirically test whether party elites pay attention to the interactions between women's intersectional identities and district-level factors.

I also empirically test whether partisan polarization between Islamists and secularists increases the nomination of secular-appearing women by the Islamist AKP, compared to conservative women and women as a single category, in the districts where negative partisanship against the AKP is the main determinant of the vote choice. Further, I apply the same model in the case of CHP to test how these district-level factors affect the strategic behavior of party elites regarding secular-appearing women when competing in

favorable competition conditions and there is no incentive to signal secularist voters with candidates' characteristics as the party label signals secularism.

In addition to polarization, I control for several district-level factors to explore possible alternative explanations. I also compare secular-appearing women's nominations by the Islamist and the secularist party, controlling for district-level factors. The next sections present the empirical strategy and measurements. The chapter concludes with findings of the multivariate models and discussion.

5.1.1. Empirical Strategy and Measurements

To test my hypotheses, I rely on OLS and logistic regression models. I use different dependent variables for three OLS models. All are constructed based on the candidate's gender and religious orientation: the percentage of women candidates, the percentage of secular-appearing women candidates, and the percentage of conservative-appearing women candidates, that is, women who wear headscarves. Because I am interested in the district-level concentration of voters who dislike the AKP due to secularist sentiments, my main independent variable is *the level of secularist negative partisanship against the AKP* measured at the district level. To measure this variable, I combine two indicators: the district data of the "NO" vote rate in the 2017 Constitutional Referendum[39] and the female high school ratio at the district level.

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[39]In 2017, the AKP government held a referendum on approval of constitutional amendments abolishing the office of Prime Minister and the Parliamentary system and introducing a presidential system with a very powerful executive presidency. Results showed that 51% of the voters said yes to the system change, while 49% of the voters voted no. The referendum revealed polarization between pro-democracy versus pro-

The results of the 2017 referendum are a suitable proxy for measuring negative partisanship against the AKP because it was a referendum on the authoritarian rule under the AKP versus a democratic alternative and thus captured the negative feelings towards Erdogan's AKP and authoritarianism. To capture mass negative partisanship at national levels, scholars ask survey participants to rate the party that they strongly dislike (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Lauka et al., 2018; Abramowitz & Webster, 2018; Iyengar et al., 2012). Yet, this question alone is not enough to measure underlying cleavages causing negative feelings toward a party (Lauka et al., 2018). Moreover, it is very costly and time-consuming to gather this sort of data for each district. However, national referendums that ask "Yes" or "No" questions on dividing issues in polarized societies can be indicators of negative partisanship as well as polarization over certain issues, especially if the issue subjected to a referendum is divisive and overlaps with partisan identities in society. Thus, the results of the 2017 referendum are suitable for measuring negative secularist partisanship against the AKP since the voters were asked whether they supported changing the parliamentary system into a strong presidential system. During the referendum campaigns, voters were divided into the "Yes" camp, which supported AKP's conservative authoritarian rule, and the "No" camp, which supported democracy against the personalist rule of Erdogan (Konda, 2019; Selçuk & Hekimci, 2020; Somer, 2022). In other words, it was a referendum on authoritarianism under the AKP versus democracy and thus captured the negative feelings towards Erdogan's AKP and his

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authoritarianism as one of the main cleavages that determine voting behavior in Turkey, along with other historical cleavages. To see more on the 2017 Referendum and Polarization in Turkey (Konda, 2019.)

authoritarian rule. Indeed, survey results indicated that the "No" rates and the turnout rates were high in CHP strongholds, and almost all of the CHP voters said "No" to constitutional change. Conversely, almost all of the AKP supporters who mostly identify themselves with conservative values and lifestyles voted "Yes" in the referendum (Figures 1 and 2 in the previous section).

However, voters who voted "No" in the referendum did not entirely do so due to secularist concerns. For example, in South Eastern provinces of Turkey, the main motive of the HDP base for rejecting AKP is ethnic discrimination, criminalization, and prosecution against Kurds (KONDA, 2019). Therefore, I weighed the "No" vote rate with the district-level female high school ratio since a high level of female education shows commitment to secular, modern, democratic values in Turkey. Next, I standardized the variable to avoid relative differences.

I include district-level control variables in all of the models. I have constructed dichotomous variables for the *AKP stronghold* and the *CHP stronghold*, *HDP Stronghold* and *MHP Stronghold* which take a value of 1 if the party won the last three consecutive elections in 2014 and 2019, and take 0 if not. Next, to capture dominant ideology in remaining districts, I have coded *the Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties* and *Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties* variables, which are dummy variables that take a value of 1 if more than one left-wing party or more than one right-wing party won the last three elections in the district, and 0 if otherwise. To control for district swing between left parties and a right parties, I have coded *Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties*

variables, which are dummy variables that take a value of 1if a district swung between a left party and a right party or vice versa in one of the last three local elections, and take 0 if not. The next control variable is the *incumbent candidate* who ran again in districts. This variable is coded as 1 if an incumbent mayor ran again for the mayoral seat in the 2019 elections and coded as 0 if not. Finally, I include a control variable to measure *Economic Development Level* by using the infant mortality rate at the province levels. Appendix B provides the summary of all variables in multivariate models.

Finally, to further analyze how the likelihood of nominating secular-appearing women changes by the AKP and the CHP regarding each district-level variable, I have run two logistic models. The dependent variables for these logistic regressions are the secular-appearing women candidates by the AKP and the CHP. These variables are dichotomous and take on the value of 1 if the party's candidate is an unveiled woman and 0 if he candidate is a man or conservative woman. Ideally, this analysis would be done by multinominal regression where I would have coded dependent variables categorically as secular-appearing women, conservative-appearing women, and men. But because the number of conservative women in the dataset by each party is very low—4 for the AKP and 2 for the CHP—I ran binomial logistic regressions with dichotomous dependent variables.

The main independent variable in Logistic models is *the level of secularist negative partisanship against the AKP*. I also control for following independent variables, *AKP Strongholds, CHP Strongholds, Incumbent Candidate in District*, and *Economic*

Development Level. However, In the case of the AKP, when I include variables, *HDP Stronghold District, MHP Stronghold District, Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties, Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties, and Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties,* these variables were omitted due to no or a few observation. Similarly, in the case of the CHP, the variables HDP Stronghold District, MHP Stronghold District, Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties, and Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties, were omitted due to no or few observations. Therefore, these variables are excluded from the model. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of candidates' gender who ran in the 2019 mayoral elections from each party. Additionally, Figure 1 and Figure 2 present apparent religious orientations of women mayoral candidates by each party and dominant party affiliation, dominant ideology, or swing category of the districts in which they were nominated to run in the 2019 local elections in all 30 metropolitan cities of Turkey.

Table 1 Number of Women and Men by Party

	Percentages of Women and Men Candidates by Party		Number of Women and Men Candidates by Party		
	Percentages of Women Candidates	Percentages of Men Candidates	Number of Women Candidates	Number of Men Candidates	Total Number of Candidates
AKP	3.9%	96.1%	17	414	431
SP	2.5%	97.5%	13	501	514
MHP	1.1%	98.9%	1	87	88
IYIP	4.8%	95.2%	11	220	231
CHP	5.0%	95.0%	18	345	363
HDP	24.3%	75.7%	26	81	107
Total	5%	95%	86	1648	1734

Source: An Original dataset on 519 districts of 30 metropolitan municipalities and 1734 candidates who ran in the 2019 Mayoral Elections in Turkey.

In the 2019 local elections, only 5% percent of mayoral candidates were women, and 78% of them were secular-appearing women. Most of the secular-appearing women nominated by right-wing parties (the AKP, the IYIP, the MHP) ran in leftist districts, that is, districts that were won by a left-wing party in the last three consecutive mayoral elections in 2009, 2014, and 2019 (Figure 1). Moreover, the majority of these women—17 of 21 women candidates— ran in strongholds of the secular party, the CHP. Especially, Islamist parties (the AKP and the SP) predominantly nominated secular-appearing women

in districts dominated by the secularist CHP. The Islamist AKP nominated 13 secular-appearing women; 10 of them ran across CHP strongholds. Similarly, 6 out of 9 secular-appearing women of the other Islamist party, the SP, ran in the leftist districts; 5 of these districts were CHP strongholds. Almost all of the remaining candidates ran in swing districts that were flipped by a right or left-wing party in at least one of the last three elections. The nationalist and masculine MHP, the "party of men," nominated only one woman for a mayoral seat across 519 electoral districts, and, again, this was a CHP stronghold.

Figure 3 Number of Secular-Appearing Women Candidates by All Parties Across Districts
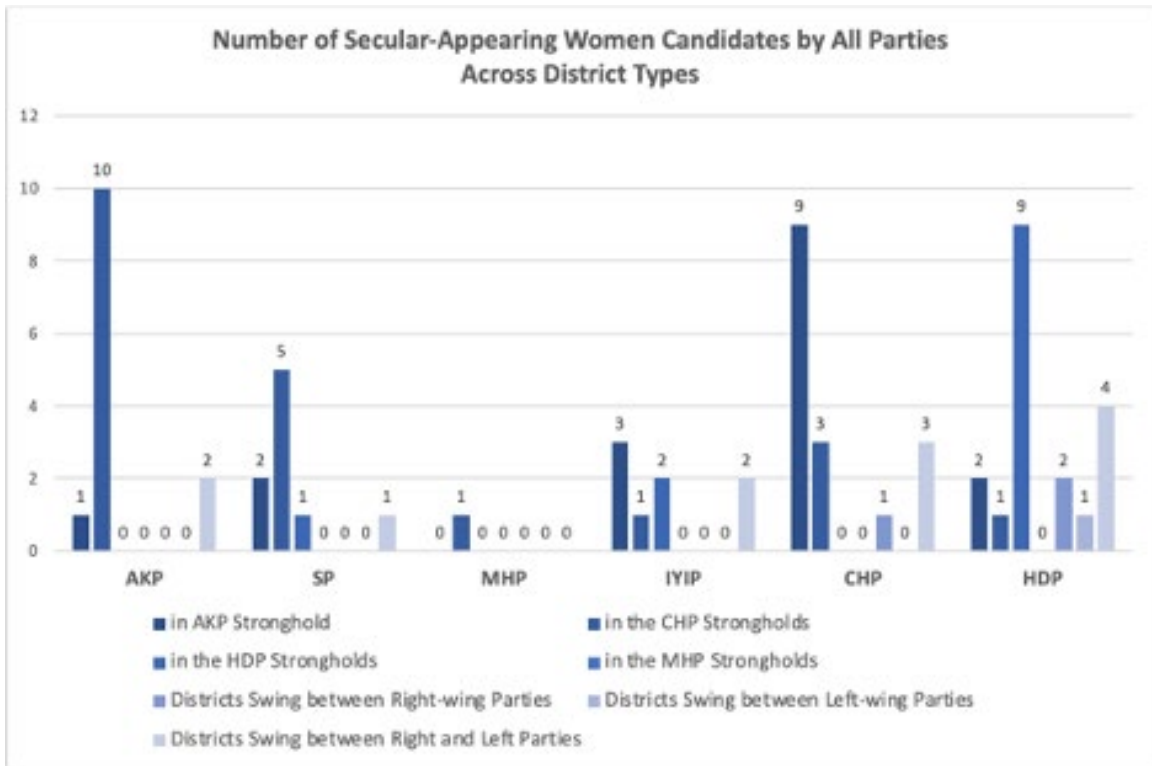
By contrast, only 20 women candidates who ran in the districts of metropolitan cities were wearing headscarves, and 13 of them were nominated in right-wing districts

(Figure 2). More strikingly, for the first time in Republican history, the secular CHP, the party that advocated the headscarf ban in public places for decades, ran with a woman candidate wearing a headscarf in a right-wing district of Konya, a city known as the capital of political Islam in Turkey (CHP'den bir ilk başörtülü belediye başkan adayı 2019). The Kurdish party, the HDP, ran with the highest number of conservative women across districts. This outcome is not surprising because the HDP is the only party that adopted gender parity and a co-chair system across all political positions and is committed to gender equality. According to data presented in Figure1 and Figure 2, the HDP nominated the highest number of women candidates for mayoral seats across districts.[40]

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[40]Although the HDP nominated a man and woman co-chair across the mayoral seats, the Electoral system in Turkey does not allow parties to share mayoral seats, and thus, official data only includes one candidate, either male or female, for each seat. The statistical analyses in this study are based on the data available on the Electoral Council Database and thus reflect the official numbers regarding candidates' gender.

