

# **DETERMINANTS OF TURKISH CITIZENS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

*Following a brief introduction of the literature on the role of public opinion in international relations, the author analyzes the fluctuations of public opinion in Turkey towards the UN and the EU. The factors that trust in these institutions depends on and the variations within different segments of the Turkish society are dissected.*

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Public opinion is the missing element of the analysis of international relations. The international system based on nation states as rational and unitary actors leaves no room for populace to articulate their foreign policy preferences. Rather, they merely delegate their power to elected governments. The role given to the public in foreign policy formation is one of the important issues in the conflict between the liberal and realist approaches to the study of international relations. Disillusion by the Wilsonian approach and the Cold War prepared a suitable environment for the realist school, to undervalue the role of the public opinion and treat it as a residual factor. Nevertheless, the end of the Cold War and the emergence of the inter-societal dialogue created a significant opportunity space for analysis of public opinion.

The majority of international institutions are products of the nation state system and the Cold War paradigm. The leading international institutions were established during the years following the Second World War and their missions were to facilitate international dialogue. Only after the end of the Cold War, some of them take advantage of this opportunity space and transformed themselves to supra-national institutions. The European Union, despite its weaknesses is the most successful case of this transformation.

This changing role of international institutions and increased concentration of managers of these institutions on public policy attracted the attention of scholars to determinants of attitudes of citizens towards these institutions. Enriching literature about social capital and trust provided analytical tools to understand this relatively new phenomenon.

In this article, determinants of attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions with special emphasis on the United Nations and the European Union will be elaborated on. Data provided by international institutions such as the Eurobarometer, the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey will be employed to test hypotheses provided by comparative discussion about international trust.

### ***Trust, International Trust and International Institutions***

Introduction of new concepts is not a frequently observed phenomenon in social sciences. The majority of basic concepts of social sciences were invented many decades ago, especially during the rapid paradigmatic shift years of the 19th and 20th centuries. If the focus of study is limited with international relations, the founding fathers of the discipline invented almost all basic concepts. However, the paradigmatic shift that took place after the end of the Cold War created a suitable environment for introducing new concepts, basic blocs of the scientific study.

Trust is one of these new concepts which is increasingly popular. Trust is accepted as one of the most important indicators of the quality of democracy, political

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culture and democratic governance.<sup>1</sup> A significant number of academic papers showed that high trust societies tend to have higher growth rates, lower levels of poverty and income inequality, higher citizen civic participation and lower levels of corruption.<sup>2</sup>

Recent works showed that trust also plays an important role in the formation of public opinion about political issues. The “mood theory” of Converse (1964) argues that the political beliefs of the mass public does not have any kind of consistency and answers given to survey seems to be obtained randomly rather than being a product of ideological point of view. This “mood” or “minimalist” theory dominated the study of public opinion, leaving little room to the public opinion as a determinant of policies. Accompanied with the realist paradigm in the study of international relations, the ignorance of opinion of public formed the “Post-War consensus.”<sup>3</sup>

The “mood theory” was challenged in the 1980s through the detailed fieldwork of prominent academics and numerous field surveys that provided data showing that citizens maintain a certain level of consistency by using some information shortcuts to form political judgments. Converse, Almond and their followers were right to underline the fact that political issues are too complex for ordinary citizens. Citizens lacks the necessary of information especially about international disputes, therefore information shortcuts help them form consistent opinions. In the field of foreign policy, major shortcuts are principles or foreign policy postures (isolationism vs. internationalism) and images of nations (the Soviet Evil).<sup>4</sup>

Brewer and his colleagues showed that trust is one of these shortcuts determining positions of ordinary citizens in foreign policy issues.<sup>5</sup> According to them citizens having higher level of social trust are less “xenophobic” while higher political trust leads to higher trust in international institutions and higher levels of support for peaceful actions instead of military interventions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For For a detailed discussion about trust, see Eric Uslaner; “Trust as a moral value”, paper prepared for the European Research Conference on “Social Capital: Interdisciplinary perspectives”, Exeter, 15-20 September 2001, available at: [www.ex.ac.uk/shipss/politics/research/socialcapital/](http://www.ex.ac.uk/shipss/politics/research/socialcapital/); Kenneth Ruscio; “Jay’s Pirouette, Or Why Political Trust is not the Same As Personal Trust”; *Administration and Society*; Vol:31, No.5, 1999; John Dunn; “Trust and Political Agency”. In: Gambetta, D. (Ed.), *Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations*; Blackwell, Oxford, 1998; pp. 73-93; and Francis Fukuyama; “Social Capital and the Global Economy”; *Foreign Affairs*, Vol:74 No.5; 1995

<sup>32</sup> Uslaner (2001)., Charles Boix and Daniel N. Posner “Social Capital: Explaining Its Origins and Effects on Government Performance”; *British Journal of Political Science*; Vol:28, No.:4; 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Ole R. Holsti. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004; pp. 36-40.

<sup>4</sup> Holsti, 2004; pp. 40-80; John Hurwitz and Mark Peffley; “How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured? A Hierarchical Model”; *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 4; 1987; pp.870-878.

<sup>5</sup> Paul R. Brewer and Marco R. Steenbergen; 2002; “All Against All: How Beliefs about Human Nature Shape Foreign Policy Opinions”; *Political Psychology*; Vol:23, No.1, 2002; Paul R. Brewer; Kimberly Gross, Sean Aday, Lars Willnat; 2004; “International Trust and Public Opinion About World Affairs”; *American Journal of Political Science*; Vol:48 No.1, 2004;.

<sup>6</sup> Brewer et al (2004). pp. 95-98.

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At this point, we need to make some distinctions between different versions of trust. Although academicians like Fukuyama or institutions like the World Bank tend to use ‘trust’ as an umbrella concept covering all sorts of trust, several studies have showed that the concept needs further specification and is far from being unidimensional. The major dimensions of trust are as follows:

### ***Strategic vs. Generalized Trust***

There are two different approaches to the study of trust. According to the ‘rational’ approach, trust is “nothing more or less than the considerations a rational actor applies in deciding to place a bet”<sup>7</sup> and it is a result of calculation of one’s own interest. Uslaner labels this approach as “strategic” because “If Jane trusts Bill to keep his word and if Bill trusts Jane to keep her word, they can reach an agreement to cooperate and thus make both of them better”.<sup>8</sup> That kind of trust facilitates collaboration and reduces transaction costs.

The “generalized trust” forwarded by Uslaner, is based on “moralistic values” and defined as:

the belief that others share your fundamental moral values and therefore should be treated as you would wish to be treated by them. The values they share may vary from person to person. What matters is a sense of connection with others because you see them as members of your community whose interests must be taken seriously<sup>9</sup>.

Factors distinguishing ‘generalized trust’ and ‘strategic trust’ are mainly experience and risk. Advocators of ‘strategic trust’ emphasize the fact that people form opinion about other people after a series of transactions and a set of cooperative transactions reduces uncertainty and risk. From this perspective trust is dependent on performance (cooperation) and is fragile, because every new experience can endanger previously established trust. On the other hand, ‘generalized trust’ is relatively stable and resistant to short term fluctuations and accumulated after a long period of transactions.

### ***Social Trust vs. Political Trust***

Although advocates of social capital generally employ trust as a unidimensional concept, empirical data shows that trust is far from being unidimensional. According to Newton, there is no or little correlation between trust in family or countrymen and trust in parliament or political parties.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, social trust (trust in other people) and political trust are two different concepts. Social trust is a result of strategic interaction among people or a common shared po-

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<sup>7</sup> Coleman, cf. Ruscio (1999), p.644.

