

# Who Represents Women in Turkey? An Analysis of Gender Difference in Private Bill Sponsorship in the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament

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In this study, we examine substantive representation of women in the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament by focusing on sponsorship of private members' bills by members of parliament (MPs) across eight major issue areas. The Turkish case offers new insights into women's representation, not only because this topic is unexplored in the Turkish context but also because it provides an opportunity to examine the tension between gender as a social identity and ideology as a political identity in a legislature characterized by disciplined political parties and low gender parity. Findings indicate that women MPs in Turkey substantively represent women by sponsoring more bills on women's rights and equality issues than their male colleagues, despite their low numbers in parliament and affiliation with highly disciplined parties. Party ideology also shapes women MPs' issue priorities depending on the emphasis placed by the parties on different issue areas. Whereas left-wing women MPs sponsor more bills on women's rights and equality issues defined with a feminist accent, right-wing women MPs sponsor more bills on issues regarding children and family. Left-wing women also differ

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significantly from right-wing women in their sponsorship of bills on health and social affairs issues, as left-wing parties prioritize those issues more than right-wing parties.

**Keywords:** Turkey, Turkish Parliament, substantive representation, private members' bills (PMBs), women's issues, ideology

A growing literature on political representation studies the impact of personal traits on the behavior of legislators. Gender has become a significant indicator explaining the differences in legislative behavior across policy areas. Legislative studies generally emphasize the influence of constituency interests, party membership, and institutional structures on legislative behavior. These studies find that legislative behavior tends to align with party position, especially in political systems dominated by high party discipline. In such contexts, party affiliation may explain more than gender or mediate its effect on the representation of women's interests, creating an interaction between gender as a social identity and ideology as a political identity. Accordingly, this study examines whether women in parliament substantively represent women by paying attention to the ideological differences between women members of parliament (MPs) to understand how women MPs from different parties represent women in different ways.

Women's representation has not been explored outside Western democracies except in a few studies (Jacob 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2006). In this respect, Turkey offers an exceptional opportunity to examine gender differences in women's representation in a developing country with a Muslim-majority population and low gender parity. Prior to the 2000s, women MPs constituted not more than 4.2% of the Turkish Parliament. Women now make up 17.3% of parliament, but this number lags behind the average representation of women in European parliaments (27.6%), according to Inter-Parliamentary Union statistics for June 2018. Socially, unequal socioeconomic opportunities for men and women and high levels of violence against women portray Turkish society as unfavorable to women. For instance, Turkey ranked 131st among 144 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index developed by the World Economic Forum in 2017. According to World Bank gender statistics for 2017, female participation in the total labor force in Turkey was 32.2%, below both rates for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (43.9%) and European Union (45.8%). Despite the legal developments to eliminate domestic violence against women, it is still widespread. Four out of every 10 ever-married women

reported having been subjected to physical violence.<sup>1</sup> These statistics suggest the opposite of a women-friendly society (Wängnerud 2000), as women in Turkey have limited empowerment in the public sphere and are mostly reserved in the private domain as unpaid domestic workers.

The Turkish case is also ideal for studying interactions between gender and ideology since its parliamentary system is characterized by highly disciplined and centralized parties that strictly shape legislative behavior. Existing work has not considered the role of party ideology in the relationship between gender and women's representation. In this respect, studying the Turkish case offers new insights about women's representation.

Parliament is the primary venue to alleviate gender disparity by enacting women-friendly policies. This study examines who represents women in Turkey by focusing on the correlation of gender with the issue priorities of parliamentarians. To gauge the issue attention of MPs, we compiled original data on private members' bills (PMBs) that were initiated during the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament, a period that witnessed the highest number of women legislators ever. We categorized these private bills into eight major issue areas to estimate gender effects across policy areas.

First, we examine whether there is a gender difference in sponsoring PMBs on women's rights and equality issues. If substantive representation means acting in the interests of those represented (Pitkin 1967), we expect women MPs to substantively represent women as a marginalized group and to sponsor more private bills on issues that are beneficial to women. Second, we address whether women MPs sponsor more PMBs on other issues regarded as women's domain (children/family, education, health/social affairs) compared with issues of men's domain (economy, fiscal affairs, agriculture, and defense). Current literature finds that women MPs engage more in soft policy areas that are consistent with traditional gender roles and less with hard policy areas that are usually demarcated as men's domain (Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2005). Given that women in Turkey continue to suffer from gender inequalities in social, economic, and political aspects of life, women MPs would have a "gendered duty to represent women's perspective" in women's domain areas (Catalano 2009, 47), and therefore we would expect them to sponsor more bills on those issue areas.

1. For more details, see the summary report of the Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey conducted in 2014 (refer to page 7 for the statistics on violence against women): [http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/ING\\_SUMMARY\\_REPORT\\_VAW\\_2014.pdf](http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/ING_SUMMARY_REPORT_VAW_2014.pdf) (accessed July 11, 2018).

On the other hand, the Turkish party system is highly disciplined with strong leadership. Party leaders, the ultimate principals controlling candidacy, make MPs' careers dependent on party leadership and urge their MPs to consistently act in line with the party (Musil 2011). In this regard, party ideology may mediate the effect of gender on women's domain issues, insofar as it may cause women MPs from different ideologies to sponsor PMBs in different areas, with the result of representing women in different ways. Whereas left-wing parties introduce more gender quotas and emphasize gender equality in their party programs, right-wing parties are more concerned with the maternal identity of women by emphasizing the view of mothers as the foundation of the family. Moreover, left-wing parties in Turkey emphasize investments in public education and the expansion of welfare benefits (Ayata and Ayata 2007). Accordingly, we expect that left-wing women MPs sponsor more bills on issues of women's rights/equality, education, and health/social affairs compared with right-wing women MPs, while the latter are expected to sponsor more bills on children and family issues.

First, we discuss the literature on women's political representation in light of the link between descriptive and substantive representation of women to inform our main theoretical assumptions. Second, the picture of women's representation in the Turkish case emerges from circumstances related to women's participation in the Turkish parliamentary system against the backdrop of women's issues in Turkey; both are necessary to clarify our measurement decisions in issue areas and to substantiate our hypotheses. Third, we describe our data set and variables and then discuss the findings. Lastly, we present our concluding remarks.

## POLITICS OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

The debate about political representation of women focuses on descriptive and substantive representation, as outlined by Hanna Pitkin (1967). According to Pitkin, descriptive representation is the congruence between the representatives and the represented in terms of their personal characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, or race. Substantive representation is the most important form of representation and means "acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin 1967, 209). Building on Pitkin's seminal work, scholars have examined the relationship between descriptive representation (the presence of women) and substantive representation of women (Celis and

Mazur 2012). Their underlying assertion is that women as a group have common interests that are different from those of men; hence, they are more likely to act for women than men. Distinct women's interests arise from their shared responsibilities, experiences, and expectations and the need to accommodate these in their public roles (Phillips 1995).