Figure 4 Number of Women Candidates Wearing Headscarves by All Parties Across Districts
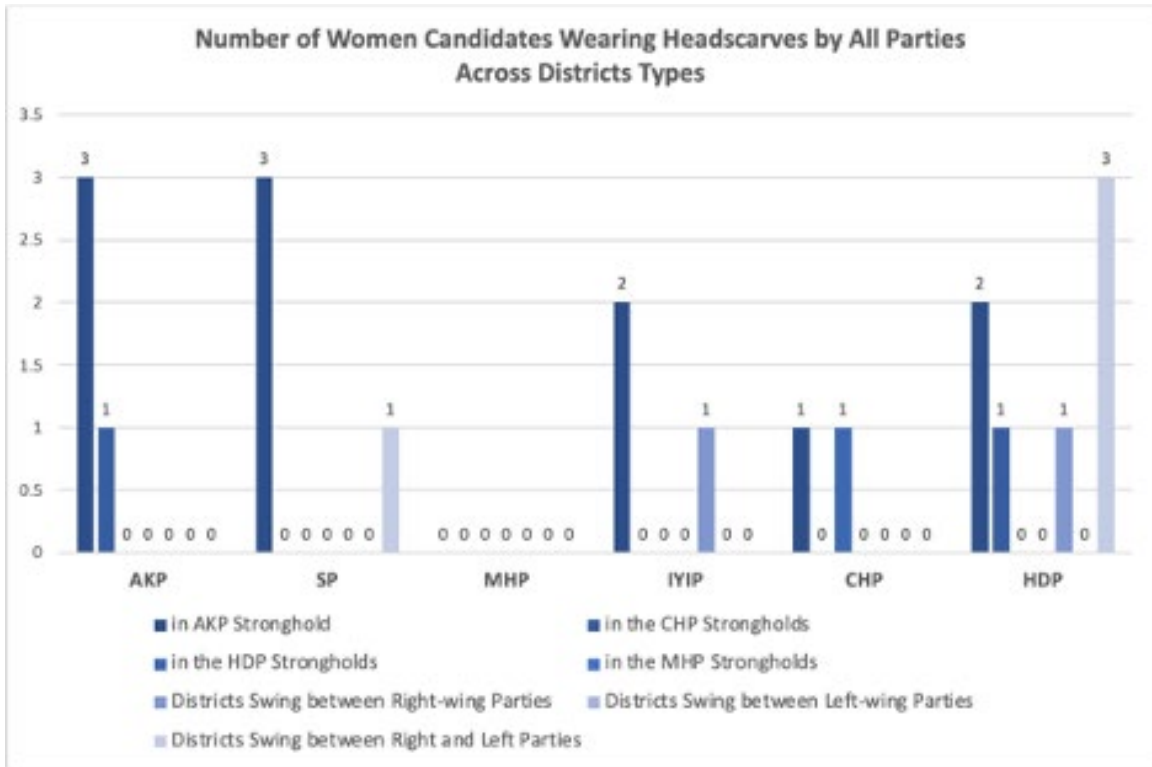
Moreover, Table 2 and Figure 5 show that distribution of women candidates' religious identities across left-wing, right-wing, and left-right swing districts. Parties nominated relatively more secular-appearing women in leftist districts. 51.5% of secular-appearing women were nominated in left-wing districts, 18.2% of them were nominated in left-right swing districts while 30.3% of them were nominated in right-wing districts. In contrast, 65.0% of conservative-appearing women candidates were nominated in right-wing districts and 20% of them were nominated in left-right swing districts. Only 15% of the were nominated in left-wing districts. These descriptive findings support *H1a* and *H2a,* and suggest that parties pay attention to women's intersecting identities during the

nomination process, take district-level determinants into account, and select women candidates strategically to leverage their intersectional identities.

Table 2 Distribution of Women Candidates' Religious Identities across district types

	Right-Wing Districts		Left-Wing Districts		Left-Right Swing Districts		Total	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Secular	20	30.3%	34	51.5%	12	18.2%	66	76.7%
Conservative	13	65.0%	3	15.0%	4	20.0%	20	23.3%

Note: Right-wing districts are strongholds of the AKP and the MHP and districts that swung between right-wing parties in one or more of the last three local elections. The IYIP and the SP do not have strongholds as they are small and relatively new parties. Left-wing districts are strongholds of the CHP and the HDP and districts that swung between left-wing parties in one or more of the last three local elections. Left-right swing districts are districts that swung between a left party to a right party or vice versa in one of the last three local elections. For more information on district and candidate type, see appendix A.

Furthermore, these descriptive statistics suggest that right-wing and left-wing parties respond to district-level factors differently. The HDP and the CHP, two relevant left-wing parties, ran with 18 women in conservative districts, whereas the total number of women candidates from all four right-wing parties was 10 in these districts. These numbers were 17 for left parties and 20 for right parties in the leftist districts. These numbers show that conservative parties ran with fewer women candidates than leftist parties in conservative districts. Also, descriptive data suggest that the two biggest parties, the AKP and the CHP, nominated men for most of the safe seats in their respective strongholds or districts where the dominant party ideology was compatible with the party's identification within the right-left spectrum (Figure 3 and Figure 4 and Appendix A).

Figure 5 Distribution of Women Candidates' Religious Identities across left-wing, right-wing, and left-right swing districts

Distribution of Secular and Conservative Appearing Women across Left and Right Districts

(Legend: Secular-Appearing Women, Conservative-Appearing Women)
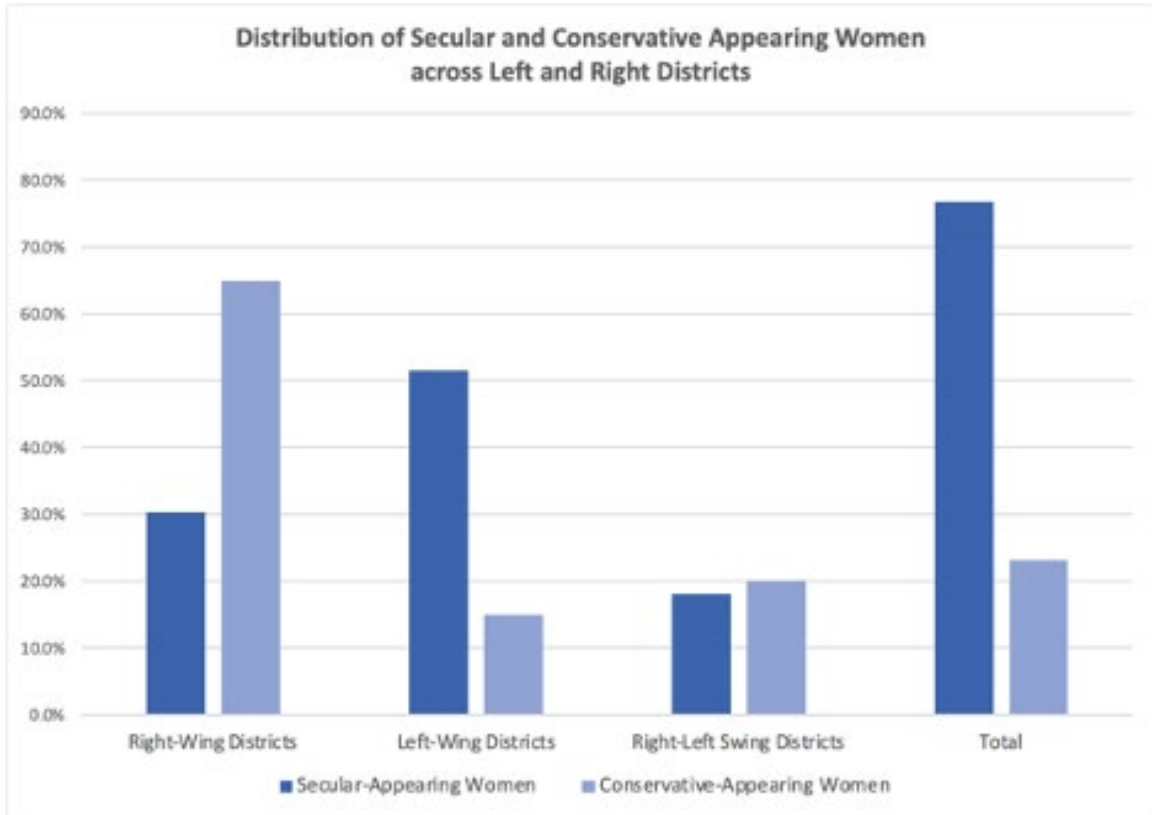
5.1.2. Results from Multivariate Models and Discussion

As expected, district-level secularist partisanship is positively associated with an increase in the percentage of nominations of women candidates whose identities speak to the strongest party's base in districts. Table 3 presents three separate OLS models for women candidates' gender (Model 1), gender and secular-appealing (Model 2), and gender and conservative-appealing (Model 3) identities. The first model shows women are more likely to be nominated in HDP's Strongholds (β=.144, p < .001), in secularist districts (β=.016, p < .01), and in districts swing between leftist parties (β=.270, p < .05) and the effects are statistically significant. Parties are likely to nominate women in CHP's

strongholds as well, although the effect is statistically less significant *((β=.059, p < .10)*. These findings are consistent with the literature. However, an incumbent mayor running again in the district is negatively associated with women's nomination *(β=-.022),* and the effect is statistically significant *(p < .05)*.

Table 3 OLS Regression Models

	Model 1 Dependent Variable Percentage of Women Candidates	Model 2 Dependent Variable Percentage of Secular-appearing Women Candidates	Model 3 Dependent Variable Percentage of Conservative-appearing Women Candidates
NP Against the AKP	.016** (.480)	.018*** (.004)	-.002 (.002)
AKP Stronghold	.024 (.030)	.010 (.027)	.015 (.015)
CHP Stronghold	.059† (.033)	.050† (.029)	.009 (.016)
HDP Stronghold	144*** (.039)	.118** (.034)	.003 (.019)
MHP Stronghold	—	—	—
Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties	.009 (.034)	-.003 (.030)	.012 (.017)
Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties	.270* (.115)	.267** (.102)	.002 (.057)
Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties	.036 (.032)	.026 (.029)	.014 (.016)
Incumbent Candidate in District	-.022* (.011)	-.027** (.010)	.004 (.005)
Economic Development	.003 (.005)	.007 (.004)	-.003 (.002)
Constant	.012 (.030)	.015 (.027)	-.002 (.015)
N	519	519	519

Notes: Coefficients are reported. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
$p<.001$***, $p<.01$**, $p<.05$*, $p<.10$†

Yet, having a dependent variable of women's gender identity does not tell us how women's intersecting identities impact their selection. To make such an inference, we need intersectionality analysis. In the second and third models, I use OLS regressions with the same independent and control variables but different dependent variables: the percentage of secular-appearing women candidates and the percentage of conservative-appearing women candidates. The results show that district-level factors create distinct outcomes for women with different religious orientations. Party elites are more likely to select secular-appearing women in districts where there is a high secularist polarization against the Islamist ruling party *(β=.118, p < .001)*. Similar to findings of the Model 1, secular-appearing women are more likely to be nominated in HDP's strongholds *(β=. 118, p < .01),* in districts swing between leftist parties *(β=.267, p < .01),* and in CHP strongholds *(β=.050, p < .10)* and the effects are statistically significant, Again, an incumbent mayor running again in the district is negatively associated with women's nomination *(β=-.027),* and the effect is statistically significant *(p < .01)*.

However, in the case of conservative-appearing women candidates, there is a negative association with negative partisan polarization against the Islamist party and conservative-appearing women's candidacy *(β=-.002)*. Also, the economic development level is negatively associated with the nomination of conservative-appearing women *(β=-.002)*. None of the other district level factors has any statistically important impact on the nomination of secular-appearing women. These findings support *H1a* and show that parties are more likely to nominate secular-appearing women rather than conservative women in leftist districts.