<sup>8</sup> Uslaner, (2001).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Newton; “Social Trust and Political Disaffection: Social Capital and Democracy”; Paper prepared for the EURESCO Conference on Social Capital: Interdisciplinary Perspectives Exeter, 15-20 September 2001; p.11

litical culture while political trust is highly determined by institutional performance. Newton and Norris shows that political trust is not correlated with social trust or personal characteristics of individuals but only related with institutional performance<sup>11</sup>. Pharr, Putnam and Dalton analyzed a number of developed countries and stated that political trust of citizens declined continuously during the last 25 years. Nevertheless, authors see political performance of institutions as only one of three factors affecting opinions of citizens. Two other factors, fidelity and social capital are highly affected by declining social trust<sup>12</sup>.

A careful reading of political science literature illustrates the fact that authors often use words of trust and confidence interchangeably and there is little discussion about differences between these two concepts. An implicit distinction is visible that majority of authors talk about trust when they are discussing interpersonal relationships; while they prefer confidence in institutions. Sapsford and Abbot states that:

We distinguish between ‘trust’ in people and ‘confidence’ in the nature of the social environment. Attitudes to concrete institutions of government and welfare have elements of both concepts, involving both confidence in the social environment of which they form a part and trust in the individuals who form and administer them.<sup>13</sup>

Discussion of attitudes of citizens towards international institutions has to be within boundaries of above discussed dichotomies:

- If confidence in international institutions is rational/strategic; performance of these international actors is the most important determinant of attitudes. In this option, confidence in these institutions is fragile and very open to short term fluctuations.
- If we can classify these attitudes as a function of generalized trust; it is important to discuss a common value system, especially emphasizing on internationalism. For example, internationalist arguments of the President Wilson during the 1920s are an important example for this kind on shared value system.
- If confidence in international institutions is a result of social trust –trust in other people-, it is most probably a result of the personal value system highly configured during socialization of citizens. Then we expect that people having higher levels of social trust tend to have higher confidence in international institutions.
- If confidence in international institutions is related with political trust, it means that citizens perceive international institutions as parts of po-

<sup>11</sup> Newton, Kenneth and Pippa Norris; “Confidence in Public Institutions: Faith, Culture or Performance?”; Paper for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, 1-5th September 1999; pp. 8-11

<sup>12</sup> Pharr, Susan J., Robert D. Putnam, Russel J. Dalton; “A Quarter-Century of Declining Confidence”; Journal of Democracy; Vol:11, No.2; 2000;.

<sup>13</sup> Roger Sapsford and Pamela Abbot; “Trust, Confidence and Social Environment in Post-communist Societies”; Communist and Post-Communist Studies; Vol: 39, No.1; 2006, p.61.

litical system and they transfer punishment of domestic institutions to international ones.

- Finally, if confidence of ordinary citizens in international institutions is not related with any significant variable; it means that the “Mood Theory” is valid for these cases.

Brewer and his colleagues found that social and political trust both have positive and statistically significant effects on international trust and internationalism. Age has a negative effect indicating negative effect of international environment experienced by older Americans during their formative years, while identification with the Republican Party which is generally associated with the realist approach; pushes voters to have lesser international confidence. In the same paper, authors also provided evidence for the point that citizens having higher international trust have much more positive attitudes towards other countries and lower support for military action against Iraq.<sup>14</sup> According to them, international trust is an important determinant of attitudes of citizens in foreign policy issues.

Torgler discusses factors affecting confidence in the United Nations by using individual level data collected by the World Values Survey. Torgler employed political trust, social trust, perceptions about corruption in the country as an indicator of low performance of political system, openness to globalization and a series of socioeconomic and demographic variables. A series of regression analyses showed that social and political trust have a positive effect on confidence in the UN. Other factors affecting this attitude are listed as cosmopolitanism, age (negative) and corruption (negative). As a citizen becomes more cosmopolitan, his/her confidence in the UN increases while as age or perception of corruption in the country increases; level of confidence decreases.<sup>15</sup>

Both surveys show that social and political trust are factors affecting attitudes of citizens towards international institutions while other independent variables are relatively less important. This indicates a close relationship between both international trust and the political culture of countries and performance of domestic political institutions.

Following parts of this paper will elaborate Turkish public opinion about international institutions, with special emphasis on confidence in these institutions within the boundaries of available data.

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<sup>14</sup> Brewer et al. (2004); pp.102-104.

<sup>14</sup> Benno Torgler; “Trust in International Organizations: An Empirical Investigation Focusing on the United Nations”; Review of International Organizations; forthcoming.

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## *Turkish Public Opinion and International Institutions: Descriptive Analyses*

Although we do not have any specific survey which presents attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions, a group of high quality field surveys include specific questions about the issue:

### *World Values Survey*

The first of these international surveys is conducted under the title of the World Values Survey – a specific survey conducted by a group of prominent social scientists to measure cross cultural variation among countries.<sup>16</sup> Four of five waves of this world wide survey conducted in more than 80 countries included Turkey in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2007.

Despite the fact that available data is limited to two international institutions –the United Nations and the European Union, it gives us the opportunity to take an overall picture of the change between the second (1991) and the fourth (2001) waves.<sup>17</sup>