Descriptive representation is important for substantive representation in the context of uncrystallized interests (Mansbridge 1999). For groups that have historically been discriminated against because of their shared personal traits or whose interests are uncrystallized in the political arena, electing a representative sharing same individual traits would be a good strategy to secure their representation. MPs who belong to this subordinate group are then positioned to open new channels of communication and improve the quality of deliberation in representation. Therefore, the presence and numerical strength of women in parliament can lead to substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999, 654), even when the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation is not direct. Naturally, women can be (and are) represented by both men and women to various degrees, and asserting otherwise would essentialize "women-ness." It is important to remain cognizant of the pitfalls of essentializing women and to avoid positioning women's interests as a set of homogenous group preferences shared by all women (Celis 2012) or downgrading women to one of the binary categories of biological sex (Campbell, Childs, and Lovenduski 2010).

The intersectionality perspective emphasizes how people possess multiple social identities in relation to each other. Thus, studying gender as an axis of social identity requires an understanding of its relation to other significant social identities, such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Shields 2008, 303; Weldon 2006). Different mechanisms resulting from these interactions affect and nuance the marginalization of women's experiences, particularly those with different social backgrounds. For instance, the different working experiences of blue-collar women and white-collar women and the potential educational attainments of black and white women can be quite different from each other, as are their paths to those attainments. Nevertheless, differences in women's experiences by themselves do not change the general outcome that women are historically disadvantaged compared with men. In this regard, women MPs as a group share the daily experiences and marginalization of women. Hence, it is not only their biological sex but also their experiences that create preferences that

are different from those of men in similar positions and may spur women MPs to act for women as a disadvantaged group. Differences among them may direct their attention to different aspects of women's issues, but together, their presence in parliament can bring women's perspectives into policy areas, especially those concerning the gender gap to promote women's equality and rights.

Studies examining gender differences in legislation show that women MPs view themselves as representatives of women, since they report carrying a responsibility or a moral duty to bring women's issues to the legislative agenda, and it is usually they who raise such issues in legislation (Ayata and Tütüncü 2008a; Bird 2005; Catalano 2009; Mansbridge 1999; Swers 2001). Some studies indicate that women MPs prioritize women's issues and interests in legislative agenda setting and initiate more bills in these areas than men do, demonstrating the connection between women MPs' views of themselves and their role as women parliamentarians (Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2005). These findings indicate that the presence of women in parliament makes a difference when women legislators with different preferences from their male colleagues take action on those issues. Some studies emphasize that a critical mass is necessary for substantive representation of women, namely, that when the proportion of women in parliament passes a certain threshold, women MPs will be more likely to act in the interests of women (Childs and Krook 2006).

In addition, constituency interests, party affiliation, and committee membership may guide women MPs to act on their preferences. As in the U.S. Congress, women MPs' issue priorities follow their women constituents' concerns and interests (Swers 2001). Bill initiation in areas of education, children and family, and women's and general health is predicted by women MPs' committee positions in relevant committees as well as their ideology (Swers 2005). Ironically, substantive representation of women can also occur in these areas because women MPs are often sidelined from policy areas considered as "hard or masculine" by their male counterparts. In Latin American countries, women legislators are pushed toward policy areas such as women's issues, children/family, education, and health, even though their attitudes do not differ from men's in prioritizing other issue areas (Schwindt-Bayer 2006). In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, women MPs substantively represent women in health care debates and participate less in finance debates than men, not because they are sidelined but because they think that their contribution to legislation on health policy is more relevant (Catalano 2009).

This brief discussion of the complicated link between descriptive and substantive representation of women outlines the main theoretical assumption underpinning this article, namely, that women MPs are more likely to act for women than men. It also considers that women are not a monolithic entity with homogeneous interests but are multifaceted. Gender as a social identity is substantially different from biological sex, and it intersects with other significant social identities. Thus, the starting point of this study is that women, as diverse they are, are disadvantaged as a group, and any issue that is beneficial to ensure equality between men and any group of women is an issue promoting women's rights and equality.

Another significant factor arises from how parliamentarians view women's interests. For example, in their analysis of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, Childs, Webb, and Marthaler (2010, 210) found that women are mostly depicted as caregivers in the private sphere in election manifestos and that family and parents replace women in the manifesto texts over time, suggesting that Conservative MPs may represent women's interests in different terms than those of other parties. Similarly, in the Turkish context, we examine the effect of ideology as a crosscutting political identity on women MPs' PMB sponsorship and expect that highly disciplined and centralized political parties in Turkish Parliament lead women MPs to represent women in different issue areas. Subsequent discussions of the Turkish Parliament and women's issues in Turkey provide insight into how women's substantive representation within the Turkish context is manifested through PMB sponsorship.

## THE TURKISH PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

During the 2011–15 parliamentary term covered in this study, Turkey had parliamentary system. Turkish Parliament was a unicameral chamber composed of 550 MPs elected by a party-list proportional representation system.<sup>2</sup> In this system party candidates can only be elected only if their party obtained at least 10% of valid votes cast nationwide, which is a very high election threshold in comparison with other developed democratic systems. For this reason, only parties with broad electoral support can enter parliament. The government is formed by the party that has the

2. After the constitutional referendum of April 2017, Turkey adopted a presidential system. Institutional changes to convert from a parliamentary to a presidential system were to take place after the elections on June 24, 2018.

most parliamentary seats after a vote of confidence for the Council of Ministers and its executive program. The Council of Ministers was responsible for formulating and executing policies according to the government program.

Government bills (*tasarı*) are drafted by relevant ministries and must be signed by all members of the cabinet before their submission to parliament. In general, a single-party government can successfully initiate its legislative agenda with the support of its majority in the committees and the plenary. MPs are other actors who can set the legislative agenda by initiating private bills (*teklif*), either individually or by cosigning on any issue that concerns their constituency or wider public interest. They can also single out the issues they prioritize, signaling to their constituents that their concerns and interests are represented in legislation through private bills.