Lastly, I analyze how the selectorate's behavior towards women's identities changes by two leading parties which are associated with the two poles of the secularist-Islamist polarization. To do so, I used binominal logistic regression models. The dependent variables in these models are secular-appearing women candidates nominated by the AKP (Model 4) and by the CHP (Model 5). Results of Model 4 in Table 4 reveal that, compared to all other types of candidates, an increase in negative partisan polarization against the AKP increases the likelihood of secular-appearing women's nomination remarkably, and the effect is statistically significant *(p < .001)*; this finding supports *H2a* (Figure 6 and Figure 7). Also, likelihood secular-appearing women nomination is positively associated with AKP Strongholds and CHP strongholds. All of the other district-level indicators affect secular-appearing women's nominations negatively.

Table 4 Binomial Logistic Regression Models

	Model 4 *Dependent Variable* Secular-Appearing Women Candidate by AKP	Model 5 *Dependent Variable* Secular-Appearing Women Candidate by CHP
NP Against the AKP	2.891*** (.818)	1.121 (.239)
AKP Stronghold District	.180 (.226)	2.819† (1.765)
CHP Stronghold District	.854 (1.000)	1.431 (1.352)
Incumbent Candidate in District	-1.180 (.337)	-.298 (.232)
Economic Development Level	-.366 (.368)	1.005 (.271)
Constant	-.014 (.011)	-.031 (.016)
N	431	363
Notes: Odds ratios are reported. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. p<.001***, p<.01**, p<.05*, p<.10†		

In the case of the CHP, results of Model 5 in Table 4 shows that the likelihood of secular-appearing women's nomination increases in AKP strongholds, although the effect is relatively less significant *(p < .10)*. Moreover, results show that the CHP is relatively less likely to nominate secular-appearing women's nominations in CHP strongholds and in districts with a high level of secularist negative partisanship against the AKP. Similarly, the economic development and the probability of secular-appealing women' nomination are positively associated, but the effect is not statistically significant. However, having an incumbent candidate in the district decreases the likelihood of secular-appearing women's nomination. These findings support *H3a* and support that the CHP does not have an

incentive to nominate secular appearing women in secularist districts since party label signal secularism.

Figure 6 Distribution of the AKP's secular-appearing women candidates across districts
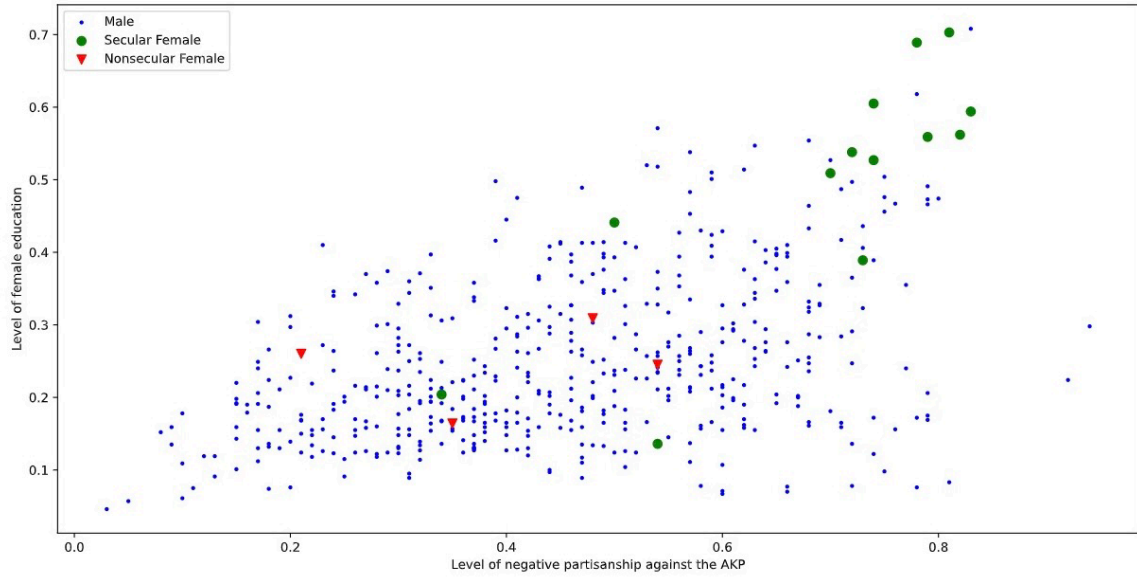
Figure 7 Predicted Probability of Secular-Appearing Women's Nomination by the AKP
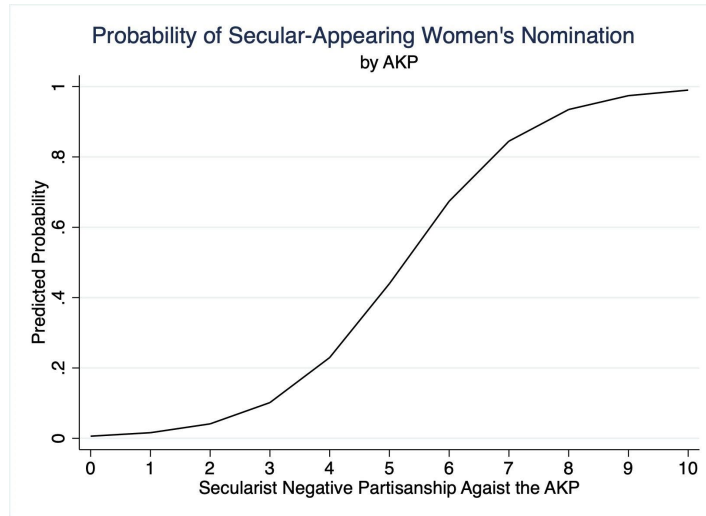
Overall, results from descriptive and multivariate models show that partisan polarization favoring the secularist party increases the likelihood of secular-appearing women nominations by all parties in the mayoral elections. In districts where negative partisanship with secularist sentiment is high against the Islamist party, elites of the Islamist party increase the number of secular-appearing women candidates.

Parties' nomination strategies vary depending on their ideological identification and dominant ideology in the districts, as well. Left-wing parties are more likely to nominate women both in right and left-wing districts, whereas right-wing parties are more likely to nominate women in leftist districts. However, an intersectionality analysis of descriptive statistics reveals more nuanced findings and suggests that all parties, except the HDP, are more likely to nominate men in right-wing districts. Right-wing parties run with men rather than women, regardless of women's intersecting identities in right districts.

Also, the CHP symbolically nominates women wearing headscarves when the party wants to appeal to conservative voters.

The literature says women are more likely to be placed in unwinnable seats in which they run against incumbent competitors. Unlike literary findings, I found that having an incumbent candidate running in districts negatively correlates with the nomination of women in the case of Turkey's mayoral elections. In Turkey, as well, women were placed in unwinnable seats (Marschall et al., 2016). Yet, the case studied here supports that the Islamist party nominates secular-appearing women candidates in districts where the party is competitively disadvantaged due to secularist partisan voters' domination in these districts, and the reason for this strategic selection is to signal tolerance to constituents who are concerned with their secularist lifestyle choices under the Islamist ruling party. Thus, according to these intersectional analyses, parties select these women to run in these challenging districts, not necessarily because they are 'sacrificial lambs' (Thomas & Bodet, 2013), but because the strategic value attached to their identities increases in these districts. Consequently, these findings indicate that district-level indicators of partisan polarization have consequences for the nomination of women with intersecting identities and, thus, require us to engage with intersectionality as an analytical tool when studying male strategic behavior toward women's inclusion in politics.

CHAPTER 6

6.1. Elites' Incentives to Nominate Women with Intersecting Identities: A Qualitative Analysis

In this chapter, I examine elites' decision-making in the candidate selection process and enhance the findings of quantitative analyses presented in the previous chapter. Drawing on semi-structured in-depth interviews with political party elites, I obtain rich and detailed accounts of elite reasonings that consider candidates' traits, district-level factors, and electoral competition when nominating candidates. These narratives of interviewees explain elites' incentives to nominate women with intersecting identities. Additionally, I complement this interview data with a content analysis of TV interviews of secular-appearing candidates during the 2019 mayoral election campaigns when such data is available. The first section presents the findings on the candidate selection methods, candidates' traits, and district-level factors that impact elites' decision-making in this process. The second section presents findings on the elite's incentives for nominating women with intersecting identities under highly polarized electoral competition conditions in the CHP strongholds. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

6.1.1. Intersecting Identities, District-level Factors, and Candidate Selection in the AKP

6.1.1.1. Candidate Selection Process and Placement

To elucidate the strategic behavior of the AKP elites toward women's inclusion, it is helpful first to analyze how they described the candidate selection process and the factors

that influence elites' decision-making during this process in the party. All of the interviewees described a highly centralized and structured candidate selection process across all elections. In Turkey, aspirants first run for candidacy. These people are called candidacy candidates (*aday adayı*). Applications are made to headquarters or local party branches in provinces. Citizens who are legally allowed to run for elections can apply after paying a fee determined by parties. The AKP elites explain that this process starts with all candidacy candidates running their own campaigns to promote themselves within the party organization. Meanwhile, the local party branches conduct tendency surveys (*temayül yoklaması*) among local party elites as well as public opinion surveys about candidacy candidates.[41] All these data are sent to the candidate selection commission at the headquarter of the AKP. This commission comprises the party leader, President Erdogan, vice presidents, and executive board members.

Next, the candidate selection commission conducts interviews with selected candidates, evaluates local-level data, and prepares a short list of candidates for the next stage to the party leader, President Erdogan, who makes the final decisions about who will get in the candidate lists with their list placements and districts.[42] The party leader has a personal quota for the first name on every list. In addition, it is common for the party leader to nominate candidates who did not run for candidacy at all.

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[41] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022
[42] Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022

The lists are also formed strategically. In order to ensure the campaign efforts of the strongest candidates, the general strategy is to place the most popular candidates in the last guaranteed seat on the list, assuming that these candidates then work harder to drag more votes to the party.[43] While other parties face challenges in applying this sort of strategy,[44] the AKP successfully applies this strategy because of the intraparty discipline and a highly centralized candidate selection process. Although candidates demand to be placed in higher ranks as these list placements are more prestigious, candidates do not have a chance to negotiate their placements in the AKP because this may be seen as disobedience and lead to being canceled and excluded.[45]

General candidate selection rules apply in local elections as well. Yet, the selection process has some particularities. While metropolitan and district mayoral candidates are selected by the same core selectorate, selected mayoral candidates have power on the candidate list of municipal councilors since these candidates are their potential teammates with whom they will work together on projects related to municipal services and infrastructure.[46]

6.1.1.2.   Profiles of Desired Candidates

Interviewees collectively emphasized that several candidate-level factors apply to all gender and identity groups in terms of increasing the likelihood of nomination. They all

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[43] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022; Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022

[44] Gamze, One of the vice presidents of the main opposition party, said that, although the CHP wants to follow the same strategy, candidates see list placements as a matter of prestigious, and strong candidates insist on being placed in higher ranks of the party lists. Personal interview, June 30,2022.

[45] Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022

[46] Mehmet, personal interview, June 4, 2022

described that being liked by constituents is the most important factor to be considered as a candidate. Other collectively mentioned features are having higher education and occupations that can be useful to the party. The most preferred professions for MP candidates are lawyers, civil society professionals, unionists, and economists. In local elections, architects and city planners are the most desired experts for both mayoral and councilor candidates.

The party also grants much significance to serving in the party organization as it indicates candidates' loyalty and ideological alignment with the party. Otherwise, the candidate would defect, not support party positions in controversial policy issues, or even leave the party after being elected under the party label. However, this rule is purposefully more flexible for mayoral candidates. For mayoral seats, the preference leans toward candidates who are ideologically close to the center. An AKP district mayor described this rationale in this quotation:

> Mayors are expected to appeal to the entire city and serve all of them, so they are expected to be close to the center…I increased my votes in the second time I ran because I don't discriminate against other parties' voters, I am equally close to everyone, and that is why all decisions are taken with consensus in my district council despite we have councilors from four parties.[47]

In addition, incumbency advantage is mentioned as a factor that increases the likelihood of selection, especially in mayoral elections, both in district and metropolitan municipalities. While incumbent mayors have a relative advantage compared to new

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[47] Mehmet, personal interview, June 4, 2022

candidates, successful incumbent district mayors can be nominated for upper-level municipalities such as metropolitan municipalities. However, the party can also place incumbent mayors whose municipal success is recognized nationwide in more challenging districts rather than the districts they served in previous terms in order to increase the chance of winning in these challenging districts.[48] Also, four interviewees disclosed that the AKP nominates well-recognized former ministers or bureaucrats who worked in service delivery sectors, such as transportation, infrastructure, or economy, in strongholds of the rival party, the CHP[49] as one of the election competition strategies.