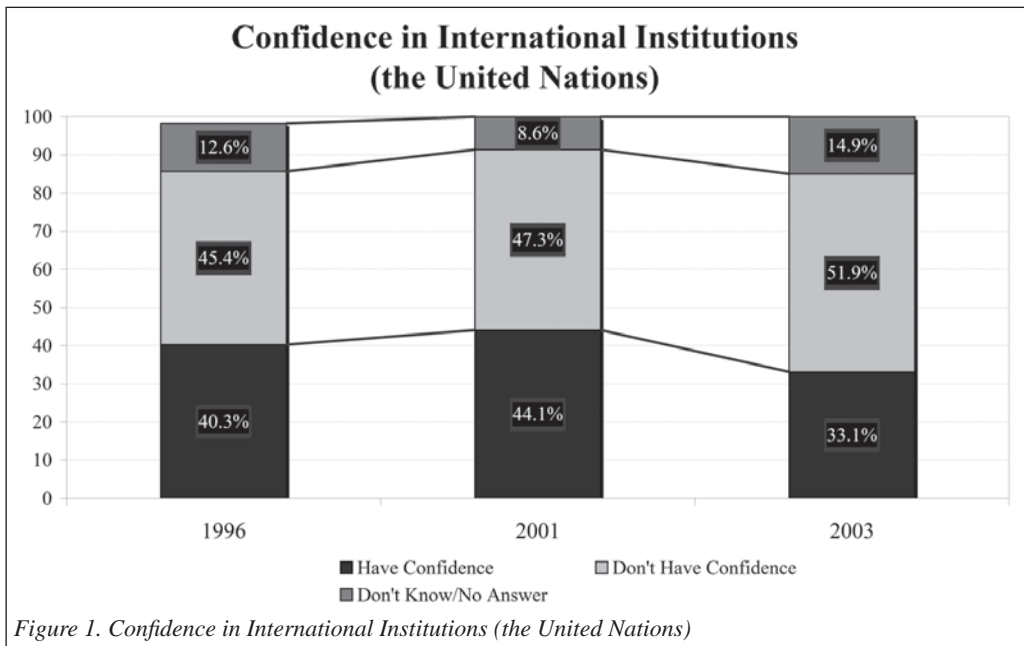


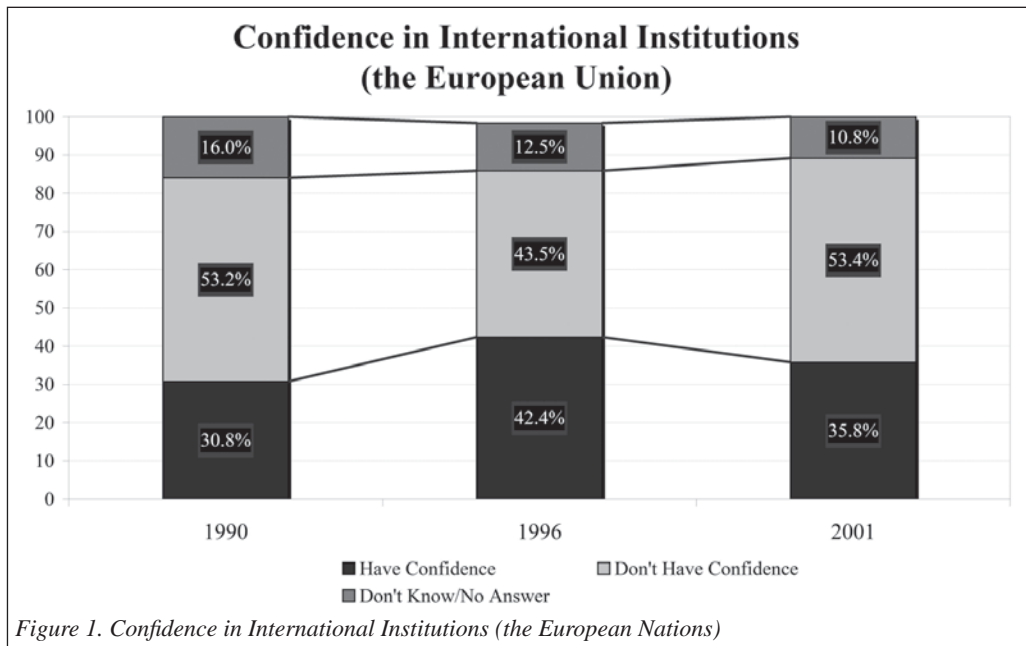
Figure one shows that the experience of the five years between 1996 and 2001 did not lead to a significant effect in the overall level of confidence of the Turk-

<sup>16</sup> Detailed data is available at [www.worldvalues.org](http://www.worldvalues.org) ; for a detailed discussion of these surveys, Yılmaz Esmer, and Thorleif Pettersson; *Measuring and Mapping Cultures: 25 Years of Comparative Value Surveys*; Brill;2007;

<sup>17</sup> Original wording of the question is as follows: "I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them. Is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?"

ish populace in the United Nations. In 1996, the percentage of those having confidence in this institution was 40 while the percentage of negative answers was 45. Almost one tenth of the respondents did not express any position on the issue. The last survey shows that confidence in the UN declined between 2001 and 2003 by 11 points while those stating negative answers increased by four points reaching 52 percent.<sup>18</sup>

Fluctuations in “Don’t know/No answer” percentages can be seen as an indicator of the “Mood Theory” discussed above. All the three surveys show that more than one tenth of the population did not answer the question.



Change in the level of confidence of Turkish public opinion in the European Union is presented in Figure 2. In 1990, when the relationship between Turkey and the European Economic Community (as it was labeled until 1993) was not yet one of the most important cleavages dividing Turkish society, 31 percent of the respondents stated that they had confidence in this institution. The Percentage of those stating negative attitudes was 53 and one sixth of the respondents did not state any opinion about the issue.

In 1996, after a couple of years spent to improve the relationship with the European Union and most probably simultaneous with the discussions about the benefits of the Customs Union, the percentage of those with confidence in the

<sup>18</sup> The last data set presents findings of another survey conducted by Infakto RW, used with the permission of the anonymous client.



European Union increased to 42 with an 11 point increase, coupled with a 10 percent decline in the negative answers. The percentage of those failed to give any answer remained almost the same.

The last publicly available wave of the World Values Survey (2007) showed that Turkish voters have withdrawn their support to the European Union. The percentage of those having confidence declined to 36 (a drop by 6 points) and those that have no confidence increased to 54 percent, almost equal to the scores of the 1991 survey.

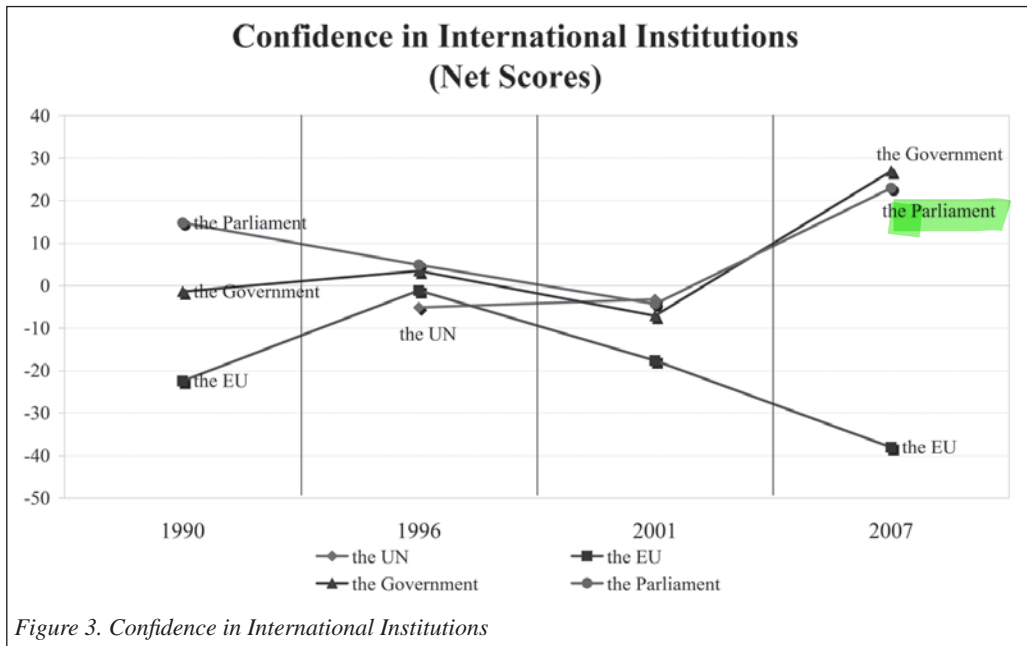


Diagram 3 shows fluctuations in the level of confidence of Turkish citizens in the EU and the UN. Net scores are calculated by subtracting the percentage of negative answers from positive answers. Net scores for both the Turkish parliament and the Turkish government are also calculated to present findings from a comparative perspective. Scores for the last wave of the World Values Survey are obtained from a press conference held by Yılmaz Esmer.<sup>19</sup> According to these scores:

- Confidence in the UN stayed almost same between 1996 and 2001. Presentation distributed in the press conference does not include net scores for the UN however it seems that percentage of those stating confidence in the UN has decreased.
- Net confidence score of the EU became 0, indicating a neutral posi-

<sup>19</sup> Presentation accessed through <http://betam.bahcesehir.edu.tr/UserFiles/File/sunum/betamsunum7.2.08.pdf> on 11 February 2008.