Before the plenary discussion, the Speaker sends both types of bills to a standing committee and, if necessary, to a secondary committee for any provisions falling into their areas of expertise. These standing committees are also known as specialized committees (*ih̃tısas komisyonları*), since they correspond to ministerial policy areas and provide specialized knowledge to their members to influence legislation falling into their area of expertise.<sup>3</sup> A majority of them only deal with legislative scrutiny of bills, but others are equipped with special powers such as investigating government activities in their areas of expertise and considering individual appeals. They can form subcommittees for detailed legislative scrutiny, which dissolve after reporting to the main committee. Once the scrutiny process is concluded, standing committees can either pass the bills with or without amendments or reject them; they report their assessment to the plenary in either case. In the plenary stage, only committee versions of the bills are considered. Regarding their scrutiny powers (detailed in the end note), standing committees are considerably influential in legislation with their specialization and committee stage preceding the plenary discussion.<sup>4</sup>

3. Standing committees are the Committee on the Constitution/Justice/National Defense/Internal Affairs/Foreign Affairs/National Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport/Settlement, Development, Transport, and Tourism/Environment/Health, Family, Employment, and Social Affairs/Agriculture, Forest, and Rural Affairs/Industry, Trade, Energy, Natural Resources, Information, and Technology/Petitions/Plan and Budget/Public Economic Enterprises/Human Rights Inquiry/Equal Opportunity for Women and Men/EU Harmonization/Security and Intelligence. Ad hoc committees are Committees of Inquiry/Investigation. While ad hoc committees are formed by the plenary for government oversight and dissolved after issuing their reports, standing committees work as subunits of parliament, sharing significant amount of workload in legislation and government scrutiny.

4. Standing committees are equipped with various powers that enhance their influence in legislation. The committee chair declares the agenda, but members have right to decide the agenda through voting. For government bills, sponsored ministers are summoned to the meetings with an invitation, and MPs



Sponsoring private bills and committee membership are two mechanisms by which individual legislators can affect legislation, but these mechanisms are not independent of the influence of party groups. Parties assign MPs to committees twice for two-year periods, giving most MPs an opportunity to serve as committee members within a parliamentary term.<sup>5</sup> Procedurally, the assignment is based on the expertise of MPs; however, since committee members are assigned by political parties, the leadership can reward MPs by assigning them to significant committees (i.e., committees that would enhance the political careers of MPs) or demote MPs by giving them no assignment or assigning them to less important committees. The rules of procedure of the Turkish Parliament also recognize party groups (formed with at least 20 MPs) as the main actors in parliament in order to discipline MPs' individual activities. Committee memberships, moving interpellations, and motions for government oversight are only permitted to the MPs who belong to a political party group.

Studies of the Turkish party system indicate that the role of MPs in legislation depends on the functioning of their political parties (Dorronsoro and Massicard 2005), which limits cooperation between MPs from different parties to get support for their individual legislative agendas and therefore leads PMBs to lean toward the party position. This is related to a number of institutional factors. The electoral system with closed party lists coupled with the Law on Political Parties, which allows parties to determine their own candidate nomination process, has led to the emergence of highly centralized parties. In practice, a party's highest ranks and/or executive committees, formed by the party leadership, are tasked with deciding party lists. Likewise, party policies and programs are formulated exclusively by a party's highest-ranking members and then transferred to local party actors (Kabasakal 2014). Moreover, state subvention is a major source of party income, and candidates rely on their parties for financing electoral campaigns, which leads to the

are called for their private bills to explain their proposal and answer committee members' questions. Those who are not committee members do not have the right to propose amendments or vote. Committees can invite public officials, experts and interest groups to benefit from their opinions on the matter. They can directly contact ministries and demand documents, and also benefit from the assistance of expert staff on technical and legal aspects of the legislation. They have right to amend the bill, and they report the revised version to the plenary at the end of scrutiny process. Any committee member can annex a minority report for their dissenting views on the provisions of revised bill.

5. For instance, only 92 out of 550 (16.7%) MPs did not serve on any standing committees in the 2011–15 term.

monopolization of resources at the center and restrains competition within the party (Musil 2011). Electoral and party systems in Turkey do not encourage MPs to pursue individual agendas that deviate too much from their party agenda, for fear of losing their chances for renomination.

In sum, PMB sponsorship and committee membership can be significant mechanisms for individual legislators to enact their legislative agendas, but they are often mediated by strong party centralization, for both men and women MPs. All MPs can sponsor private bills that mirror their individual legislative agendas or their expert policy knowledge. But they are also bound by centralized political parties that determine candidate lists and committee assignments. In this regard, private bills are practical tools to assess MPs' issue priorities in legislation and, in turn, to assess whether descriptive representation of women in parliament leads to either substantive representation or party representation. In order to answer this question, it is necessary to first discuss the role of women MPs in legislation and then hypothesize the ways in which women MPs prioritize issues concerning women in Turkey by sponsoring private bills.

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN TURKEY

### The Role of Women MPs in the Turkish Parliament

Politics has long been a highly inaccessible domain for women in Turkey, despite the relatively early enfranchisement of women in 1934. This important initiative was part of the Westernization agenda of the single-party regime at the time and resulted in the election of 18 women (then 4.5%) to parliament in the noncompetitive elections of 1935. Yet the representation of women declined dramatically (0.6%) once democratic multiparty elections were introduced in 1950. Until 1999, the representation of women consistently remained below 4%. Women's political engagement has been very limited, mostly enacted by organizing philanthropic and professional associations or pursuing cultural and social goals — that is, until the women's rights movement started to emerge in the late 1980s (Arat 1994).

During the 1990s, the pressure of women's rights organizations led center-left and right parties to introduce quotas for women, but the loose implementation of those quotas did not yield the expected results, for in most cases, women candidates were not placed in electable ranks in the party lists. This trend changed in the 2007 general elections, when the

Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP, left-wing, pro-Kurdish), which implemented a 40% women quota, overcame the 10% election threshold through independent candidacy strategy, thus enabling women to constitute around 35% of the party's representatives in parliament.<sup>6</sup> This changed the dynamics of women's parliamentary representation in the next election cycle in 2011, when two other political parties changed their policies for women candidates: the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP, left-wing, main opposition) enforced its 25% women quota (which was raised to 33% in 2012) and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP, right-wing, conservative governing party) increased the number of women candidates in its party lists.

Given that the ideological distribution of Turkish voters is skewed to the right, a considerable increase in the number of women MPs could only be achieved when major right-wing parties began to nominate more women candidates. In this respect, the 2011 elections constitute an important turning point, when women MPs constituted around 14.4% of the Turkish Parliament: 46 of 79 women MPs were members of the governing AKP, constituting 14% of its total MPs. Among the opposition parties, the CHP had 19 women representatives (making up 14.1% of its MPs), the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP, left-wing, pro-Kurdish) had 11 women representatives (making up 31.4% of its MPs),<sup>7</sup> and the National Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP, right-wing, nationalist) had three women MPs, constituting 5.8% of its MPs. Among 79 women MPs, 71 of them had bachelor's or higher university degrees; save one, all had professions; and 35 had active roles in their party before they were nominated.<sup>8</sup>

Committee assignments are another means for women MPs to influence legislative agenda. For the 2011–15 parliamentary term, 13 out of 79

6. Leftist Kurdish parties have implemented 25% to 35% women quotas since 2003, but because they could not pass the 10% election threshold until 2007, this quota policy is not reflected in the numbers of women MPs. In the 2007 and 2011 elections, party candidates were elected as independents to circumvent the 10% threshold.