6.1.1.3.   Candidates' Gender and Other Identities

Candidates' gender and identity are prominent characteristics that impact their chances of getting selected. As expected, all of the interviewees stated that being a man is the most significant advantage in the selection since the AKP is not considered to be a women-friendly party. Officially, the leader of the AKP, President Erdogan, is against gender quota legislation or a party quota as he sees it as an insult to women (Drechselová, 2020). In 2021, a bill of the main opposition party, the CHP, proposing parity and a zipper system across national and local PR lists, was rejected by the AKP and its ally MHP votes (CHP istedi, AKP ve MHP engelledi 2021).   However, the AKP applies a de facto 25 percent gender quota in PR lists at national elections lists.[50] Unfortunately, this de facto rule has not reached its target: 18 percent of the AKP MPs are women (TBMM 2022).

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[48] Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022

[49] Mehmet, personal interview, June 4, 2022, Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022, Kemal personal interview, June 24, 2022; Cihan, personal interview, July, 19, 2022.

[50]Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022; Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022; Mehmet, personal interview, June 4, 2022; Kemal personal interview, June 24, 2022; Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022.

Also, this rule excludes mayoral elections: only 8 of 575 elected mayors of the AKP were women in the 2019 mayoral elections, including metropolitan municipalities and districts municipalities in cities and towns (Alan, 2019).

According to the de facto party quota rule, the AKP places a woman in an electable seat if the party guarantees at least four seats in an electoral district. However, this target is not met in every district. All of the aforementioned factors, such as education, a working experience that the party would need expertise on, and being liked by constituents, increases the likelihood of women's selections. However, unlike men MPs, an overwhelming majority of AKP's current women MPs worked in party organizations— mostly as heads of women's branches from the provinces they were elected— prior to their election: 46 out of 54[51]. The party elites require endorsement by a high-level party member for those women aspirants who did not work in the party.[52] Four interviewees described these informal requirements as an assurance of trustworthiness and loyalty and emphasized that this is a commonly-used criterion for women's candidate selection within the party. While long-term experience in the party organization signals candidates' loyalty, a trusted party elite must refer a candidate and guarantee that the aspirant is trustworthy and ideologically aligned with the party. These are the bare minimums for those women who want to be nominated by the AKP.

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[51] Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022
[52] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022; Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022; Mehmet, personal interview, June 4, 2022; Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022.

Representativeness of candidates is also related to their identities and affects party elites' decision-making during candidate selections. All of the parties tend to nominate locals in electoral districts. Even if candidates live outside their hometowns for many years, the AKP tends to nominate these aspirant candidates from their hometowns. In addition, *hemşehrilik* (having the same hometown or region of origin) remarkably affects voting behavior in Turkey, especially in big cities (Uysal & Toprak, 2010). Interviewees collectively emphasized that candidates from the Black Sea region have a relative advantage in metropolitan and parliamentary elections because, starting from the 1950s, people from this region immigrated to big cities and clustered in certain towns or districts. As they predominantly vote for their *hemşehri*, being from the Black Sea region provides candidates with an advantage in the selection process.

Moreover, party elites described several minority identities of men and women candidates that impact their selection; this includes being a member of an ethnic and/or religious minority group, such as Kurd, Alevi, Armenian, Roma, Circassian, Nusayris (also known as Arab Alevi or Syrian Alevi), Yazidis, Assyrian, or Greek. Finally, being a religious or secular candidate is also taken into consideration, especially for women. However, when discussing candidates' gender and identity traits, all interviewees emphasized that whether a gender or minority identity is an advantage or disadvantage depends on district-level factors. Because these district-level factors determine dominant voting behavior in districts and, as expected, party elites are responsive to these factors when deciding whom to select as candidates and their placements across districts.

6.1.1.4. The Interaction between District-level Factors and Candidates Identities

Interviewees commonly defined several district types: western provinces populated by relatively modern, secular, educated, and affluent citizens, and eastern parts of Turkey, where relatively conservative citizens are clustered. In addition, they categorized districts depending on the density of minority populations, such as the Kurdish, Alevi, or Nusayri cities in eastern/ southeastern Turkey or neighborhoods in big cities where minority groups have clustered. Finally, interviews described that whether a district is a stronghold of its own or a rival party plays a role in selecting candidates to run in these districts.

The main parameter regarding the interaction of candidates' identity and district-level factors is whether a selected candidate can bring a block vote of particular identity groups, including religious or ethnic minorities, *hemşehri* groups, and women. One of the interviewees explained that the party holds workshops with minority members of the executive board to identify attractive candidates from their own groups to field in districts where these minorities are concentrated[53]

When explaining such calculations, all interviewees distinguished parliamentary, mayoral, and municipality council elections, as these elections have different electoral systems that create distinct incentives for inclusion. In parliamentary and municipal council elections, which use a closed-list PR system, the party considers the diversity and population density of cities and towns in the provinces. In parliamentary elections, when

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[53] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022

forming lists, the leadership aims to include well-known and liked candidates from each densely populated city or town as well as from minority groups who could attract block votes from these highly populated areas or from minority groups.[54] A similar logic applies to municipal council elections, as this quotation indicates:

> We tell the local branches not to focus on one district, and, if there are diverse identities, get one from these groups on the lists…we tell them that assume you divide the province into four pieces, get one candidate from all four. If Circassians are dense, get one candidate from them. If people from Ağrı [Ağrı is a province in Eastern Turkey] are dense, then get one from them too.[55]

However, in mayoral elections, the FPTP electoral system of mayoral elections generates personal vote-earning attributes. Party elites are responsive to these incentives. Thus, interviewees collectively described mayoral elections as elections in which voters vote more for candidates than the party. Therefore the candidate's identity is the most crucial factor determining electoral success. In this regard, all interviewees' emphasized candidates' compatibility with the constituencies' sociological structure (*doku uyuşması*). In other words, elites select candidates that mirror not only diverse ethnic, religious, or *hemşehri* groups but also the dominant sociopolitical structure and sentiments in districts. One of the interviewees sums up this logic:

> The party always keeps its door open to minorities, but whose identity provides us with an advantage depends on the electoral district…In politics, you are as strong as the votes you get as a party. That is why you have to make smart moves; if you nominate a Kurdish nationalist or Alevi in Trabzon [a conservative and Turkish

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[54] Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022.
[55] Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022

nationalist city], you can't get any votes. But the party always prefers liked minority candidates in districts where they are clustered.[56]

This quotation shows that compatibility with the constituencies' sociological structure goes beyond descriptively mirroring the districts. The party is responsive to dominant ideological tendencies and attitudes in districts. Such interaction creates consequences for women and minority representation. All of the interviewees pointed out that decisions on women's nominations are shaped by whether a district is secular or conservative:

> You try to select candidates that reflect the identity of the district… in secular districts, candidates are selected accordingly. The main aim is to select candidates that appeal to people in that district. For example, Cankaya is a secular district, and our candidate in Çankaya was a woman who has a secular lifestyle.[57]

Interviewees collectively described party preference as nominating secular-appearing women in urbanized western parts of the country where voters are relatively secular, modern, and educated. In conservative districts, however, men are the preferred candidates rather than conservative women.

Similarly, in districts where minority groups are clustered, the party's preference for the gender of the candidate depends on the minority groups' level of religiosity or their attitudes toward traditional gender norms. For example, all of the interviewees identified the Kurdish region as conservative and explained that the AKP is more likely to nominate

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[56] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022
[57] Kemal, personal interview, June 24, 2022

Kurdish men as mayoral candidates in this region. However, being a minority woman is more advantageous than being a minority man in districts where minority groups, who are known as being secular and progressive, are clustered, as demonstrated below:

> If you run with an Alevi woman in Tunceli, then you can have a chance of winning because Tunceli can handle women candidates [e.i, the gender bias would be low in Tunceli]. I personally witnessed that the Party sought an Alevi woman candidate to field in the districts of Tunceli, where Alevis are the majority. Because they vote for leftist parties, which means that they may want to vote for women candidates.[58]

Indeed, the AKP ran with an Alevi woman in the 2019 mayoral elections in Tunceli, Hozat, another stronghold of the CHP (Songül Acar, AK Party Tunceli Hozat Başkan Adayı, 2019).

These findings indicate that the AKP elites have a pragmatic approach to representation. If women and minority candidates potentially attract more votes than majority men in a given district due to aforementioned district-level factors, the party purposefully seeks candidate profiles to field in these districts. This pragmatic approach to candidate selection strategy becomes crystal clear in districts where the AKP is competitively disadvantaged due to a high level of negative partisan polarization with secularist sentiments against this party. The next sections will focus on interviewees' narratives regarding the competition between the AKP and the CHP in secularist districts and their rationale for candidate selection to illuminate elites' incentives to nominate secular-appearing women.

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[58] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022

6.1.2. The AKP Elites' Incentives for Nominating Secular-Appearing Women in the CHP Strongholds

Veiling has been a matter of intense debate in Turkey since the late Ottoman era. Starting from the 1980s, the headscarf has become a controversial political symbol in party politics due to the tension between Islamist and Secularist parties over the headscarf ban in public places. Although the AKP has dominated elections nationwide in the last two decades, the party has faced remarkable electoral challenges in the secularist CHP strongholds where fear of Islamist rule and intervention in secularist lifestyle choices is the main determinant of the vote choice. This polarization manifests itself in the narrative of the AKP elites when they describe the voters' reactions to candidates from the AKP in these districts:

> Like I always say, even if Ataturk [founder of secular Turkey] were alive and ran as the AKP candidate, it wouldn't work in places like Izmir or Cankaya [both are CHP strongholds], because people are so impersuasible in these places, they only care about candidates' party identity.[59]

Negative partisan polarization against the AKP is more disadvantageous to women candidates wearing headscarves than any other groups. One conservative woman MP of the AKP described bias she faced during an electoral campaign in districts where secularist voters clustered, highlighting the idea of nominating secular-appearing women as a necessary and rational electoral strategy to bypass this sort of bias at first sight, as this quotation demonstrates:

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[59] Kemal, personal interview, June 24, 2022

For women candidates, the party knows that if we nominate a woman wearing a headscarf and send her to the field for campaigning to promote the party… in districts that the CHP considers as their castles [i.e., Strongholds]...voters wouldn't accept this candidate in the first place. This is such a pity. When some voters see this [pointing to her headscarf], oh my God, they get so irritated. They push you away without having a word. Therefore, it is understandable that the party prefers a secular-appearing woman, even if only for starting a dialogue with constituents.[60]

When asked about why the party nominates secular women rather than men, interviewees emphasized appearance. They collectively indicated that people can't make assumptions about the religious orientation of male candidates by their appearance, but women's veiling or unveiling is associated with being conservative or secular in voters' minds. As stereotypes are used as information shortcuts to draw inferences about candidates, the party elites indicated that the party appeal to secularist voters. Moreover, one of the interviewees described such selection as not only being an attempt to signal for secularism but also democracy and a high level of education in this quotation:

The party could have run with an educated secular man, who received a Ph.D. degree from METU [one of the most progressive universities in Turkey], but this candidate would have needed to explain himself to voters. But, when the party runs with a secular woman, voters automatically see this woman as well-educated and democratic.[61]

All of the interviewees brought up Izmir, the most secular and the third biggest city in Turkey when they exemplified the strategic move of nominating secular-appearing candidates. Some of the interviewees stated that it is the most challenging city for the AKP

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[60] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022
[61] Hasan, personal interview, July 18, 2022

and the main battleground of the AKP's competition against the CHP. Indeed, the AKP ran with six women district mayoral candidates across Izmir, compared to 11 in the rest of Turkey. Interviewees collectively blamed the party's electoral failure in Izmir on the fear of intervention in people's secularist lifestyle choices and Islamisation. An interviewee from the AKP Izmir Branch sums up the challenge the party faced in Izmir related to these concerns and how the local party organization tried to deal with these concerns:

> The AKP couldn't explain itself to the people of Izmir. Especially since the Republic Protests in 2007[62], competition conditions have become harder for the AKP, but we try to explain ourselves better to the people of this city every day. We want to show that we respect everyone's lifestyle and identities, and we don't have any intentions to intervene in people's lifestyle choices… thus when we select our women candidates, we select women who reflect the feelings and sentiments of their districts.[63]

These concerns are also evident in the AKP's 2019 local election campaign in Izmir. A discourse analysis of the women district mayoral candidates, and even President Erdogan's Izmir speech addressed the fear of intervening in secularist lifestyle choices. In his campaign speech in Izmir, President Erdogan signaled tolerance for secularist lifestyle choices, as demonstrated below:

> The AKP has been in power for 17 years. Which of these fears did become true? Did we intervene in our people's clothing, drinking? I am looking at my sisters [i.e., women], they all wear what they want. My sisters give them the best response.[64]

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[62] Republican Protests (or Rallies) were mass protests started following the announcement of AKP's Presidential Candidate whose wife's wears headscarf in 2007. The main motivation was protecting the secularist state under the Islamist AKP rule. For more, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_Protests

[63] Cihan, personal interview, July 19, 2022.