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tion of the Turkish public opinion about this institution in 1996. This score was -22.4 percent in 1990. Between 1996 and 2001, the net confidence score of the EU declined to -17.6 percent. Findings from the last wave also show that the negative attitudes of the Turkish public opinion reached -38 percent in 2007. Following parts of the paper will present this significant decline in details in a narrower time scale. Nevertheless, it is not surprising that this decline is a result of changing nature of Turkish-European relations and is highly related with increasing Euroskepticism in Turkey.

- Infakto RW's field research conducted in 2003 shows that the net confidence score for the EU was a positive 10 point, meaning that the EU was once able to gather the confidence of the Turkish voters.
- Above figure shows that confidence of Turkish voters in the government and the parliament also fluctuated over time. While the parliament had a higher confidence score compared with the government; it lost credit continuously until 2001 when the country experienced the most serious economic crisis of its history. The last survey (2007) shows that both institutions have high scores of net confidence (more than 20 percent).
- Decline of confidence scores of the government, the parliament and the EU between 1996 and 2001 might provide significant evidence for the supporters of the "political trust" approach; however the last survey showed that convergence of confidence scores of these institutions ended in 2007. The "political trust" approach will be tested in details in the following parts of the paper.

### *Eurobarometer Surveys*

The European Union regularly conducts public opinion surveys in both member and candidate countries. The specific objective of these Eurobarometer surveys is defined as follows:

Since 1973, the European Commission has been monitoring the evolution of public opinion in the Member States, thus helping the preparation of texts, decision-making and the evaluation of its work. Our surveys and studies address major topics concerning European citizenship: enlargement, social situation, health, culture, information technology, environment, the Euro, defence, etc.<sup>20</sup>

Turkey has been covered by this survey since 2001, first as a part of the Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB) and later on as a part of the Eurobarometer series. Some parts of the dataset of surveys is open for academic works through the Inter-university Consortium of Political and Social Research<sup>21</sup> and reports are distributed through the web page of the project and national delegation offices of the European Commission.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm).

<sup>21</sup> Information about the ICPSR is available at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>.

This longitudinal series of surveys include many questions ranging from personal evaluations to expectations; from value specific questions to opinions about hot issues such as the full membership of Turkey. Among this large set of questions, two sets are relevant for this essay. First, these surveys present opinions of Turkish public about the UN and the EU and give us an important time series ranging from 2001 to date. Secondly, attitudes about a specific set of European institutions are asked and presented. We will first emphasize longitudinal change of attitudes in the UN and the EU.

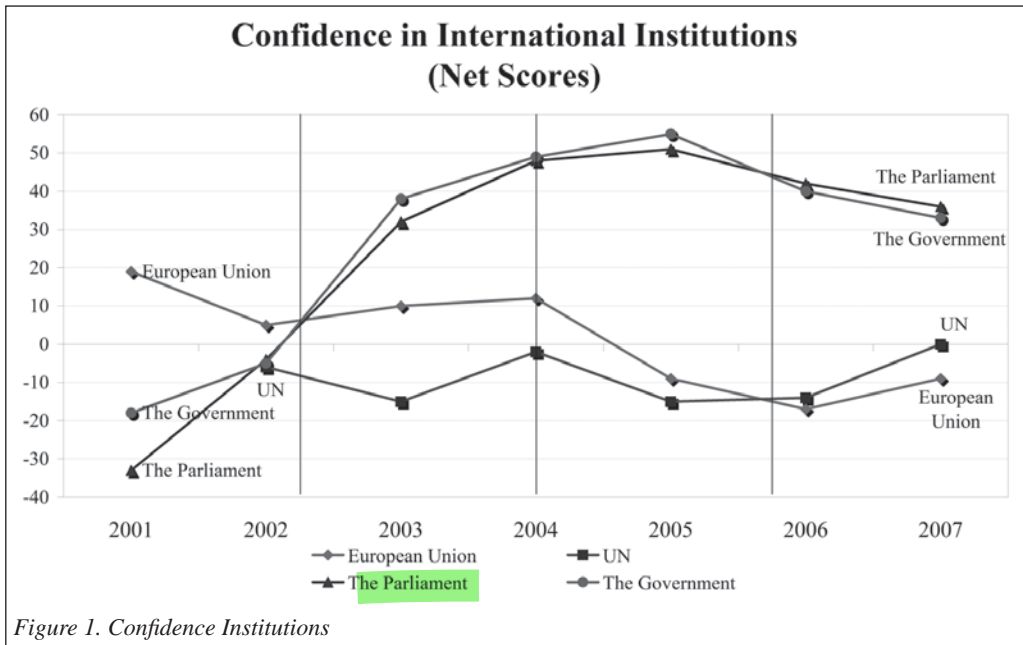


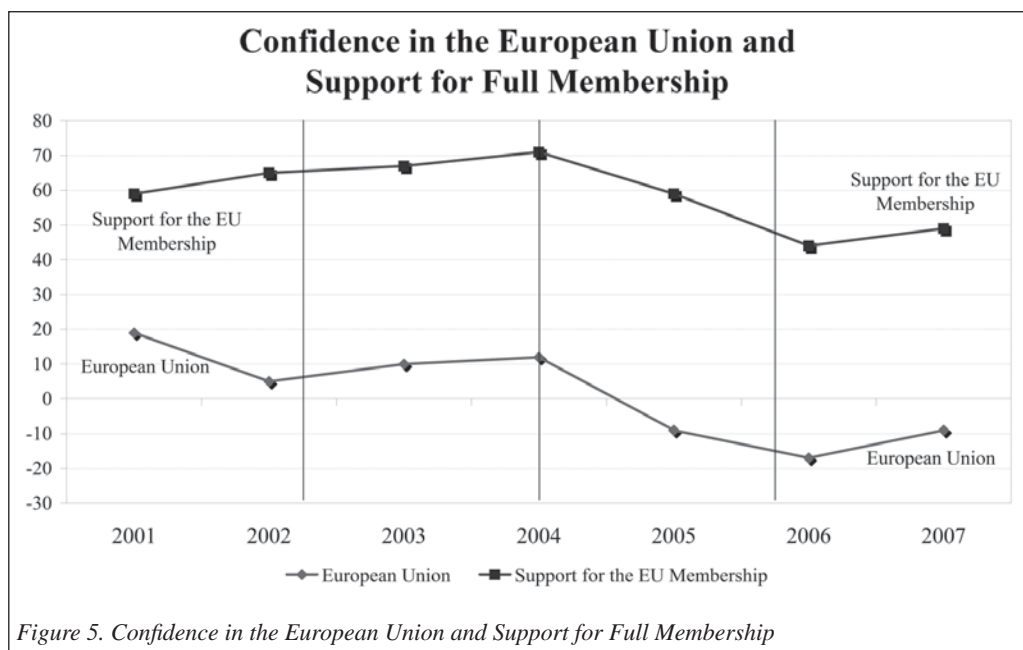
Diagram 4 presents the change of the level of confidence of the Turkish public in the UN and the European Union over time.<sup>22</sup> Net scores are calculated by subtracting “tend not to trust” from “tend to trust” answers. In order to make a comparison, net confidence scores of the government and the parliament are also calculated. This figure shows that:

- In 2001, the European Union had the net confidence of Turkish public with a score of around 20 percent. This score fluctuated between about 10 percent until 2004. Following the referenda in Cyprus and the full membership of the Southern part of the island against their negative positions in the referenda in April 2004, confidence declined to -10 percent. The last Eurobarometer shows that the European Union has a net confidence score of -10 percent.
- Until 2004, the Turkish public had a neutral position about the UN.