7. Twenty-nine BDP affiliates were elected as independents to circumvent the 10% election threshold and formed their party group in parliament along with six other MPs who acted together with the party during the elections but could not be party affiliates because they were banned from being a member of any party for five years by a Constitutional Court decision in 2009. Since they acted together in parliament, we coded the BDP group as 35 affiliates in the data set. In 2014, the BDP dismissed itself and joined the new party platform of the People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP).

8. Among 79 women MPs, all of them had professions except one: 32 business women, 14 lawyers, 10 academics, 6 doctors, 5 pharmacists, 4 journalists, 3 nongovernmental organizations activists, 2 public administrators, and 2 teachers.

(16.5%) women MPs were unassigned to committees. Twenty-six women were assigned to the Committee for Equal Opportunity for Women and Men, a high number considering the number of women assigned to other committees. Nine women MPs were assigned to the Committee on Health, Family, Labor, and Social Affairs; nine to the Committee on European Union Harmonization; eight to the Committee on Constitution; and seven to the Committee on National Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport. There is a striking difference between women and men MPs' assignments in three committees: the Committee on Plan and Budget had only three women out of its 40 members; the Committee on State Economic Enterprises had only four women out of its 35 members; lastly, the Committee on Industry, Trade, Energy, Natural Resources, Information, and Technology had two women occupying its 26 seats. Even though 32 of 79 women MPs were business professionals, parties tend to assign men to economic and financial committees.

The role of women MPs is further reduced when it comes to cabinet assignments. In 2011, only two women MPs were appointed consecutively to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The first woman minister was appointed in 1971. After 1987, it became customary to assign one or two women to the new cabinet. Most women ministers were assigned to the General Directorate on Women Status (established in 1990) or to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (established in 2011). The appointment of women to ministry positions is not a necessary condition for representing women, but it is important in bringing women's perspectives onto the governmental legislative agenda and into decision-making processes that may promote women's rights and equality (Aktaş 2015).

While we observe a significant increase in the number of women MPs in the 2011–15 parliamentary term compared with former terms, women's role in committees and the cabinet is still limited. The question remains open as to whether the increase in the number of women MPs has resulted in the prioritization of women's issues in Turkey in a manner responsive to them, after accounting for the influence of major partisan and other individual-level factors. The next section introduces the issues that are on the women's agenda in Turkey and hypothesizes whether women MPs represent women substantively through PMB sponsorship.

## Women's Issues in the Turkish Context

As women's organizations became stronger in the late 1980s, they demanded equal citizenship for women, emphasizing the individuality of women rather than their relationship to men (i.e., as mothers, sisters, or comrades). The feminist movement also raised the issue of inequality in the private sphere, focusing on domestic violence, virginity tests, and sexual harassment as problems requiring immediate solutions (Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün 2017). Utilizing international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, signed by Turkey in 1985 and 1995, respectively, women's organizations across society became instrumental in advocating for important legislation, including the amendment to the Civil Code promoting gender equality (Tan et al. 2008). Another central concern for women, especially for Islamist women activists, was the removal of the headscarf ban in public offices and universities (Aksoy 2015). During the 2011–15 parliamentary term, women's organizations drew attention to pervasive domestic violence against women. According to the 2014 national survey conducted by Hacettepe University, around 25% of ever-married women reported having been subjected to physical violence (see note 1 herein). These concerns of women's organizations correspond to the top three high-ranking issues for Turkish women (according to prior public opinion surveys): people living in poverty and need, inadequate education, and discrimination against women.<sup>9</sup>

Turkish women appear to be primarily concerned with issues of women's rights and equality and with education and poverty. In our assessment of the substantive representation of women, it is important to discern whether these issues are prioritized in legislation. In private bills, any beneficial content for women that may advance their equality and rights is coded in the category of women's rights and equality. This category includes issues such as domestic violence, gender equality, reproductive health freedom, and sexual harassment policy, as well as women's health and welfare benefits for women. As discussed earlier, since women MPs share the experiences and marginalization of women as a group with their constituents, we expect that their experiences create legislative preferences different from those of men and urge them to act

9. World Values Survey, Wave 5, question V168, <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp> (accessed July 11, 2018).

for women as a disadvantaged group. In their interviews, women MPs also note that they feel responsible to represent women's concerns and interests in the Turkish Parliament (Ayata and Tütüncü 2008a). Turkish voters also expect women MPs to act for women's interests and concerns. In a 2011 public opinion survey, 84% of respondents reported that they think the presence of more women in parliament will increase the attention given to issues such as domestic violence, education, child care and maternity leave (Konda 2011). If there is a relationship between descriptive and substantive representation of women, we would expect women MPs to signal their issue priorities by sponsoring bills on issues of women's rights and equality. Accordingly, our first hypothesis tests whether descriptive representation of women leads to substantive representation in parliament.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Women MPs are more likely to sponsor PMBs on women's rights and equality issues than their male colleagues.

Current literature also suggests that women MPs engage more in policy areas that represent a continuity with their traditional female roles as caregivers in the private sphere. They focus more on areas such as children/family, education, and health, which are regarded as women's domain, while engaging less with policy areas such as economy, finance, agriculture, and defense, which are considered men's domain (Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2005). Turkish women are still lagging behind in public life; they are mostly reserved to the private domain and are often responsible for unpaid domestic work and elderly/child care. Also, women MPs in parliament, as we have seen, are mostly assigned to women's domain areas in the cabinet and legislative committees. Thus, it is highly likely for women MPs to represent women's perspectives in these issue areas.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Women MPs are more likely to sponsor PMBs on issues of children/family, education, and health/social affairs and less likely to sponsor PMBs on issues of economy, agriculture, fiscal affairs, and defense compared with their male colleagues.

The existence of centralized and disciplined political parties in the Turkish Parliament limits MPs' issue priorities to those along party lines, since any divergence from the party agenda could cost an MP his or her renomination chance. For instance, when a women MP from the government party supported the opposition party's proposal to add a clause that would alleviate gender inequality during the revisions of Civil Code in the 2002 Parliament, she was forced by her party to resign

(Ayata and Tütüncü 2008a, 465). This incident shows the strength of party discipline in enforcing party position and preventing cooperation between MPs from different parties in representing women's issues in legislation. The strict boundaries drawn by Turkish political parties for MPs' activities make it unlikely that MPs will support policies that are not part of their party's agenda. Accordingly, we focus on the categories of women's domain to test whether different party positions on these issue areas shape their women MPs' issue priorities and lead to different outcomes in PMB sponsorship.