[64] This is a quotation from President Erdogan's campaign speech in Izmir, for more see Duvar, G. (2019, March 17). *Bahçeli ve Erdoğan'dan İzmir'de ortak miting* https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/politika/2019/03/17/bahceli-ve-erdogandan-izmirde-ortak-miting

Similar themes reoccurred in TV interviews of the secular-appearing women candidates of the AKP who ran in strongholds of the CHP. In an interview with a local TV, Melek Eroglu, one of the AKP's women candidates in Izmir, disclosed that people in her district are concerned about their secularist lifestyle choices and conveyed that the party doesn't have any position regarding how people should live. She supported her argument by saying, "I am inside of the AKP, I live in Izmir, and I am the most obvious example of the party's position in terms of lifestyles," signifying her secular appearance as evidence of the party's tolerance toward secularism.[65] Some candidates also explicitly mentioned the tension on the headscarf issue and explained how it influences the voters' decision-making in elections. Another mayoral candidate of the AKP stated in a national TV interview that voters asked her whether the party would force them to cover up in case of winning elections. She said, "This is nonsense," and blamed the CHP for dispersing this sort of fear.[66]

Moreover, four candidates define themselves as an "Ataturk's woman" or a "Republic's woman," an expression that appreciates Ataturk's reforms for emancipating Turkish women and is typically used by women supporters of the CHP. Also, commitment to democracy is another theme emphasized by secular-appearing women candidates of the AKP. There has been a gradual democratic backlash in Turkey under the AKP

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[65] Melek Eroglu. Intervied by Asli Eren. Gunaydin Ege. Sonsoz TV. February 21, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/egedesonsozcom/videos/409908296245368/
[66] Özgül Özkan Yavuz, Interview by Saynur Tezel. *Haber Global*. Haber Turk. March 15, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vm1EKBqcAY

governments, and Turkey has been categorized as "Not Free" by the Freedom House since 2018 (Freedom House, 2023). However, AKP's women candidates in CHP strongholds have presented their candidacy as a sign of AKP's commitment to democracy as this quotation by Ayda Mac, who ran in one of the biggest provinces of Izmir, demonstrates:

> Voters who are concerned about democratic backlash and Ataturk's principles should support the AKP. The AKP is the only party running with six women across Izmir's province. Why? Because we care about women's empowerment, as Ataturk did.[67]

Despite being highly challenged, a sign of the AKP's desire to win in Izmir is the party's selection for metropolitan mayoral seats for the last two local elections. Indeed, some interviewees described the party's strategy in Izmir as a dual electoral strategy. On the one hand, the party nominated secular-appearing women for district mayoral seats. On the other hand, the leadership selected a strong, well-known candidate in the metropolitan mayoral elections who ran a campaign around municipal service delivery, bringing investments for infrastructure projects. An interviewee from AKP's Izmir Branch described this dual strategy in this quotation:

> Izmir doesn't want a conservative government. We selected candidates that reflect these sentiments. But we also want to show Izmir that we will deliver long-neglected service, construction, and infrastructure investment to the city. That is why the party selected well-known names for their good performance in investment projects in their political careers for the metropolitan mayoral seat.[68]

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[67] Ayda Mac. "Ayda Mac (AK Parti Karşıyaka Belediye Başkan Adayı)." Interview by Burak Cilasun. *Rota Siyaset,* Ben TV. March 12, 2019.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6aFwzT9Vlo

[68]Cihan, personal interview, July 19, 2022.

The profiles of the metropolitan mayor candidates from the AKP in the last two elections speak for themselves: the metropolitan mayor candidate in the 2014 elections was the former Prime Minister and the most trusted man of President Erdogan, Binali Yildirim; the candidate in 2019 was a former Minister of Economy of the AKP, Nihat Zeybekci. Based on previous central-right wing parties' electoral success in Izmir, the AKP elites described Izmir as a secular, but not necessarily a leftist, city. They calculated they would try to shift the voters' concerns from religious division to service delivery. Thus, while one angle of the electoral campaign was assuring secularist concerns, the other angle is nominating high-profile politicians who are experienced in government to show the party could bring investment to the city. As one of the interviewees puts it:

> The AKP wanted to do this: The party nominated one of the most successful Prime Ministers of Turkey for the Izmir metropolitan mayoral seat. Because Izmir has so much potential. But people in Izmir are obsessed with this secularism issue. We would use someone like him in top-level positions. We needed him, didn't we? But we nominated him in Izmir to show how much we care about Izmir. But it is people's decision at the end of the day.[69]

But what electoral gain does the party aim to get from this strategy if there is such a huge reaction against the Islamist identity that the party represents? Interviewees differentiated local elections from parliamentary elections and emphasized the interaction between the personal vote and floating voters. By this strategy, the party wants to appeal to floating voters who dislike the CHP candidates for any reasons, and who may consider voting for another candidate who appeals to them, as the quotation below demonstrates:

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[69]Kemal, personal interview, June 24, 2022.

In local elections, there are more floating voters, meaning that even though voters ideologically committed to one party, they might dislike the candidate of their party and vote for another party whose candidate appeal to them, even if it is just for one time. This happens even if the parties are too ideologically distinct, as in the case of the CHP and the AKP, because voters may say, "This is our guy, this is our gal." I personally witnessed this sort of case. As these situations can occur at local levels, we try to mirror the sociological features of cities while nominating our candidates[70].

In terms of floating votes, appealing to voters who are concerned with women's representation is another dimension of this strategy. As all of the interviewees described, the candidate selection process in the AKP is data-driven. The Research and Development Office of the AKP conducts regular public opinion polls on candidate profiles and feeling thermometers for aspirants. All of the interviewees agreed that these survey results are taken very seriously by the leadership and followed through in the candidate selection process. An interviewee disclosed that the data collected by the party indicated voters' demand for women candidates in these districts and the party was guided by data as well when selecting these women candidates. Thus, as one of the interviewees explained, the strategy of nominating secular-appearing women also aimed to appeal to voters who are concerned about women's issues:

Women voters have been the strongest weapon of the AKP since the beginning. Getting women's support makes a 2 percent increase in the votes. Don't think that this strategy is only for secular women. Conservative women have some modern demands too. By putting modern women forward, the party wants to show its moderation to all women and try to keep communication channels open.[71]

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[70] Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022
[71] Ali, personal interview, June 5, 2022.

Despite the decrease in electoral support in the 2019 local elections for AKP and the party's loss of all the major metropolitan municipalities, the party gradually increased its votes for the metropolitan municipality in Izmir from 35 percent in 2014 and to 38 percent in 2019. Moreover, in six of nine CHP stronghold districts that the AKP ran with secular-appearing women, AKP's vote share either increased or remained the same in the 2019 elections.[72] Referring to these election results, all of the interviewees described nominating secular-appearing women as a successful election strategy, as this quotation demonstrates:

> We nominate secular women in secular districts because you can be successful only if you take the sociological features of the districts into account. We nominated these women, and we increased our votes despite the fact that we lost metropolitan municipalities.[73]

The party elites defended this strategy in several ways. Some stated that the rival party had applied the same strategy. They framed it as a pragmatic way of doing things in politics. One of the interviewees gave as an example the fact that the CHP ran with central-right male candidates to appeal to voters close to the center in Anakara and Istanbul metropolitan municipalities and nominated male Nusayri candidates in two provinces of Southern Turkey. In fact, the CHP did run with these candidates and flipped these metropolitan seats in the 2019 mayoral elections. Another interviewee blamed the CHP for being hypocritical and including women wearing headscarves in the party:

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[72] For details of the election results see The Open Data Portal of Supreme Election Council
https://acikveri.ysk.gov.tr/anasayfa
[73] Kemal, personal interview, June 24, 2022.

The AKP runs with secular women in strongholds of the CHP and prefers conservative women for eastern cities where the constituents are usually conservative. The CHP does the same thing; they have recently pinned the party badge to a woman who wears a burqa[74], despite their long past banning the headscarf in this country.[75]

Comparing their party with the CHP, most of the interviewees emphasized that the party included these secular-appearing women candidates in the party organization after the elections. One of the candidates was appointed as deputy minister at The Ministry of Culture and Tourism.[76] Another candidate is a member of the Executive Board and works as a consultant at the AKP's Izmir Branch.[77] Interviewees described this as the party's inclusiveness and tendency to protect their candidates after the elections even if they couldn't win, as opposed to the CHP's exclusive attitudes towards conservative women.

But even though we nominate these women in those districts as an electoral strategy, we don't just nominate these women and throw them away. These women can find a place for themselves in the Headquarter and work at different levels of the party organization after the elections. Unlike the CHP, we always have veiled and unveiled candidates during our tenure.[78]

Although interviewees criticized the main opposition party for leveraging women's identities, they described it as a rational party behavior in competitive electoral

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[74] The interviewee was referring to an incident that the CHP members pinned a party badge to a woman wearing burqa at a party event. For details of this event, please see: https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/izmirde-chpden-carsafli-partiliye-rozet-22016481

[75] Fatma, personal interview, June 23, 2022

[76] For more info see https://ozgulozkanyavuz.com/

[77] For more info see https://www.akparti.org.tr/ak-kadro/il-baskan-yrd-il-yurutme-kurulu-uyeleri/izmir?562564/-%C4%B0l-Ba%C5%9Fkan-Dan%C4%B1%C5%9Fman%C4%B1/Melek-ERO%C4%9ELU

[78] Seda, personal interview, June 21, 2022

politics and justified the nomination of secular-appearing women in the CHP strongholds, as these accounts indicated.

6.1.3. Discussion

This chapter explains the AKP elites' incentives to nominate secular-appearing women as an electoral strategy in the strongholds of the CHP, where the negative partisanship against their party is high. The findings of qualitative analysis supported and added insight into the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter. Interviewees collectively affirmed that the AKP elites are more likely to nominate secular-appearing women in districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high. Yet the findings indicate that this sort of pragmatic approach to representation is not specific to secular-appearing women's representation. The party elites purposefully seek and recruit minority candidates and members of groups who can drag block votes to the party. However, district-level factors and challenging competition conditions increase the strategic value attached to a candidate's intersectionality, as the party has limited strategies to compete in elections under such conditions. For example, dominant ideological tendencies and attitudes regarding secularism and conservatism in a district is the main determinant of women's nomination, and these district-level factors interact with women's intersecting identities and have consequences for their selection. The party is more likely to nominate secular-appearing women in districts whose constituents are Westernized, educated, secular, and willing to support women's presence in politics. However, in conservative districts where gender bias is stronger than in secularist districts, the party is more likely to nominate men rather than conservative or secular-appearing women candidates.