<sup>22</sup> Original question is as follows: “I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.”

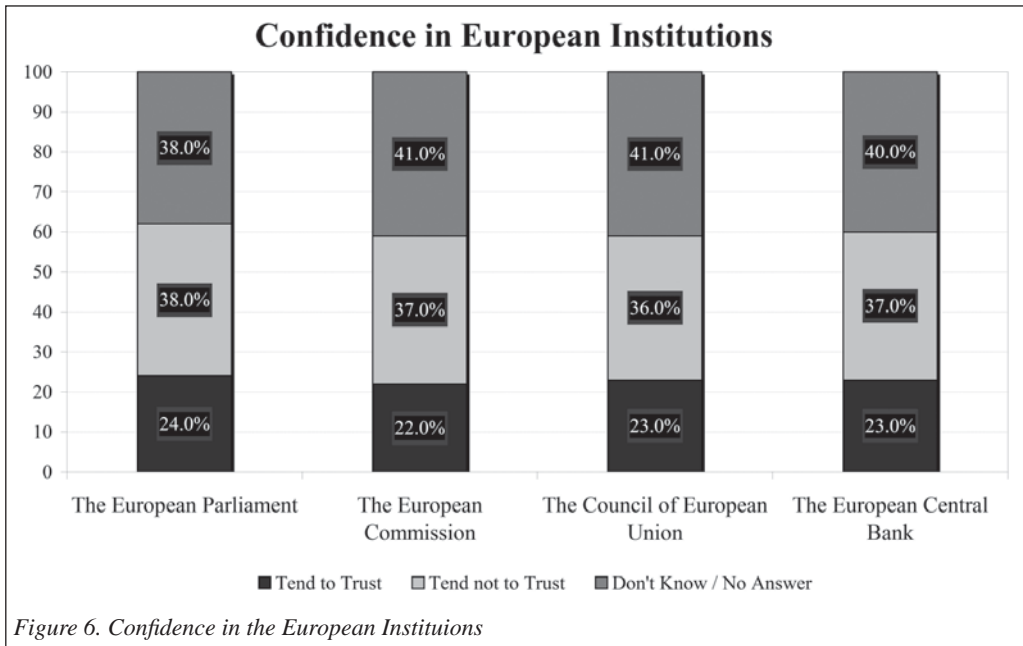
However, Eurobarometer 2005 indicated a significant decline in net confidence score of this institution: -15 percent. The Eurobarometer no longer includes a specific question about the UN; the last available figure shows that –this lack of confidence continues.

Net confidence scores of the government and the parliament shows how “political trust” rapidly fluctuates and changes direction. In 2001, following the most serious financial crisis of the country the government and the parliament totally lost the confidence of the public opinion. The net confidence score for the government was -18 while this score was -33 for the parliament. During 2002, public opinion became neutral towards these institutions and both institutions got significant support from the public following the general elections of 2002. Between 2003 and 2005, net confidence scores of the government and the parliament was 50 percent. Despite a small fluctuation in 2006, the last Eurobarometer shows that the government’s net confidence score is 46, and the parliament has a confidence score of 55 percent.



Both findings of the World Values Survey and the Eurobarometers indicate that there is a small correlation between confidence scores of international and domestic institutions. It is clear that confidence in domestic institutions is highly dependent to their performances. Diagram 5 provides evidence for advocates of the ‘confidence in international institutions is an output of interaction of international politics’ argument. As support for full membership increases, confidence in the European Union also increases. Moreover, these two trends move together

when they are experiencing a decline. This data leads us to test the hypothesis that confidence in the European Union is highly politicized and dominated by the relationship between Turkey and the EU.



Fluctuations in the overall level of confidence in the European Union indicate existence of a public opinion about the issue. However, it is possible to hypothesize that such support does not exist towards specific institutions of the European Union. The above figure shows that in the last Eurobarometer survey there is a similar level of confidence (about 24 percent) for almost all European institutions. Net confidence scores of these four institutions are about -14 percent, very close to -10 percent score of the European Union.

Another interesting finding forwarded by the above graphic is the high level of “Don’t Know/No Answer” option. Almost 40 percent of respondents failed to state whether they trust or they do not trust European institutions. This kind of high level non-response is a widely observed fact by students of Turkish public opinion research, especially when they are running surveys about complicated issues such as foreign policy preferences. This lack of opinion changes between 10 to 40 percent depending on the level of complexity of the issue. The advocates of the “mood theory” can find abundant evidence for their arguments, by using these figures; however such a deduction requires much more detailed analysis.



## *Determinants of Confidence in International Institutions: Multivariate Analyses*

The previous parts of this paper presented some information about the climate change in the Turkish public opinion towards international institutions, especially the UN and the European Union. At first glance, data provided by the World Values Survey and the Eurobarometer pushes us to decide that:

- Confidence in international institutions is not related with confidence in domestic political institutions (with political trust in other words);
- Relations with international institutions directly affect the level of confidence in these institutions;
- Confidence in the European Union is highly related with the support for full membership to the European Union;
- The Turkish public has not developed specific attitudes about the European institutions and a significant portion of the populace has a neutral standing towards these institutions.

In order to test these intuitive conclusions, we will make further analysis by using two different datasets which are open to public. The first one is the cumulative dataset of the World Values Survey, including 1991, 1996 and 2001 data for Turkey. The second dataset is provided by the European Social Survey, conducted in 2005.<sup>23</sup> Since operationalization of key variables is not the same in two different data sources; each data set will be used separately to test the above discussed findings.

### **World Values Survey Data Set**

It is so far argued that Turkey has participated in four of the five waves of the World Values Survey and dataset for the three waves (1991, 1996, 2001) is open for public use. In multivariate analysis, this data set is employed to develop a basic model to understand determinants of attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions.

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<sup>23</sup> Data of the World Values Survey is available at [www.worldvalues.org](http://www.worldvalues.org) and the European Social Survey can be accessed at [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org).

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Table 1. Definition of Variables

Variables employed in multivariate analysis are as follows:

Variable	Definition	Operationalization
Generalized Trust	Level of generalized trust of individuals in other people	1 if participant thinks that “most people can be trusted”; else 0
Interest in Politics	Level of interest with politics	1 is minimum level of interest, 4 is the highest
Self Positioning in Political Scale	Positioning of individuals on left-right scale	1 Left-10 Right
Unconventional Participation	Level of unconventional political participation of individuals	Score calculated by using political actions: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes; -3 to 3;
Political Trust	Trust of individuals to domestic political institutions	Score calculated by using trust to political institutions: the parliament, the government and political parties. For the data set of 1991 only government and political parties and for 2001, only the parliament
Age	Age of the respondent	Age of the respondent at ordinal level, 1 is the youngest and 3 is the oldest
Gender	Sex of the respondent	1= male and 0 is female;
Income	Monthly income of the respondent	Income of the respondent at ordinal level, 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest
Education	Education level of the respondent	Education level of the respondent at ordinal level, 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest

#### *i) Confidence in the UN*

The World Values Survey dataset includes a specific question about the UN, which was asked in Turkey in the 1996 and 2001 waves. Answers given to this question are transformed to a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 indicates the highest level of confidence in the UN and employed as the dependent variable in a series of multiple regression analyses.