For instance, party ideology might either support or be in conflict with certain demands of women, especially those that have a feminist accent. Leftist parties are more likely to support women representatives through gender quotas (Leijenaar 2004), and left-oriented political systems tend to enact gender equality legislation more often (Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Turkey is no exception to these ideological tendencies, since both the left-wing CHP and BDP emphasize women's equality in their party programs more than right-wing parties. Accordingly, we would expect women MPs from left-wing parties to sponsor more PBMs on issues of women's rights and equality than right-wing women MPs. The following hypothesis tests this argument.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Women MPs from left-wing parties are more likely to sponsor bills on women's rights and equality issues compared with women MPs from right-wing parties.

Conservative parties emphasize the maternal identity of women more in their party programs, even when they devote general attention to women's issues (Altındal 2007; Ayata and Tütüncü 2008b). The AKP's party program states that the party prioritizes women's issues, because in addition to constituting half of the population, *women are responsible for raising healthy generations* (emphasis added) (Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün 2017). Similarly, the MHP informs its voters about its policies on women under the title of "Family, Women and Children" in its party program (Altındal 2007). The conservative attitude toward women of right-wing parties was also revealed during parliamentary debates on the Civil Code amendments. Members of the AKP and MHP voiced objections to some amendments, basing their arguments on the protection of family and family values, hoping to keep the private sphere of family separate from state intervention (Erdem-Akçay 2013). Thus, we expect right-wing women MPs to sponsor more bills on children/family issues. Left-wing parties in Turkey traditionally place

more emphasis on issues of education and health/social affairs by advocating the expansion of investments and benefits in both areas as an extension of their social democratic agenda (Ayata and Ayata 2007). Thus, it is more likely for left-wing women MPs to prioritize these issue areas in their PMB sponsorship.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Women MPs from right-wing parties are more likely to sponsor bills on children/family issues, while women MPs from left-wing parties are more likely to sponsor bills on issues of education and health/social affairs.

## DATA AND METHODS

We test our hypotheses using a novel data set consisting of 2,837 PMBs initiated during the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament and individual-level information on MPs.<sup>10</sup> We examine MPs' sponsorship activities in eight policy areas: women's rights/equality, children/family, education, health/social affairs, economy, agriculture, fiscal affairs, and defense. While these issue areas constitute the main policy areas in Turkey, they also correspond to the general distinction between "women's domain" and "men's domain" in the literature (Bäck, Debus, and Müller 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2006).

The policy areas for PMBs are hand-coded on the basis of the content of the bills. The details of the coding procedure are provided in Appendix A online, but three clarifications are worth noting. First, only bills that are beneficial to women by promoting their rights and equality are included in the women's rights and equality category. Second, both the women's rights and equality and children/family categories are coded based on the target of bills rather than their thematic focus. Finally, the bills related to health/social affairs are coded within the same category to cover all issues related to the provision and financing of the health care services system. The general health insurance system is financed and regulated by the Social Security Institution (SSI), and the bills that change the way SSI works or its services mostly affect the coverage of both health services and other long-/short-term welfare benefits, making it difficult to assign these bills into separate categories. This categorization does not deviate from the literature since the health/social affairs area is also considered to

10. The Turkish Parliament's website provides an online database of MPs' parliamentary activities and personal backgrounds: <https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/index.php/EN/yd/>.



*Table 1.* Number and share of bills by issue area, 2011–15

<i>Issue Area</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Women's domain		
(1) Women's rights and equality	136	4.8
(2) Children and family	67	2.4
(3) Education	232	8.2
(4) Health and social affairs	407	14.4
Total	842	29.7
Men's domain		
(5) Economy	215	7.6
(6) Agriculture	144	5.1
(7) Fiscal affairs	326	11.5
(8) Defense	215	7.6
Total	900	31.7
Other bills	1,095	38.6
Total number of bills sponsored	2,837	100

belong to women's domain or soft policy issues (Bäck, Debus, and Müller 2014). Also, both issues fall under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Health, Family, Labor, and Social Affairs in Turkey.

Table 1 shows the number and the percentage of bills initiated in each thematic area. During the 2011–15 parliamentary term, the highest numbers of bills were initiated in health/social affairs, followed by fiscal affairs. The children/family category had the fewest number of bills, followed by women's rights/equality. Approximately 38.6% of the bills fall into the "other" category, including bills related to public affairs, human rights, culture, media, sports, transportation, and environment. There is also a relatively balanced distribution of bills sponsored in women's domain and men domains, as shown in Table 1.

To test the significance of gender on MPs' bill sponsorship behavior across major issue areas, we counted the number of PMBs sponsored by an MP in each thematic category and made MPs our unit of analysis. We included all MPs who signed the bill as sponsors and did not distinguish between primary sponsors and cosponsors. Our dependent variable is the proportion of bills that an MP sponsored in each issue area, measured by dividing the number of bills an MP sponsored in a given issue area by the total number of bills that the same MPs sponsored during the parliamentary term. Using proportions rather than counts in the analyses allows us to assess the priority that MPs gave to a specific issue area in relation to their overall policy goals (Schwindt-

Bayer 2006). During the 2011–15 parliamentary term, 19 MPs (three women) did not sponsor any bills, so they are not included in the empirical analysis, since their issue priorities could not be calculated as proportions. As seen in Table 2, health/social affairs, economy, and fiscal affairs are the most notable issue areas that MPs prioritized, as more than half of all MPs sponsored at least one bill in these areas. Next are education and agriculture, with around 45% of MPs sponsoring at least one bill in these issues. The most neglected issue areas are women's rights/equality and children/family, as 80% and 70% of MPs, respectively, did not sponsor any bills in these areas.

The second part of our data set includes individual-level information on MPs composed of factors related to their legislative activities and personal backgrounds. One of the primary explanatory variables in our analyses is *gender*. To account for gender differences in PMB sponsorship, we use sex as a proxy for gender in our empirical models, even though we acknowledge the limitations of using a dichotomous categorization for gender, as discussed earlier. We coded this variable 1 for a female MP and 0 for a male MP.

The second explanatory variable is *ideology*. First, we examine the effect of partisan ideology on sponsoring PMBs in each thematic area. For this, we use a party ideology indicator provided by the Parliaments and Governments database (ParlGov), which reports ideological positions (left-right dimension) from party expert surveys using a scale of 0 to 10 (Döring and Manow 2016). Lower values indicate a more left-wing ideology.<sup>11</sup> Second, we are also interested in how the party ideology of MPs may mediate the effect of gender on bill sponsorship in women's domain issues. In order to test the interactive effect of gender and ideology, we generated four categories to account for women MPs from left-wing parties, men MPs from left-wing parties, women MPs from right-wing parties, and men MPs from right-wing parties. By dividing men and women by their party ideology, we assess whether women from different ideologies differ in their issue attention. Since we use party affiliation as the source of ideology in the models, independent MPs are not included in the analyses. For MPs who resigned from their party, we match their bill sponsorship activity and resignation date to identify their

11. We also use ideology scores from the Manifesto Project, which is based on election manifestos (Volkens et al. 2017), as a robustness check. The regression models did not reveal qualitatively different results, except for education model, in which the significance of ideology drops. The coefficient of ideology is smaller in models with manifesto scores, which mainly stems from different scaling used in manifesto and ParlGov indices.