The findings further indicate that minority groups' dominant ideological orientations also play a role in the decision-making of party elites regarding the gender of the minority identity of the candidates. The AKP elites are more likely to nominate minority women in districts where these minority groups are clustered and predominantly vote for left-wing parties. In other words, to appeal to minority groups who are secular and ideologically close to the left, the AKP is more likely to nominate minority women. On the other hand, in districts in which the AKP competes with parties whose constituents are conservative minorities, the party is more likely to select male minority candidates. Thus, whether a minority identity of a women candidate is an advantage for their selection is dependent on the size of the minority population in a given district and the voting behavior of this minority group regarding the right-left ideology spectrum (Janssen et al., 2020; Dancygier, 2017). As a right-wing conservative party, the AKP prefers minority women candidates when competing against secular or leftist parties in districts where these minorities are clustered.

Together these findings show that the AKP has a pragmatic approach to the representation of underrepresented groups. Unless nominating secular-appearing women or minority women would provide the party with an electoral advantage in competition, the AKP elites tend to nominate majority men. As interviewees repeatedly emphasized, this pragmatic approach guides the party's candidate selection in districts where the AKP is competitively disadvantaged due to a high level of negative partisan polarization with secularist sentiments against this party. These disadvantageous conditions incentivize party elites to select candidates to appeal to floating voters who are dissatisfied with the secularist

party's candidate and may consider voting for an AKP candidate as being "one of their own." In such situations, the party relies on information shortcuts that the candidate's appearance sends to voters. The appearance of women candidates, rather than the appearance of men, sends information shortcuts to secularist constituents about secularist lifestyle choices; thus, selecting secular-appearing candidates is considered a strategically right move by party elites. As interviewees' accounts indicate, the party's attempt to start a dialogue with secularist constituents whose dislike towards the Islamist AKP, fear of Islamisation, and intervention in secularist lifestyle are the main determinants of vote choice.

As elites pointed out, the bias against the headscarf and the AKP, for being the party responsible for Islamisation, creates an incentive for party elites to assure these concerns during electoral campaigns. Thus, in districts where secularist voters cluster, the party strategically increases the symbolic inclusion of secular-appearing women to signal tolerance for secularist lifestyle choices. Moreover, because of the recent democratic backlash under the AKP government, secular-appearing candidates are also selected by the elites to mimic democracy (Valdini, 2019). Campaign speeches of secular-appearing women intended to convey a message by nominating a comparatively higher number of women by the AKP as a signal of commitment to democracy.

These findings also draw attention to the consequences of the data-driven candidate selection process for women and minority representation. Elites' accounts reveal that parties are responsive to voters' attitudes toward the gender, ethnic, and religious identities

of candidates. Some of the interviewees justified such a pragmatic candidate selection based on the voters' attitudes and the electability of a candidate in a given district. Thus, voter bias against certain gender and minority identities of candidates in various districts motivates party elites to strategically leverage women's intersectional identities to appeal to rival party's voters under unfavorable competition conditions. Likewise, in such a pragmatic electoral context, women candidates can improve their chances of selection by leveraging their electorally valuable intersecting traits (Kao & Benstead, 2021). Yet, these findings also suggest that in electoral contexts with high levels of voter bias, gender and minority quotas are needed to increase the descriptive representation of marginalized groups. Otherwise, these groups are more likely to be symbolically included in politics to the extent that they provide party elites with electoral advantages. Because, as in the case of the AKP, even when increasing women's representation brings more votes to parties, right-wing parties can get this benefit by relying on symbolic representation only in districts in which voters support women's representation.

Moreover, unlike previous studies, findings on what motivates elites to leverage women's intersectionality show that elites nominate secular-appearing women in challenging districts not necessarily because they are sacrificial lambs. The interviewees collectively emphasized the AKP's desire to win elections in Izmir, the most challenging city for the AKP. They described the party's candidate selection of strong candidates, who are top-level party leaders, who used to be Prime Minister or Economy Minister, for the metropolitan mayoral seat in Izmir as evidence of how much the AKP wants to win elections in this city. They collectively described this as a dual strategy. These accounts

support quantitative findings and demonstrate that the Islamist party nominates secular-appearing women candidates in districts where the party is competitively disadvantaged due to unfavorable competition conditions because of high secularist leaning polarization. In contrast to studies focusing on only the gender identity of women candidates, intersectional analysis of candidate selection elucidates that parties select these women to run in these challenging districts because the strategic value attached to their identities increases in these districts.

Relatedly, previous studies, like sacrificial lambs, portray women candidates as docile political actors who lack the agency and skills to know and act according to their best interests. However, findings from the interviewees suggest otherwise. Party elites revealed that despite secular-appearing candidates placed in unwinnable seats, the party offered them prestigious positions within the party organization. It is unlikely that secular-appearing women candidates are not aware of the strategic value of identity for the party since they are also actors in this pragmatic political environment, as well. Especially in clientelistic political contexts where every political favor comes with a cost and proximity to a ruling party opens career doors inside and outside of politics, it is plausible to expect that these women candidates calculate and perhaps negotiate for their gain in exchange for running under unfavorable conditions for the ruling party.

Together, qualitative findings presented in this chapter enhance our understanding of party elites' strategic behavior towards women's intersecting identities and how district-level conditions and partisan polarization interact with candidate selection decision-

making and create advantages and disadvantages for women and minorities. Considering the rich and detailed accounts of elites' pragmatist reasonings obtained by this study, future research should pay particular attention to the interaction between symbolic politics of contentious issues and women's intersecting identities in a given electoral context where these issues determine the winner of electoral competition and create incentives for party elites to leverage women's intersecting identities.

CHAPTER 7

7.1. Conclusion

This dissertation sought to investigate whether political parties select women with intersecting identities to leverage their multidimensional identities as an electoral competition strategy in races where parties are competitively disadvantaged due to partisan polarization over identities, in the context of Turkey. Existing studies of party elites' strategic behavior toward women's nominations point out that male elites strategically increase women's representation to advance their power. However, these studies analyze women as a single category and do not account for their complex intersectional identities. I argue that the Islamist AKP strategically nominates secular-appearing women to leverage their intersecting identities in races where high negative partisanship with secularist sentiments against this party is the primary determinant of vote choice, and the motivation behind this strategy is to attract voters from the other side of polarization. I also argue that elites make such a strategic selection because the strategic value of including these women increases when the parties are less competitive due to high partisan polarization, and leveraging intersecting identities of women candidates allows them to appeal to voters of the rival party.

In addition, I argue that in political contexts in which women's identities symbolize social cleavages that are decisive in voting behavior, including these women provides party elites with a valuable tool as parties can signal to voters about their ideological and policy positions through their choice of candidates. I argue that, by selecting secular-appearing

women candidates, the party intends to appeal to floating voters who are dissatisfied with the candidate of the secularist party and would vote for another party whose candidate speaks to them because of their gender, race, ethnicity, or religious orientation. I argue that by leveraging women's identities, the party selectorate aim to send two information short-cuts to floating voters with one candidate. The gender axis of their intersecting identity, i.e., women, signals voters who are concerned about gender equality and commitment to democracy. Simultaneously, the secular orientation axis signals tolerance for secularist lifestyle choices. I argue that the AKP relies on symbolic inclusion to improve the party's image in the eye of secularist voters under highly disadvantageous competition conditions due to polarization in the CHP strongholds.

In Chapter Two of this dissertation, I reviewed the relevant scholarly literature on factors impacting women's representation, the interaction between women intersecting identities and their access to political power, and party competition strategies that focus on candidate selection.

In Chapter Three, I presented the case of this study and explained literary findings on women's underrepresentation, how intersectionality is relevant to the context of Turkey, and social cleavages that determine vote choice in the country. Building on these backgrounds, I explain the symbolic meaning of veiling and unveiling in partisan politics in Turkey in the last section of this chapter.

In Chapter Four, I developed a framework to explain whether male party elites leverage women's intersecting identities as an electoral competition strategy. This chapter

presents the hypotheses, case selection, methodological approach, and data I rely on to test my hypotheses. In this chapter, I also explain the sampling strategy for in-depth interviews and the limitations of my qualitative and quantitative methodological choices.

In Chapters Five and Six, I analyzed the original dataset of candidates who ran in the 2019 mayoral elections and the qualitative data obtained by semi-structured in-depth interviews. To do so, I applied intersectionality as a methodological approach and coded women candidates' apparent religious orientation depending on whether they wear headscarves or not; I examined how their intersecting identities influenced their nomination. I then further investigate the incentives of male party elites to leverage women candidates' gender and religious identities as an electoral competition strategy.

I used an explanatory sequential mixed-method design of quantitative and qualitative methods. To empirically test my hypotheses, I used an original district-level dataset of 1734 mayoral election candidates who ran in the 2019 elections in 519 districts of thirty metropolitan municipalities in Turkey. I also relied on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 elites, men and women, from different political parties in Turkey to investigate what motivates political party elites to nominate women with intersecting identities. Additionally, to supplement the interview data, I included a content analysis of TV interviews of secular-appearing candidates during the 2019 mayoral election campaigns when such data is available.

Overall, results from descriptive and multivariate models showed that partisan polarization favoring the secularist party increases the likelihood of secular-appearing

women nominations by all parties in the mayoral elections. In districts where negative partisanship with secularist sentiment is high against the Islamist party, elites of the Islamist party increase the number of secular-appearing women candidates. Also, an increase in education and development levels positively influences the secular-appearing women's nomination. The findings of qualitative analysis supported and added insight into the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter. Interviewees collectively affirmed the AKP elites strategically nominate secular-appearing women in districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high in order to appeal to the secularist constituents who predominantly vote for the CHP.

By analyzing descriptive statistics and using multivariate models, I have found that district-level secularist partisanship is positively associated with an increase in the percentage of nominations of women candidates whose identities speak to the strongest party's base in districts. Party elites are more likely to nominate secular-appearing women in districts where there is a high secularist polarization against the Islamist ruling party. In addition, logistic regression models comparing nomination decisions of the AKP and the CHP elites for each district-level factor indicate that an increase in negative partisan polarization against the AKP increases the likelihood of secular-appearing women's nomination remarkably, and the effect is statistically significant *(p < .001)* which supports the *H1a*. These quantitative findings support the main argument that the Islamist AKP leverages the identities of the secular-appearing women candidates to appeal to voters of the rival party, the secularist CHP, in races where Islamist-secularist polarization is high, and the AKP's competitiveness is low due to negative partisanship against this party.

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Moreover, I obtained rich and detailed accounts of the elites' decision-making when formulating electoral strategy by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with political party elites. Qualitative analysis of these interviews reveals that elites consider candidates' traits, district-level factors, and electoral competition when nominating candidates. The findings of qualitative analysis not only support Hypothesis 1a but also provide insights into the incentives of male party elites to leverage secular-appearing women's identities.

Interviewees collectively affirm the AKP elites are more likely to nominate secular-appearing women in districts where polarization with secularist sentiments is high. They describe the main reasoning as the challenging competition conditions due to negative partisan attitudes of voters who are concerned with Islamisation and intervention in secularist lifestyles under the AKP governments in the last 20 years. The bias against the headscarf and the AKP, as the party is responsible for Islamisation, intensify party elites to assure these concerns during electoral campaigns. Thus, by selecting secular-appearing women candidates, the AKP aims to establish a dialogue with the electorate by signaling tolerance for secularist lifestyle choices. In addition, by selecting secular-appearing women, the AKP means to appeal to voters who are concerned with the recent democratic backlash in the country since secular-appearing women are stereotyped as more democratic. Also, the interviewees describe the potential target of this electoral strategy as floating voters who are dissatisfied with the secularist party's candidate and may consider voting for an AKP candidate as being "one of their own." In such situations, the party relies on information shortcuts that the candidate's appearance sends to voters. The appearance

of women candidates, rather than the appearance of men, sends information shortcuts to secularist constituents about secularist lifestyle choices; thus, selecting secular-appearing candidates is considered as a strategically right move by party elites.

These results make significant contributions to the women's representation literature. First, my argument challenges research that explains elite behavior toward women's inclusion by studying women as a single group. I show that applying intersectionality as an analytical tool to study what motivates the male elites to include women in politics reveals more nuanced findings than studies analyzing women as a single category. My findings suggest that party elites pay attention to the multidimensional identities of candidates, such as ethnic, racial, or religious orientation, along with their gender. Moreover, I find that these party elites strategically assess the value attracted to women candidates' identities depending on the district-level factors and how variations of these factors affect such value. Therefore, my findings indicate that making inferences about elite strategic behavior towards women's identities requires us to pay attention to symbolic politics regarding women's intersecting identities contextually since stereotypes associated with these identities vary among different cultural contexts.