Table 2. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the UN is Dependent

Confidence in the UN	1996			2001		
	B	Beta	Sig.	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	0.00	0.00	0.97	-0.06	-0.02	0.20
Interest in Politics	-0.02	-0.02	0.51	0.03	0.03	0.16
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.07	-0.18	0.00	-0.05	-0.12	0.00
Unconventional Participation	-0.09	-0.09	0.00	-0.01	-0.01	0.53
Political Trust	0.38	0.35	0.00	0.45	0.42	0.00
Age	0.07	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.01	0.45
Gender	-0.28	-0.13	0.00	-0.14	-0.07	0.00
Income	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.97
Education	0.04	0.03	0.34	0.02	0.01	0.49
Constant	2.61		0.00	2.55		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.15			0.19		

The above table presents findings of multiple regression analyses. Multiple regression analysis is a multivariate statistical technique which shows causal relationship between one dependent and more than one independent variable. These findings may be read as follows:

- As education of the respondent increases by 1 point (as respondents takes higher education), confidence in the UN increases by 0.04 points over 4 (B coefficient).
- Relative explanatory power of education is 0.03, compared to other variables (beta coefficient);
- Relationship between education and confidence in the UN is statistically insignificant because significance of B coefficient is greater than 0.10.
- Average level of confidence of any respondent is 2.61 over 4 (constant) regardless effects of other independent variables.

Results of multiple regression analysis shows that the most important determinant of confidence of Turkish citizens in the UN is their political trust. As political trust score of any respondent increases by 1 point, level of confidence in the UN increases by 0.38 points (1996) and 0.45 points (2001).

The second important determinant of confidence in the UN is the self positioning of respondents. As any respondent positions himself/herself on a 1 point to the

right, his/her confidence in the UN decreases by 0.07 (1996) and 0.05 (2001).

Unconventional political participation presented a negative relationship in the 1996 dataset with a B coefficient of -0.09, however such a relationship does not exist in the 2001 dataset.

The same table also shows that men have a lower level of confidence in the UN; this gender gap declined between 1996 and 2001 (B coefficients -0.28 versus -0.14). On the other hand as income and age of the respondent increases, level of confidence also increases in the 1996 dataset; while we failed to find such a relationship in the 2001 dataset.

Generalized trust and interest in politics do not have relationship with the level of confidence in the UN.

## *ii) Confidence in the European Union*

By using the same data set, determinants of confidence of Turkish citizens in the European Union are also analyzed through a series of multiple regressions:

Table 3. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the EU is Dependent

Confidence in the European Union	1991			1996			2001		
	B	Beta	Sig.	B	Beta	Sig.	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	-0.02	-0.01	0.87	0.02	0.00	0.88	-0.03	-0.01	0.71
Interest in Politics	0.08	0.08	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.26			
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.03	-0.07	0.08	-0.08	-0.22	0.00	-0.07	-0.17	0.00
Unconventional Participation	-0.01	-0.01	0.75	-0.05	-0.06	0.05	-0.03	-0.03	0.34
Political Trust	0.41	0.39	0.00	0.29	0.27	0.00	0.33	0.33	0.00
Age	-0.06	-0.05	0.23	0.05	0.04	0.14	0.03	0.02	0.51
Gender	-0.02	-0.01	0.76	-0.24	-0.12	0.00	-0.14	-0.06	0.04
Income	0.04	0.04	0.35	0.08	0.06	0.02	0.11	0.07	0.03
Education	-0.05	-0.03	0.45	0.04	0.03	0.39	-0.03	-0.02	0.56
Constant	2.23		0.00	2.62		0.00	1.68		0.0
Adj. R-Square	0.14			0.11			0.13		

Findings of multiple regression analyses presented above shows that political trust is the most important determinant of level of confidence of Turkish citizens in the European Union. This variable has a beta coefficient of 0.39 (1991), 0.27 (1996) and 0.33 in 2001 meaning that as political trust increases, confidence in the European Union increases.

The second leading variable is “self positioning in political scale” which has a negative B coefficient of around 0.07, meaning that rightist voters have lower confidence in the European Union.

The gender variable had a negative effect in 1996 and 2001, while unconventional political participation had a negative B coefficient in 1996 but in other datasets. The last two datasets show that as income increases, level of confidence in the European Union also increases.

### ***European Social Survey Data Set***

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academic survey to observe convergences and divergences among the European populace. The survey is conducted in 30 different nations and completed in three waves: 2002-2003, 2004-2005 and 2006/2007. Turkey participated in the second round of the survey and the available data set composed of 1856 adults representing Turkish voters.

The ESS questionnaire includes a question which targets to measure how some institutions are trusted. Among numerous institutions, the UN and the European Parliament are two institutions interesting to students of Turkish public opinion. Unfortunately the questionnaire does not include a specific question about the European Union. However, our previous discussion showed that confidence level in European institutions is highly correlated with the credibility of the European Union. Therefore, by taking a methodological risk, it is possible to substitute the European Union with the European Parliament.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Original wording of the question is as follows: “Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust. Firstly...”

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*(i)The United Nations*

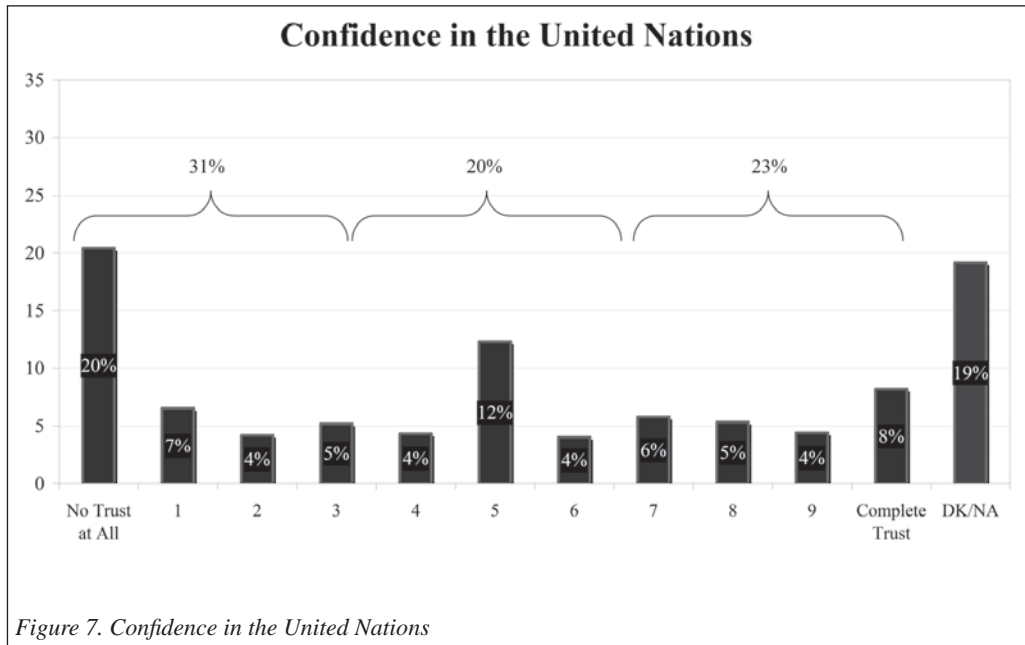


Figure 7 shows the distribution of answers. According to this figure, 31 percent of Turkish citizens do not trust the UN, while the percentage of those that trust is 23. One fifth of respondents gave neutral answers. Since operationalization of variables are different—the World Values Survey asks a four item scale question, while the ESS question is on the ordinal scale—, we cannot compare findings of these two different surveys. Nevertheless this question is a good source for further analysis.