Table 2. MP's bill sponsorship by issue area, 2011–15

<i>Issue Area</i>	Legislators Who Did Not Sponsor Any Bills		Legislators Who Sponsored at Least One Bill		Number of Bills Sponsored (if > 0)		
	#	%	#	%	Mean	SD	Range
(1) Women's rights and equality	427	80	110	20	2,78	3,29	1–24
(2) Children and family	372	69	165	31	1,35	0,96	1–9
(3) Education	287	54	250	46	2,72	2,76	1–19
(4) Health and social affairs	231	43	306	57	4,59	5,56	1–38
(5) Economy	218	41	319	59	2,24	2,65	1–35
(6) Agriculture	302	56	235	44	2,15	1,95	1–16
(7) Fiscal affairs	250	47	287	53	3,05	4,14	1–36
(8) Defense	341	64	196	36	2,84	3,22	1–23

new party affiliations. If they did not sponsor any bills after they resigned, their party affiliation is kept. If they sponsored bills both before and after their resignation, we kept their previous party affiliation for the bills they sponsored before their resignation. For the bills they sponsored after their resignation, their new party affiliation is coded accordingly, either as independent or their new party.<sup>12</sup>

To isolate the impact of gender on PMB sponsorship, we control for several factors related to MPs' backgrounds and legislative activities. First, we control for *relevant committee membership*. MPs assigned to a legislative committee might be more inclined to sponsor bills falling into the issue area of their committee membership, since they gain expertise and specialization in that area as a committee member. Relevant committee membership is a dummy variable that is coded 1 if an MP sits in a committee related to the issue area of the dependent variable. Second, we control for *legislative experience* of MPs, measured as the total number of legislative terms served in parliament before 2011. Since senior MPs have more knowledge and experience in the legislative processes, they might sponsor more bills in comparison with less experienced MPs. We also control for overall legislative activism of MPs. Some MPs might have more resources that can increase their bill sponsorship activity in any given policy area. We measure general legislative activism as the *proportion of the total number of bills sponsored by an MP* in all issue areas over the total number of bills initiated during the 2011–15 parliamentary term.

Various electoral district characteristics such as urbanization, income level, and household income can impact MPs' issue priorities (Schwindt-Bayer 2006; Swers 2005). Since these indicators are not available for Turkey for the electoral district level, we use the *provincial level life index* reported by the Turkish Statistical Institute to control for differences among electoral districts. This index takes into account housing, work life, income and wealth, education, environment, safety, social life, access to infrastructure services, health, and life satisfaction (TurkStat 2015), providing information about the level of development in each province corresponding to electoral districts in Turkey.<sup>13</sup>

12. One of the reasons for resignation can be an ideological mismatch between MPs and their parties; therefore, we also run the models by excluding these MPs from the estimation sample as a robustness check (for similar exclusion procedure, see Bäck, Debus, and Müller 2014).

13. In Turkey, each province constitutes an electoral district with three exceptions: Istanbul has three and Ankara and Izmir have two electoral districts, which are divided into contiguous electoral districts based on their population.

Finally, we control for personal attributes of MPs that might influence individual legislative behavior, such as *age* at the beginning of the legislative term and dummy variables for the highest level of *educational degree* (high school degree, bachelor's degree, and master's degree and higher) and dummy variables for *occupational sectors* that the MPs used to work (business sector, education, medicine, and public administration). We control for occupation in relevant issue areas since MPs may have a special interest in sponsoring bills mirroring their social backgrounds. We also control for the *membership in civil society organizations* (CSOs), since MPs who are CSO members might also be more active in sponsoring new bills. Lastly, we control for whether MPs have a *role in the party organization*, since those who have a role in party organization might have less time to sponsor bills.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For the empirical analyses, we use both ordinary least squares (OLS) and generalized linear modeling (GLM) since our dependent variable is the proportion of bills that an MP sponsored in each issue area.<sup>14</sup> An alternative strategy for analyzing proportion data is to perform a logit transformation of the dependent variable and then estimate the models using OLS. However, this transformation cannot be performed for observations for which the dependent variable is either zero or one, as it leads to missing values for these observations. Since GLM can handle proportion data with zeros and ones (Baum 2008), we use GLM with binomial family and logit link. Both OLS and GLM estimations produce very similar results. For space considerations, we report and discuss the OLS results in the article while reporting the results from the GLM in Appendix B online.

Table 3 presents OLS results for eight issue areas. We find support for the first hypothesis: women MPs sponsor 4.2% more bills on women's rights

14. We also estimate an alternative model using the number of bills as the dependent variable. Since the dependent variable is a count (the number of bills an MP sponsored in an issue area) and overdispersed, we estimate negative binomial regressions. The results concerning our main variables of interests are mostly qualitatively similar. The effect of gender is significant in issues of women's rights/equality, children/family, fiscal affairs, and defense. The significance of gender is even stronger in fiscal affairs. The effect of ideology, on the other hand, loses its significance for children/family and education issues, but the relationship between ideology and bill sponsorship becomes more precise in the category of fiscal affairs. In the interaction models, the results of the negative binomial regressions are quite similar to those of OLS and GLM regressions: the difference between left-wing and right-wing women is similar in all models, except for children/family issues.