Moreover, I find that polarization between identities being decisive in vote choice is another incentive for party elites to increase women's presence in politics. In electoral contexts where women's identities play a central role in symbolic contestations between two opposing partisan groups, the symbolic value attached to women's identities motivate party selectorate to leverage women's intersecting identities to send information shortcuts

to the electorate in limited competition conditions. Furthermore, I find that women's placement in unwinnable seats due to being 'sacrificial lambs,' or to meet quota requirements might have overshadowed the possibility that party elites place women in these challenging seats because the value attached to their multidimensional identities increases in these challenging districts. In other words, I find that women with intersecting identities are selected strategically to run in challenging districts as their intersectional identities provide party elites with strategic benefits to signal to voters of the rival party under high polarization.

Finally, my findings open pathways to further research. This article provides a single case study comparing parties' and strategic elites' behavior toward women's inclusion within one political context. However, potential future studies can test these findings in other cases in which women's apparent ethnic, racial, and religious identities are strategically utilized by party elites in electoral competition. Also, my study focuses on how this strategy has played out at the local level. Future studies can apply this theoretical approach to study elections at national levels depending on electoral systems, gender quota status, social cleavages, and polarization conditions. Also, strategically minded elites may use this strategy by including women in politics through appointments. One possible avenue of future research is to analyze whether women appointees' intersecting identities incentivize elites to select them to appoint for certain political positions as well.

In conclusion, this dissertation broadens our understanding of the elites' strategic behavior toward women's inclusion in politics and contributes to the literature by showing

how elites utilize women and their intersecting identities to increase vote share and gain

electoral advantages under unfavorable electoral conditions.

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Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics on Women Candidates' Religious

Identities and Districts Type

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics on Women Candidates' Religious Identities and Districts Type

Secular-Appearing Women Candidates by Party Across District Type								
	in AKP Strongholds	in the CHP Strongholds	in the HDP Strongholds	in the MHP Strongholds	Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties	Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties	Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties	Total Number of Secular-Appearing Women by Party
AKP	1	10	0	0	0	0	2	13
SP	2	5	1	0	0	0	1	9
MHP	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
IYIP	3	1	2	0	0	0	2	8
CHP	9	3	0	0	1	0	3	16
HDP	2	1	9	0	2	1	4	19
Total	17	21	12	0	3	1	12	66
Women Candidates Wearing Headscarves by Party Across District Type								
	in AKP Strongholds	in the CHP Strongholds	in the HDP Strongholds	in the MHP Strongholds	Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties	Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties	Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties	Total Number of Secular-Appearing Women by Party
AKP	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
SP	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
MHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IYIP	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
CHP	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
HDP	2	1	0	0	1	0	3	7
Total	11	2	1	0	2	0	4	20

Source: An Original dataset on 519 districts of 30 metropolitan municipalities and 1734 candidates who ran in the 2019 Mayoral Elections in Turkey.

Appendix B: Summary of Variables

Table 6 Summary of multivariate model variables

Variables	N	Mean	St.Dev.	Min	Max
NP Against the AKP	519	.452	1.191	-2.910	8.123
AKP Stronghold District	519	.497	.022	0	1
CHP Stronghold District	519	.150	.016	0	1
HDP Stronghold District	519	.042	.009	0	1
MHP Stronghold District	519	.027	.007	0	1
Districts Swing between Right-wing Parties	519	.100	.013	0	1
Districts Swing between Left-wing Parties	519	.002	.002	0	1
Districts Swing between Right and Left Parties	519	.181	.017	0	1
Incumbent Candidate in District	519	.316	.020	0	1
Economic Development Level	519	.087	.001	0.6	.16
Female Education Ratio	519	.253	.005	0.5	0.71
No Vote Rate in the 2017 Referendum	519	.460	.008	.03	.94
Percentage of Women Candidate	519	.047	.005	0	.67
Percentage of Secular- appearing Women Candidate	519	.036	.005	0	.67
Percentage of Women Candidate Wearing Headscarf	519	.011	.054	0	.33
Secular Appearing Women Candidate from the AKP	431	.025	.156	0	1
Secular Appearing Women Candidate from the AKP	363	.031	.008	0	1

Note: To create NP Against the AKP variable, I weighed the No Vote Rate in the 2019 Referendum variable with the Female Education Ratio and standardized it to avoid relative differences. Therefore the minimum value of this variable is a negative value.

Appendix C: List of Interviewees and Interview Methods

Table 7 List of Interviewees and Interview Methods

					AKP				
	Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Title	Format	Length	Date	Location	Documentation
1	Mehmet	Male	50-59	District Mayor in Trabzon	Semi-Structured	90 min	6/4/2022	Trabzon	Audio-recoding and transcript available
2	Ali	Male	50-59	Worked for the AKP's Trabzon Branch for years/ Ran for Candidacy in National Elections	Semi-Structured	120 min	6/5/2022	Trabzon	Audio-recoding and transcript available
3	Seda	Female	40-49	MP	Semi-Structured	65 min	6/21/2022	Ankara	Audio-recoding and transcript available
4	Fatma	Female	50-59	MP/ Works in a leadership poison in Women's Branches	Semi-Structured	40 min	6/23/2022	Ankara	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available
5	Cihan	Male	40-49	Works in a leadership poison in Election Office at Izmir AKP Branch	Semi-Structured	65 min	7/19/2022	Izmir	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available
6	Kemal	Male	40-49	Works in a leadership poison in Ankara, Cankaya AKP Branch	Semi-Structured	35 min	6/24/2022	Ankara	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available
7	Hasan	Male	50-59	A former worker of Party Branches in multiple cites	Semi-Structured	105 min	7/18/2022	Istanbul	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available
8	Ahmet	Male	40-49	Works at the AKP Trabzon Branch	Semi-Structured	45 min	6/29/2022	Trabzon	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available

	Pseydum	Sex	Age	Title	Format	Length	Date	Location	Documentation
				CHP					
9	Cemal	Male	60-69	Former MP/ Works in a leadership position in the CHP Kadikoy Branch, a member of an ethnic minority group	Semi-Structured	40 min	5/21/2022	Istanbul	Audio-recoding and transcript available
10	Dilek	Female	50-59	MP Candidate in the 2018 and 2023/ Instructor at the Party School	Semi-Structured	100 min	5/22/2022	Istanbul	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available
11	Huseyin	Male	60-69	District Mayor in Istanbul since 1994	Semi-Structured	45 min	6/10/2022	Istanbul	Audio-recoding and transcript available
12	Taner	Male	50-59	One of the Vice Presidents/ MP Candidates in the 2018 and 2023 General Elections	Semi-Structured	60 min	6/11/2022	Istanbul	Audio-recoding and transcript available
13	Gamze	Female	31-39	One of the Vice Presidents/ Having a leading role in Youth Branches/ MP Candidate in the 2023 General Elections	Semi-Structured	55 min	6/30/2022	Ankara	Audio-recoding and transcript available
14	Ibrahim	Male	50-59	Having a Leading role at CHP Trabzon Branch	Semi-Structured	90 min	6/29/2022	Trabzon	Note-taking during and after the interview- notes are available

				IYIP					
	Pseydum	Sex	Age	Title	Format	Length	Date	Location	Documentation
15	Suna	Female	60-69	MP/ Head of Election Office at the Party Headquarters	Semi-Structured	35 min	6/27/2022	Ankara	Note-taking during and after the interview-notes are available
16	Mustafa	Male	70-79	Former MP and Having a Leading Role in Party Management	Semi-Structured	40 min	6/27/2022	Ankara	Audio-recoding and transcript available
17	Ayse	Female	60-69	MP Candidate/ Have a leading Role in Women Branches	Semi-Structured	45 min	6/27/2022	Ankara	Note-taking during and after the interview-notes are available
				HDP					
	Pseydum	Sex	Age	Title	Format	Length	Date	Location	Documentation
18	Yakup	Male	31-39	MP Adviser	Semi-Structured	100 min	6/22/2022	Ankara	Note-taking during and after the interview-notes are available
19	Dilek	Female	20-29	MP Adviser	Semi-Structured	60 min	6/24/2022	Ankara	Audio-recoding and transcript available
20	Figen	Female	31-39	MP/ Having a Leading role in the Women's Council	Semi-Structured	60 min	8/10/2022	Ankara	Audio-recoding and transcript available

Appendix D: Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me more about your position in the party?
2. Can you describe the candidate selection process in the party?
3. Do you have any responsibilities in the candidate selection process?
4. How does the party see the women's role in society? Do you agree or disagree with the party's position?
5. Are there any party policies that aim for women's political participation?
6. Whose decision is the most significant determinant of which candidate will be selected?
   a. Whose decision is the most significant determinant of which mayoral candidate/deputy will be selected in a particular district?
   b. How does the party decide who will run for a mayoral position in a given district?
   c. How does the party decide who will get into party lists?
   d. How does the party decide the order of the party lists in general elections?
   e. How does the party decide the order of the party lists in local elections?
   f. Are women be able to place in winnable positions?
   g. IF YES: Where does the party place more women in a winnable position on the party lists? Can you please describe these districts' demographic features?
   h. IF NO: Then why do you prefer to include them on the lists?
7. Is there a demand for women candidates in the party?
   a. IF YES, can you be more specific about the profile of these women who the party demands? Are there any specific criteria?
   b. IF NOT MENTIONED: Do selectors consider women candidates' financial supports or their ties to wealthy men as criteria for selection?
   c. Do the identities of aspirant women play a role in their inclusion in the party lists? How about conservative women?/ How about women with headscarves?/How about Kurdish Women?/How about secular women?/etc.
8. Is there enough supply of women candidates?
   a. IF YES: Can you be more specific about the profile of these women who want to run for office?
   b. Are there any women from the party leader's family or inner circle who want to join the party? IF YES: Are they located in winnable positions?
9. The party has been increasingly recruiting women candidates with a headscarf and/or women candidates from minorities; why does the party select these women specifically?
10. In which districts or races does the party prefer running with a women candidate with a headscarf and/or a secular woman, or a woman candidate from minorities?
11. How do voters perceive these candidates?
12. Does the party prefer minority women other than minority men? If yes, in which locations?
13. How does the increase in the number of women in the party affect men?
14. Are there any women at the top decision levels in the party?
    a. IF YES: Are they effective in the recruitment process?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics of Provinces in Turkey

Province	Metropolitan Municipality Status	Population	Percentage of Yes Vote	Percentage of No Vote	Percentage of Female Highschool Graduation
Adana	Yes	2 274 106	41.83%	58.17%	44.70%
Ankara	Yes	5 782 285	48.85%	51.15%	45.98%
Antalya	Yes	2 688 004	40.92%	59.08%	45.96%
Aydın	Yes	1 148 241	35.66%	64.34%	46.57%
Balıkesir	Yes	1 257 590	45.50%	54.50%	43.42%
Bursa	Yes	3 194 720	53.21%	46.79%	42.49%
Denizli	Yes	1 056 332	44.53%	55.47%	45.21%
Diyarbakır	Yes	1 804 880	32.41%	67.59%	40.77%
Erzurum	Yes	749 754	74.48%	25.52%	40.01%
Eskişehir	Yes	906 617	42.43%	57.57%	41.98%
Gaziantep	Yes	2 154 051	62.45%	37.55%	42.42%
Hatay	Yes	1 686 043	45.65%	54.35%	44.04%
İstanbul	Yes	15 907 951	48.65%	51.35%	45.42%
İzmir	Yes	4 462 056	31.20%	68.80%	45.85%
Kahramanmaraş	Yes	1 177 436	73.96%	26.04%	40.28%
Kayseri	Yes	1 441 523	67.76%	32.24%	43.10%
Kocaeli	Yes	2 079 072	56.69%	43.31%	41.83%
Konya	Yes	2 296 347	72.88%	27.12%	43.19%
Malatya	Yes	812 580	69.57%	30.43%	42.72%
Manisa	Yes	1 468 279	45.67%	54.33%	43.10%
Mardin	Yes	870 374	40.94%	59.06%	39.70%
Mersin	Yes	1 916 432	35.95%	64.05%	44.82%
Muğla	Yes	1 048 185	30.67%	69.33%	45.40%
Ordu	Yes	763 190	61.89%	38.11%	42.02%
Sakarya	Yes	1 080 080	68.05%	31.95%	43.04%
Samsun	Yes	1 368 488	63.55%	36.45%	45.46%
Şanlıurfa	Yes	2 170 110	47.83%	52.17%	37.68%
Trabzon	Yes	818 023	66.45%	33.55%	44.16%
Van	Yes	1 128 749	42.73%	57.27%	38.46%
Adıyaman	No	635 169	69.76%	30.24%	42.31%
Afyonkarahisar	No	747 555	64.56%	35.44%	40.38%
Ağrı	No	510 626	43.08%	56.92%	37.29%
Aksaray	No	433 055	75.49%	24.51%	42.02%
Amasya	No	338 267	56.26%	43.74%	41.69%