Table 4. Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition	Operationalization
Generalized Trust	Level of generalized trust of individuals in other people	0 to 10 scale, 0 indicates the lowest level of generalized trust, 10 is the highest
Interest in Politics	Level of interest with politics	1 is minimum level of interest, 4 is the highest
Self Positioning in Political Scale	Positioning of individuals on left-right scale	0 Left-10 Right
Unconventional Participation	Level of unconventional political participation of individuals	Score calculated by using political actions: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations; -3 to 3;
Political Trust	Trust of individuals to domestic political institutions	Score calculated by using trust to political institutions: the parliament, politicians and political parties.
Age	Age of the respondent	Age of the respondent at interval level
Gender	Sex of the respondent	1= male and 0 is female;
Income	Monthly income of the respondent	Income of the respondent at ordinal level, 1 is the lowest and 12 is the highest
Education	Education level of the respondent	Education level of the respondent at ordinal level, 1 is the lowest and 6 is the highest

By using the independent variables above, a multiple regression has been run where confidence in the UN (0 to 10) is dependent. Findings of this multiple regression analysis are as follows:

Table 5. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the UN is Dependent

Confidence in the UN	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	0.10	0.08	0.00
Interest in Politics	0.06	0.02	0.52
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.22	-0.19	0.00
Unconventional Participation	-0.35	-0.11	0.00
Political Trust	1.28	0.37	0.00
Age	0.00	0.00	0.98
Gender	-0.09	-0.01	0.66
Income	-0.04	-0.02	0.51
Education	-0.08	-0.03	0.30
Constant	5.45		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.15		

Similar to findings of the previous analyses, political trust is the most important determinant of the level of confidence in the UN. As political trust increases by 1 point, the level of confidence in the UN increases by 1.28 points. Second important factor affecting the level of confidence in the UN is self positioning in political scale. As one voter becomes one point more rightist, his/her level of confidence decreases by -0.22 points over 10.

Unconventional political participation, whose effect on confidence in the UN was previously insignificant is observed as a significant variable with a B coefficient of -0.33. Another variable which was previously insignificant, “generalized trust” also has a positive and significant effect with a magnitude of 0.1. As generalized trust increases by 1 point; confidence in the UN increases by 0.1 points.

Political party identification is an important factor affecting people’s preferences especially in complex issues. As the “Mood Theory” envisions, people generally tend to transfer positions of their political party to their attitudes. In order to test whether our case has such a transfer behavior, some variables are added up above model: Dummy AKP (1 for AKP voters, 0 for else), Dummy MHP (1 for MHP voters, 0 for else) and Dummy DTP (1 for DTP voters, 0 for else). Coefficients of these newly added variables show differences between other party voters and voters of these parties.

Table 6. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the UN is Dependent with Political Variables

Confidence in the UN	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	0.10	0.08	0.00
Interest in Politics	0.06	0.02	0.51
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.13	-0.11	0.00
Unconventional Participation	-0.36	-0.11	0.00
Political Trust	1.34	0.39	0.00
Age	0.00	0.01	0.78
Gender	-0.06	-0.01	0.77
Income	-0.01	0.00	0.90
Education	-0.05	-0.02	0.52
Dummy AKP	-0.51	-0.07	0.03
Dummy DTP	1.47	0.11	0.00
Dummy MHP	-0.24	-0.01	0.60
Constant	5.45		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.15		

The above table shows that adding new variable did not contribute to the explanatory power of the model and leading variables kept their power with small changes. New variables show that an ordinary AKP voter has a 0.5 point lower confidence in the UN; while voters of the DTP have significantly higher confidence. Considering the fact that voting for the DTP is the most important indicator of being from a Kurdish origin, it's not misleading to conclude that the UN has higher support among Kurds. An interesting point here is the insignificant relationship between dummy variable of voting for MHP with the level of confidence in the UN. Given that nationalist tendencies of the MHP voters, a significant difference was expected, however this expectation has been falsified by available data.

Both regression models show that political trust is the most important determinant of the confidence in the UN. Self-positioning and previously insignificant unconventional political participation and generalized trust are other factors affecting our dependent variable. Finally, the last regression analysis showed that the AKP voters have generally less confidence in the UN, while the DTP voters demonstrate opposite attitudes.



## *(ii) Confidence in the European Parliament*

It is so far argued that the ESS dataset does not include a specific question about the level of confidence in the European Union. Substituting the European Union with the European Parliament may lead to methodological confusion however intuitive correlation between confidence levels in these two institutions needs to be falsified with further data analysis.

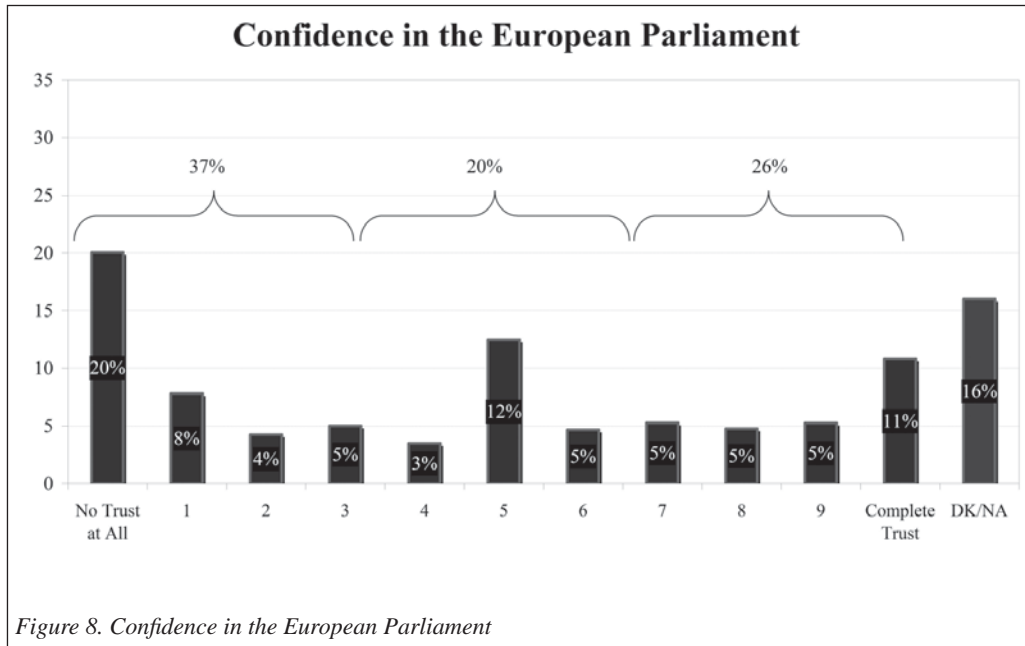


Figure 8 shows that almost 40 percent of respondents declare lower levels of confidence in the European Parliament while 26 percent of them say that they have confidence in these institutions. 20 percent of the respondents have neutral positions while 16 percent did not respond.