Table 3. Determinants of bill sponsorship by MPs in various issue areas, 2011–15

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Women's Rights &amp; Equality</i>	<i>Children &amp; Family</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Health &amp; Social Affairs</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Fiscal Affairs</i>	<i>Defense</i>
Women	0.042*** (0.016)	0.020*** (0.007)	0.009 (0.011)	0.006 (0.013)	0.003 (0.010)	-0.0003 (0.007)	-0.018* (0.011)	-0.014*** (0.005)
Ideology	-0.008*** (0.002)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.004* (0.002)	-0.020*** (0.003)	0.007*** (0.002)	-0.003* (0.002)	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.007*** (0.001)
Relevant committee membership	0.004 (0.016)	0.009 (0.007)	0.042* (0.022)	0.017 (0.033)	0.045*** (0.013)	0.041*** (0.014)	0.046*** (0.015)	0.013 (0.013)
Legislative experience	0.003 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.002)	0.013** (0.006)	-0.010*** (0.004)	-0.011*** (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.000 (0.003)
Province-level life index	-0.006 (0.028)	0.017 (0.019)	0.099*** (0.033)	0.113** (0.046)	-0.006 (0.039)	0.075*** (0.024)	-0.016 (0.048)	0.026 (0.026)
Role in party organization	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.009)	-0.009 (0.009)	0.003 (0.009)	0.002 (0.006)	-0.016** (0.008)	-0.005 (0.005)
CSO membership	0.000 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.004 (0.008)	0.006 (0.008)	0.019** (0.008)	0.000 (0.005)	-0.006 (0.008)	0.009* (0.005)
Relevant occupation			0.041 (0.033)	0.080** (0.031)	-0.018** (0.008)		0.025** (0.010)	
Age	-0.001 (0.002)	0.00002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.003)	0.005** (0.002)	0.001 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.003)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.001 (0.002)	-0.0001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.004)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.005** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.004)	0.003 (0.003)
Bachelor's degree	-0.022 (0.026)	0.011* (0.006)	-0.005 (0.014)	0.007 (0.024)	-0.023 (0.022)	0.003 (0.013)	-0.017 (0.022)	0.009 (0.010)
Master's degree and higher	-0.019 (0.025)	0.009 (0.007)	0.002 (0.015)	0.010 (0.025)	-0.038* (0.022)	-0.002 (0.013)	-0.030 (0.021)	0.013 (0.010)

*Continued*

Table 3. Continued

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Women's Rights &amp; Equality</i>	<i>Children &amp; Family</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Health &amp; Social Affairs</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Fiscal Affairs</i>	<i>Defense</i>
Total proportion of bills sponsored by MP	0.825*** (0.240)	0.041 (0.107)	1.171** (0.540)	1.888* (0.992)	0.057 (0.305)	0.582 (0.411)	1.366** (0.544)	1.170** (0.557)
Constant	0.101** (0.050)	-0.011 (0.055)	-0.121 (0.112)	0.075 (0.104)	0.022 (0.092)	-0.117* (0.061)	0.104 (0.138)	0.111 (0.070)
Observations	530	530	530	530	530	530	530	530
R <sup>2</sup>	0.205	0.041	0.082	0.322	0.069	0.062	0.127	0.135
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.187	0.0192	0.0586	0.305	0.0460	0.0401	0.105	0.115

Note: OLS coefficient estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .1$ .

and equality issues than men, holding other variables constant. This result is robust to the exclusion of outliers and MPs who resigned from their parties.<sup>15</sup> The significant effect of gender on sponsoring more bills on women's rights and equality issues suggests that women MPs are more responsive to women as a constituency than their male colleagues and prioritize issues of concern for women in Turkey. In addition, the effect of ideology on PMB sponsorship is negatively significant, indicating that, on average, MPs from left-wing parties sponsor more bills than MPs from right-wing parties in the women's rights and equality issue area. This can be due to the priority that leftist parties give to equality in general and to women's equality in particular (Lovenduski and Norris 1993). Accordingly, the results indicate that women MPs and MPs from left-wing parties act responsively to women in Turkey by substantively representing their interests in legislation. This substantive representation is especially promising in a period calling for the promotion of women's rights and equality, since the parliamentary term studied in this research was characterized by the high levels of violence against women, social protests by feminist organizations against the subordination of women, and salient discussions in the media on equal opportunity for men and women.

We find partial support for the second hypothesis, that women MPs sponsor more PMBs on other issues of women's domain and fewer in issues of men's domain. Women MPs, on average, sponsor more bills on children/family issues than their male colleagues, but there is no significant gender difference on issues of education and health/social affairs. Since Turkish women have limited empowerment in the public sphere, Turkey is one of the most likely cases in which to uncover a gender difference in women's domain issues. Even though cabinet and committee assignments of women MPs correspond to issues in women's domain, it seems that they do not have a gendered-agenda to represent women's perspectives in these areas. This omission might be related to the high profile of women MPs in terms of their education and professions, which differentiates their experiences and backgrounds from women in general. Another reason might be the lack of emphasis of the

15. In the women's rights/equality category, Leyla Zana (BDP) is an outlier since she sponsored bills only in this issue area. When she is excluded from our estimation sample, the coefficient for gender decreases to 0.027 but remains statistically significant at the 1% level, whereas the coefficient for ideology increases slightly. Finally, the coefficients for education dummies turn positive but are still not statistically significant.



feminist movement in Turkey on these issues in their lobbying activities with women MPs to represent women.

For bills in men's domain, we also find partial support for the second hypothesis. While the findings suggest that women MPs sponsor fewer bills on defense and fiscal issues, there is no significant gender difference in bill sponsorship on economy and agriculture. Our results contrast with the general finding in the literature that women MPs engage less in legislative activities in economy or finance than men (Catalano 2009; Jacob 2014; Schwindt-Bayer 2006). One explanation for this difference is that our classification of bills that fall into the economy category may differ from other studies in the literature. In our data set, the economy category includes bills regarding economic development, regional development, industrial policies, domestic commerce, and the financial and banking sectors, as well as the development and regulation of different sectors and professions and the regulation of labor and labor unions. While this might seem a very comprehensive category with labor regulations and regulation of professions, our findings do not change when we exclude either or both of them from this category. We also explored the possibility that cosponsorship activity might be occurring within parties, and women MPs might be signing bills on economy initiated by their colleagues, even though it is not their issue priority. To this end, we rearranged our data set to include only primary sponsors of the bills on economy and conducted our analysis with this restricted sample. We find that women MPs sponsored fewer bills on economic issues than men as the primary sponsors and the relationship is significant at 10%.

Findings also suggest that ideology is a significant factor in explaining bill sponsorship across all issues of women's and men's domains, except in fiscal affairs. While left-wing MPs prioritize issues of health/social affairs, agriculture, and defense by sponsoring more bills, right-wing MPs concentrate more on issues of children/family, education, and economy in their bill sponsorship. The significance of ideology across seven issue areas out of eight supports the argument that the ideology of highly disciplined and centralized parties strictly shapes an MPs' legislative priorities along party lines. Also, we find that right-wing MPs sponsor more bills on education in comparison with left-wing MPs. This surprising finding mainly stems from the MHP's stance as a nationalist right-wing party on public education in Turkey. When we replace ideology with indicators for parties, the results show that MPs from the MHP sponsor more bills on education compared with other parties in

parliament. This is also in line with their party programs: the MHP scores second among four Turkish parties according to the education expansion indicator of the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al. 2017).

Finally, MPs with relevant committee membership prioritize bill sponsorship in the education, economy, agriculture, and fiscal policy areas. Relevant committee membership does not have a significant effect on bill sponsorship on issues of women's rights/equality, children/family, health/social affairs, and defense. In health/social affairs, the effect of committee membership is absorbed by having an occupation in the medical sector. The positive and significant effects of relevant committee membership and occupational sector on bill sponsorship provide support for the claim that relevant occupation and committee membership encourage MPs to sponsor more bills on issues related to their background.