Ardahan	No	92 481	44.27%	55.73%	36.02%
Artvin	No	169 403	46.93%	53.07%	38.06%
Bartın	No	203 351	56.03%	43.97%	42.81%
Batman	No	634 491	36.34%	63.66%	41.15%
Bayburt	No	84 241	81.70%	18.30%	42.08%
Bilecik	No	228 673	48.86%	51.14%	38.49%
Bingöl	No	282 556	72.57%	27.43%	45.98%
Bitlis	No	353 988	59.35%	40.65%	38.36%
Bolu	No	320 824	62.26%	37.74%	42.81%
Burdur	No	273 799	51.75%	48.25%	43.90%
Çanakkale	No	559 383	39.54%	60.46%	43.83%
Çankırı	No	195 766	73.35%	26.65%	39.95%
Çorum	No	524 130	64.49%	35.51%	42.41%
Düzce	No	405 131	70.56%	29.44%	42.04%
Edirne	No	414 714	29.50%	70.50%	43.86%
Elazığ	No	591 497	71.79%	28.21%	40.86%
Erzincan	No	239 223	60.50%	39.50%	43.53%
Giresun	No	450 862	61.66%	38.34%	42.54%
Gümüşhane	No	144 544	75.16%	24.84%	42.24%
Hakkari	No	275 333	32.42%	67.58%	39.27%
Iğdır	No	203 594	34.80%	65.20%	42.39%
Isparta	No	445 325	56.02%	43.98%	45.07%
Karabük	No	252 058	60.73%	39.27%	41.65%
Karaman	No	260 838	63.85%	36.15%	44.89%
Kars	No	274 829	50.95%	49.05%	39.69%
Kastamonu	No	378 115	64.82%	35.18%	40.40%
Kilis	No	147 919	62.42%	37.58%	46.66%
Kırıkkale	No	277 046	28.67%	71.33%	40.48%
Kırklareli	No	369 347	53.25%	46.75%	42.71%
Kırşehir	No	244 519	64.09%	35.91%	43.32%
Kütahya	No	580 701	70.31%	29.69%	39.00%
Muş	No	399 202	50.56%	49.44%	39.60%
Nevşehir	No	310 011	65.59%	34.41%	44.15%
Niğde	No	365 419	59.80%	40.20%	43.28%
Osmaniye	No	559 405	57.84%	42.16%	43.43%
Rize	No	344 016	75.55%	24.45%	42.12%
Siirt	No	331 311	57.75%	42.25%	36.78%
Sinop	No	220 799	71.28%	28.72%	44.54%
Sivas	No	634 924	70.82%	29.18%	40.65%

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Şırnak	No	557 605	28.31%	71.69%	37.25%
Tekirdağ	No	1 142 451	38.89%	61.11%	41.04%
Tokat	No	596 454	63.18%	36.82%	41.77%
Tunceli	No	84 366	19.59%	80.41%	38.43%
Uşak	No	375 454	47.03%	52.97%	44.49%
Yalova	No	296 333	49.73%	50.27%	44.81%
Yozgat	No	418 442	74.27%	25.73%	39.56%
Zonguldak	No	588 510	49.35%	50.65%	40.60%

Appendix F: Codebook

Inclusive/Exclusive Candidate Selection Methos and Placement of Candidates			
Descriptor	*Code*	*Explanation*	*Examples*
CSM: Centralized Candidate Selection Methods	CSM: CENT	Centralized candidate selection process in which the top level of party elites decide who are selected as candidates and their placement	Title of the top-level elites who makes decisions on candidate selection mentioned by the interviewees
CSM: Decentralized Candidate Selection Methods	CSM: DCENT	A candidate selection process with relatively higher levels of inclusiveness. The selectorate includes local party elites, party organizations, or parties that hold primaries for a portion of candidates.	Title of the lower-level elites who makes decisions on candidate selection mentioned by the interviewees
CP: Candidate Placement	CP	Party elites who make decisions on the placement of candidates on PR lists or mayoral districts	Title of the elites who decide on candidate placements on PR lists and mayoral seats mentioned by the interviewees
Gender, Ethnic, Religious, and Other Identities of Candidates Impacting Their Selection			
Descriptor	*Code*	*Explanation*	*Examples*
GID: Gender Identity of Women Candidates	GID: W	The gender identity of women as an advantage or disadvantage in selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate women candidates in certain districts
GID: Gender Identity of Men Candidates	GID: M	The gender identity of men as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate men candidates in certain districts
GID: Gender Identity of LGBTQ Candidates	IDG: LGBTQ	The gender identity of LGBTQ members as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate LGBTQ members as candidates, and if yes, in what type of districts
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Kurdish minorities	ID: KURD	Kurdish minority identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Kurdish candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Kurdish candidates, and why they do so

ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Alevi Minorities	ID: ALV	Alevi Minority identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Alevi candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Alevi candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Nusayri minorities (Arab Alevi Minorities)	ID: NUS	Nusayri minority (Arab Alevi Minority) identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Nusayri candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Nusayri candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Circassian minorities	ID: CIR	Circassian minority identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Circassian candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Circassian candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Bulgarian immigrants	ID: BUL	Bulgarian immigrant identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Bulgarian immigrant candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Bulgarian immigrant candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Roma people	ID: ROMA	Roma identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer to nominate Roma candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Roma candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Roma people	ID: SEC	Secular identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer secular-appearing candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women secular-appearing candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities of Conservative/ Muslim identity	ID: CONS	Conservative/ Muslim identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	Whether party elites prefer conservative/ Muslim-appearing candidates in certain districts. Whether they prefer men or women Conservative/ Muslim appearing candidates, and why they do so
ID: Ethnic/Religious or other Identities: Hemsehri identity	ID: HEM	Hemsehri identity as an advantage or disadvantage in the selection	How *hemsherilik* play a role in their candidate selection process, which hemsehri group members are more

			advantageous in candidate selection

District-Level Factors impacting candidate selection decisions

	Code	Explanation	Examples
DIS: Western Part of Turkey	DIS: WEST	Western Cities, the Mediterranean region	Cities like Istanbul, Izmir, and Denizli, where relatively wealthier, educated, and secular voters are clustered
DIS: Eastern, Eastern, and North Eastern Anatolia Regions	DIS: EAST	Eastern Cities, Eastern, and North Eastern Anatolia	Cities like Kayseri, Sanliurfa, and Erzurum, where relatively less wealthy, less educated, and conservative voters are clustered
DIS: Rural areas	DIS: RURAL	Rural areas such as villages and small towns	Rural areas of Turkey
DIS: Urban centers	DIS: URBAN	Big cities, regional capitals, urban centers, metropolitan cities	Big cities in all 7 regions of Turkey
DIS: Kurdish Region	DIS: KREG	Cities populated by Kurdish people like Diyarbakir, Van, etc.	Southern Eastern part of Turkey, where Kurdish minorities are clustered
DIS: Blacksea	DIS: BSEA	Blacksea Region	North Coastal line of Turkey by the Black Sea
DIS: Minority districts	DIS: MIN	Minority-dense cities/districts	Cities and Districts that members of a minority group clustered
DIS: CHP Strongholds	DIS: CHP	CHP Strongholds	Districts the CHP won in the last three local elections
DIS: AKP Strongholds	DIS: AKP	AKP Strongholds	Districts the AKP won in the last three local elections
DIS: Nationalist Districts	DIS: NAT	Nationalist Districts where voters vote for nationalist parties	Districts that are known as dominated by nationalist voters
DIS: HDP Strongholds	DIS: HDP	HDP Strongholds	Districts the HDP or former Kurdish parties won in the last three local elections

DIS: Conservative	DIS: CONS	Conservative Districts	Districts that are known as dominated by conservative voters
DIS: Leftist	DIS: LEFT	Leftist Districts	Districts that are known as dominated by leftist voters
DIS: Right	DIS: RIGHT	Right Districts	Districts that are known as dominated by voters who vote for right-wing parties
Elites' Motivations for Selecting Candidates with a Particular Identity to Appeal to Certain Groups			
Descriptor	Code	Explanation	Examples
SIG: Seculars	SIG: SEC	Signaling tolerance for secularist concerns	Appealing to voters with secularist concerns, such as fear of Islamization and compulsory hijab and concerns regarding secularist lifestyle choices
SIG: Democracy Supporters	SIG: Dem	Signaling Tolerance for Democratic Concerns	Appealing to voters with democratic concerns regarding authoritarianism under the AKP
SIG: Minority Group	SIG: Min	Signaling tolerance for Minority Concerns and assurance of some of their demands	Appealing to voters with concerns regarding minority representation, the right to get education in the mother tongue, ethnic identity recognition
SIG: Block Voters	SIG: BV	Signaling block voters such as *hemşehri* associations, ethnic or religious groups	Selecting candidates who can bring block votes to the party
SIG: Floating Voter	SIG: FV	Signal Floating Voters	Selecting candidates who can appeal to floating voters who are not satisfied by the candidate of their own party.

Appendix G: IRB Human Subjects Approval

Portland State
U N I V E R S I T Y
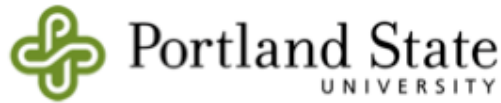
Human Research Protection Program
1600 SW 4ᵗʰ Avenue, Suite 620
Portland, OR 97201
(503) 725-5484   psuirb@pdx.edu

Human Research Protection Program
Notice of Exempt Certification

May 03, 2022

Dear Investigator,

The PSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the following submission:

Investigator(s)	Lindsay Benstead / Elif Sari Genc
HRPP #	227698-18
Title	Do Men Strategically Leverage Female Identities? The Candidacy of Women with Intersecting Identities as an Electoral Competition Strategy: The Case of Turkey's Local Elections
Funding Agency / Kuali #	N/A
Determination Date	May 03, 2022
Expiration Date	N/A
Review Category(ies)	Exempt: # 2

The IRB determined this study qualifies as exempt and is satisfied the provisions for protecting the rights and welfare of all subjects participating in research are adequate. The study may proceed in accordance with the HRPP materials submitted.

Approval by the PSU HRPP to conduct human subjects research does not constitute permission to access and use protected data (such as FERPA-protected student records) for research purposes. Other institutional approvals must be sought and obtained prior to accessing protected data for research purposes.

Please note the following ongoing Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) requirements:

IMPORTANT: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all researchers and research personnel conducting human subjects research are required to comply with state and local health authority mandates, as well as PSU policy, on social distancing and other protective measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission.

Changes to Study Activities: Any changes to the study must be submitted to the HRPP for review and determination prior to implementation.

Unanticipated Problems or Adverse Events: Notify the HRPP within 5 days of any unanticipated problems or adverse events that occur as a result of the study.

Study Completion: Notify the HRPP when the study is complete; the HRPP will request annual updates on the study status. Study materials must be kept for at least three years following completion.

Compliance: The PSU IRB (FWA00000091; IRB00000903) and HRPP comply with 45 CFR Part 46, 21 CFR Parts 50 and 56, 28 CFR Part 46, and other federal and Oregon laws and regulations, as applicable.

If there are any questions, please contact the HRPP at psuirb@pdx.edu or call 503-725-5484.

Sincerely,

Eva M. Willis, CIP, IRB Administrator
Human Research Protection Program