Table 7. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the European Parliament is Dependent

Confidence in the European Parliament	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	-0.01	0.00	0.88
Interest in Politics	0.04	0.01	0.66
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.16	-0.14	0.00
Unconventional Participation	-0.24	-0.07	0.01
Political Trust	1.31	0.37	0.00
Age	-0.01	-0.03	0.36
Gender	-0.11	-0.02	0.58
Income	-0.14	-0.07	0.02
Education	-0.24	-0.09	0.00
Constant	6.40		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.15		

According to above findings, political trust is the most important determinant of the level of confidence in the European Parliament with a beta coefficient of 0.37. Similar to previous analyses, self-positioning in political scale of respondents has a direct and significant effect on our dependent variable: as a respondent becomes one more point rightist, his/her confidence in the European Parliament decreases by 0.16 points over 10.

Unconventional political participation has a significant effect while generalized trust is not significant in this new model. An interesting change is that socio-economic factors such as income and education were not statistically significant in the previous models, where confidence in the UN was a dependent variable. However, when confidence in the European Parliament is taken as a dependent variable, regression coefficients of income and education is calculated as negative and significant. This means that as income and education levels of respondent increases, confidence in the European Parliament decreases. This difference requires detailed discussion and further research.

Table 8. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the European Parliament is Dependent, with Political Variables

Confidence in the European Parliament	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	0.01	0.01	0.82
Interest in Politics	-0.01	0.00	0.93
Self Positioning in Political Scale	-0.02	-0.02	0.53
Unconventional Participation	-0.25	-0.07	0.01
Political Trust	1.40	0.39	0.00
Age	0.00	0.00	0.88
Gender	-0.07	-0.01	0.70
Income	-0.07	-0.03	0.25
Education	-0.14	-0.05	0.10
Dummy AKP	-0.20	-0.03	0.39
Dummy DTP	3.19	0.24	0.00
Dummy MHP	-0.75	-0.04	0.11
Constant	4.91		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.19		

Inclusion of new variables indicating political party preferences of respondents led to changes in explanatory power of the model (adjusted R-square increased to 0.19 from 0.15) and some variables lost their significance as determinants of level of confidence in the European Parliament. Generalized trust, self positioning in political scale, income and education are these previously statistically significant coefficients. Political trust is still the most important determinant of the confidence in the European Parliament, one point increase in political trust increases confidence in this institution by 1.4 point over 10.

Dummy AKP is not statistically significant, meaning that AKP voters have the same positions with the average voter. However, the above model shows that an average DTP voters' level of confidence is 3.2 points higher than an average voter, confirming Euro-positive tendencies of voters of these parties. MHP voters have lower level of confidence vis-à-vis average voter, but this difference is small compared to the differences of DTP voters.

In the previous parts of this paper, analysis of the Euro-barometer reports showed that confidence in the European Union is highly associated with support for full

membership: Both confidence in the European Union and the support for full membership move simultaneously. The ESS dataset does not include a specific question to understand whether respondents are against or for full membership of Turkey. Another question asked to measure how much respondents are against enlargement of the European Union may function as a substitute for the support question.<sup>25</sup>

Table 9. Results of Regression Analyses: Confidence in the European Parliament is Dependent, with Political Variables and Support for the EU

Confidence in the European Parliament	B	Beta	Sig.
Generalized Trust	0.04	0.03	0.30
Interest in Politics	-0.04	-0.01	0.69
Self Positioning in Political Scale	0.00	0.00	0.93
Unconventional Participation	-0.18	-0.06	0.06
Political Trust	1.26	0.35	0.00
Age	0.00	-0.01	0.86
Gender	-0.14	-0.02	0.48
Income	-0.03	-0.02	0.58
Education	-0.13	-0.05	0.12
Dummy AKP	-0.14	-0.02	0.56
Dummy DTP	3.02	0.22	0.00
Dummy MHP	-0.87	-0.05	0.07
Support for the European Unification	0.28	0.25	0.00
Constant	3.04		0.00
Adj. R-Square	0.25		

Controlling for support for the European unification by adding up a new variable contributes to the explanatory power of the equation. Adjusted R-square increased from 0.19 to 0.25. Political trust is still the most important determinant of confidence in the European Parliament with a beta coefficient of 0.35. DTP supporters have higher level of confidence in this institution by 3 points compared with an ordinary voter. Remaining effects of other variables remain con-

<sup>25</sup> Original wording of question is as follows: Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. Using this card, what number on the scale best describes your position? (0 is "unification has already gone too far" and 10 is "unification should go further")

stant; the above regression model shows that as support for the European Unification increases by 1 point, confidence in the European Parliament increased by 0.3 points. A comparison of beta coefficients shows that this newly added variable is the second important independent variable explaining variation in dependent variable.

The above discussed analyses indicate that political support is the major determinant of confidence in the European Parliament. Political party supporters have varying degrees of confidence and rightist voters have lower confidence levels in this institution. Positive and statistically significant effect of the support for further European unification is an indicator of the positive relationship between support for the European Union and confidence in the European institutions. As respondents become more positive towards the European Union, their level of confidence increases.

### *Conclusion*

It is so far argued that public opinion is the missing element or the residual factor in the analysis of foreign policy formation. However, shifting paradigms in the study of international relations created a room for analyzing public opinion and its effects on foreign policy formation. International institutions which are generally the byproduct of the Cold War era and composed of membership of nation states assumed as unitary actors, are far from being immune to increasing effect of populace upon decision makers. These facts pushed us to evaluate attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions.

Among several attitudes possible to analyze, trust or confidence is the leading one; not only as a result of rising popularity of the concept, but also for its proven role as a determinant of foreign policy attitudes and as an indicator of perceived image of institution. Comparative studies showed that confidence in international institutions is an output of different conflicting but coexisting factors: Political trust, a result of past performances of domestic political institutions, and generalized trust, an indicator of high level of social capital. Moreover, confidence in international institutions may be a result of past performance of these institutions (strategic/rational trust) or citizens may have higher level of confidence as a result of a shared value system (liberalism of the 1920s).

Analysis of attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions remained limited with secondary analysis of the data provided by the Eurobarometer polls of the European Union and primary analysis of data obtained through the World Values Survey and the European Social Survey. Descriptive and advanced statistical analyses showed that:

- Turkish citizens' confidence in the European Union is highly determined by fluctuations in the relationship with this institution, meaning

that there is strategic confidence relationship.

- The confidence level of the United Nations is less fragile than the European Union, indicating an existing value based confidence; however, the decline in confidence following the Referenda in Cyprus presents openness of this relationship to strategic evaluations.
  - Higher rates of “Don’t know/No Answer” answers indicate validity of the “Mood Theory” arguing inconsistency of attitudes of citizens especially in complex issues such as foreign policy issues.
  - Individual level analysis showed that political trust and left-right self positioning of respondents are the most important determinants of confidence in the UN and the European Union. When support for further enlargement of the European Union is added up to the equation, explanatory power of the model significantly increases showing how the confidence in the European Union is related with the support for full-membership.
- vPoliticization of the issue is visible in higher and statistically significant effects of party dummies, especially of DTP. An average DTP voter almost doubles confidence of an average citizen in the European Union. Surprisingly, the MHP voters are not statistically different than voters of other parties.
- Individual level characteristics such as income, education and age are not systematically significant determinants.

All these findings show that attitudes of Turkish citizens towards international institutions is first affected by short term political fluctuations and secondly by performance of domestic political institutions. Moreover, political cleavages are echoed in evaluations of citizens about these international institutions. Such a picture is far from being close to the liberal vision envisioning value based partnership through international/supranational institutions. Establishment of such a common shared values requires significant effort.