To test the third and fourth hypotheses, we use variables for left-wing women, left-wing men, right-wing men, and right-wing women in the models presented in Table 4. Our baseline category is women from right-wing parties, as we are primarily interested in discerning whether there is a difference between women MPs from left-wing and right-wing parties. The results provide support for the third hypothesis, as women MPs from left-wing parties sponsor approximately 13% more bills on women's rights and equality issues than right-wing women MPs.<sup>16</sup> This finding suggests that although women MPs in Turkey substantively represent women by bill sponsorship on women's rights and equality issues, their activities are also bounded by party ideology, as right-wing women MPs tend to sponsor fewer bills on women's rights and equality compared with left-wing women MPs. This result is in line with Grey (2006, 499), who discusses how the Labor Party in New Zealand creates a safe space for women to act in the interests of women, whereas the National Party fails to do so.

We find partial support for the fourth hypothesis that women MPs' bill sponsorship on other issues of women's domain depends on party ideology. In line with our expectations, women MPs from right-wing parties sponsor approximately 4% more bills than women MPs from left-wing political parties on children/family issues, whereas women MPs from left-wing parties sponsor approximately 13% more bills than women from right-wing parties on health/social affairs issues. Concerning the education

16. This finding is robust to the exclusion of MPs who resigned from their parties. The results are also qualitatively the same when the outlier is excluded, with a minor decrease in the coefficient for women from left-wing parties.

Table 4. Determinants of bill sponsorship on women's domain issues, 2011–15

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Women's Rights &amp; Equality</i>	<i>Children &amp; Family</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Health &amp; Social Affairs</i>
Women from left parties	0.127*** (0.030)	-0.036*** (0.010)	0.016 (0.018)	0.134*** (0.025)
Men from right parties	-0.002 (0.007)	-0.029*** (0.010)	-0.003 (0.016)	-0.000 (0.015)
Men from left parties	0.016* (0.008)	-0.041*** (0.010)	0.004 (0.016)	0.118*** (0.019)
Relevant committee membership	0.008 (0.014)	0.008 (0.007)	0.043** (0.022)	0.024 (0.032)
Legislative experience	0.002 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	0.016** (0.006)	-0.009** (0.004)
Province-level life index	-0.017 (0.028)	0.021 (0.018)	0.112*** (0.034)	0.084* (0.045)
Role in party organization	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.005)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.008 (0.008)
CSO membership	0.0002 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	-0.005 (0.008)	0.006 (0.008)
Relevant occupation			0.041 (0.033)	0.075** (0.030)
Age	-0.002 (0.002)	0.0003 (0.002)	0.004 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)
Age <sup>2</sup>	0.002 (0.002)	-0.0003 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.000 (0.004)
Bachelor's degree	-0.013 (0.024)	0.008 (0.006)	0.002 (0.015)	0.013 (0.023)
Master's degree and higher	-0.013 (0.023)	0.006 (0.007)	0.013 (0.015)	0.017 (0.024)
Total proportion of bills sponsored by MP	0.730*** (0.181)	0.145 (0.102)	0.852* (0.489)	1.034 (0.809)
Constant	0.079* (0.044)	0.029 (0.055)	-0.113 (0.110)	-0.035 (0.101)
Observations	530	530	530	530
R <sup>2</sup>	0.306	0.056	0.076	0.395
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.289	0.0325	0.0513	0.378

Note: OLS coefficient estimates with robust standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*  $p < .1$ .

policy area, we find that women MPs from right-wing political parties do not differ from women from left-wing parties (or from men from right-wing and left-wing parties) in terms of bill sponsorship. Overall, the results provide support for the hypotheses about the interactive effect of

gender and ideology, except on the education issue. The results also lend support to the argument that in party systems with highly disciplined and centralized political parties, as in Turkey, the emphasis placed by political parties on various issues strictly bounds the legislative activities of MPs.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has explained gender differences in legislative behavior by exploring MPs' bill sponsorship in various issue areas during the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament. In terms of substantive representation of women, our findings indicate that women MPs are more likely to address women's rights and equality issues than their male colleagues, suggesting that their shared experiences and marginalization of women as a group create different preferences from those of men. Moreover, the ideology of the political parties affects the relationship between gender and bill sponsorship, leading women MPs to represent women differently in issues within the women's domain.<sup>17</sup> While left-wing women MPs sponsor more bills on issues of women's rights/equality and health/social affairs, right-wing women MPs prioritize issues of children/family more. This significant interaction effect of gender and ideology suggests that the mediating effects of party ideology should be more carefully assessed, especially in party systems with highly disciplined and centralized parties.

One can argue that signing PMBs on issues concerning women does not really entail substantive representation, since the MPs' sponsorship motivations are dependent on issues other than the representation of women's interests. Our comprehensively collected data do not provide any indicators to estimate the effects of motivations for bill sponsorship other than factors related to legislative and personal backgrounds of MPs. This study uses bill sponsorship across issue areas as an indication of MPs' support for these policies and whether women's interests are prioritized in legislation for women's representation. MPs' issue priorities can also be affected by their multiple social identities, including not only gender but also race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. However, the available data do not provide information to identify multiple social identities of MPs besides gender, and hence it is impossible to examine

17. We examined this relationship in men's domain as well and did not find any statistically significant difference between right-wing and left-wing women MPs in bill sponsorship on men's domain issues except defense. Left-wing women MPs sponsored more bills than right-wing women MPs in this area.

the effects of intersectionality on substantive representation of women's interests.

In sum, our findings with respect to bill sponsorship on women's rights/equality and other issues in women's domain in Turkey are promising for students of gender politics. Even though women representatives constituted less than 15% of the 2011–15 Turkish Parliament, they were still active in bill sponsorship on issues concerning women's rights and equality in Turkey. The findings also suggest that parties on the left are actively providing a safe space for women to represent women's rights and equality concerns. Despite being below a critical mass (i.e., a percentage of women between 15% and 30%), women MPs formulated and sponsored women-friendly policies in the Turkish Parliament. To discern whether this issue priority of women MPs is related to the increase in their numbers in parliament, we need longitudinal studies analyzing changes in women's parliamentary representation and bill sponsorship over time. Lastly, this study does not examine whether bills sponsored in women's domain are enacted into law. Further research can examine gender differences in the PMBs approved by parliament, enabling an understanding of whether these issue priorities of women MPs turn into policy outcomes. In this way, future work in this area will continue to inform on the role of increasing women's presence in more women-friendly policy agendas as well as policy outcomes.

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X18000363>.

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