How Should We Interpret the Outcome of the June 2015 Parliamentary Election in Turkey?[*]

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Abstract

The outcome of the June 7, 2015 parliamentary election in Turkey is analyzed. In particular, the causes of the drop in the vote share of the ruling Justice and Development Party are identified, and their effects are measured with the help of a vote equation. This model is fitted to data covering the 1951-2014 period and considers the credit or blame the government gets due to economic conditions, the advantages and disadvantages of incumbency, political inertia, and realignments. It also takes into account strategic voting, which is caused by election thresholds and the electorate's desire to balance the power of the government. A comparison of the prediction obtained from this equation with the actual realization is utilized to estimate the impact of the decision by the Peoples' Democratic Party to participate in the election officially, rather than through independent candidates.

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1. Introduction

During 2002-2011, not only did the Justice and Development Party (AKP) come on top in every parliamentary election and rule in single-party governments, it also managed to raise its vote share each time. That is why, when the party's vote share shrank in the June 7, 2015 election large enough to deny it a parliamentary majority, it was considered surprising, even though the party still finished first and 16 points ahead of its closest rival (Table 1).   The purpose of the present study is to explain what factors contributed to this outcome and measure their impacts. First, in Section 2, routine factors that play a role in every election, which are mentioned in the economic voting literature, such as the economy, political inertia, incumbency conditions, and strategic voting by the electorate, as well as political realignments that have taken place in Turkey, are discussed. In every election, there are also factors unique to that election. Those that influenced the result of the last election, such as the participation of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in the election officially, rather than through independent candidates as its predecessors had done, are covered in Section 3. Then, in Section 4, the effect of each factor on the incumbent party's share of the vote in the June 2015 election is estimated through a vote equation developed by Akarca and Tansel (2006) and Akarca (2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, and 2014), after some minor revisions and updating. Breaking down the incumbent party's vote swing in this manner makes it possible to analyze the outcome of the June 7 election more reliably and reach sounder conclusions in Section 5.

2. Usual Determinants of Election Outcomes

Understanding the behavior of voters is the key to predicting and interpreting such things as election outcomes, the longevity of governments, election timing, political fragmentation, and political business cycles. Consequently, a field has developed over the last half century or so that analyzes how voters vote, referred to as economic voting. Lewis-Beck and Paldam (2000) define it as "a field that mixes economics and political science and does so by means of econometrics." Since detailed surveys of this literature are provided by that study, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2000, 2008, and 2015), Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2013), and Akarca and Tansel (2006 and 2007), only a brief review will be given here.

According to the literature on economic voting, election outcomes are essentially the result of the five competing forces described below.

2.1 Political Alignment and Realignment

Most voters align themselves with a party that they identify as representing their interests and ideology. The demographic, cultural, and socio-economic characteristics of voters, as well as their habits and geographical location, determine their interests and worldviews. Since these usually change very gradually, voters show a tendency to choose the same party they voted for in the previous election. This is why there is a great amount of inertia in the political system. Thus, in analyzing a party's vote share, it makes sense to take its share in the previous election as the starting point.

Table 1. Vote Shares of Major Political Parties in Turkey

POLITICAL PARTIES	2011	2014	2015
Justice & Development Party (AKP)	49.83	43.40	40.87
Republican People's Party (CHP)	25.98	25.62	24.95
Nationalist Action Party (MHP)	13.01	17.62	16.29
Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	5.67		
People's Democratic Party (HDP)+BDP		6.53	
Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP)			13.12
Other Parties	1.67	6.65	3.71
Independents	0.90	0.18	1.06

Notes: In parantheses are the Turkish acronyms of political parties. The parties that are successors or predecessors of each other are put in the same box to facilitate comparisons. The Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) did not enter the 2011 election officially. Instead, its candidates ran as independents to evade the nationwide 10% minimum vote requirement for entry to the parliament. The 2011 figure shown for this party is the vote share of the independent candidates supported by them. The 2011 and 2015 elections were for members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (i.e., the Turkish parliament). The figures given for the 2014 election comprise the sums of the votes cast for district Municipal Councils in 30 provinces officially designated as having "Metropolis" status and for provincial General Councils for the remaining 51 provinces.
Sources: The figures related to the 2011, 2014, and 2015 elections are taken from Tuncer (2011), Tuncer, Yurtsever and Tuncer (2014), and Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (2015), respectively.

Although the economic voting literature largely ignores it, voters occasionally change their political allegiances. Phenomena such as migration, urbanization, and globalization, changes in income, better education and easier access to information can alter the worldviews and economic interests of voters. When that happens and the parties fail to adapt, political realignments

occur. Some voters may move to other parties when they get frustrated with chronic corruption and/or incompetence by the parties they support or when these parties change in a manner that deviates from their interests and beliefs. All of these have occurred in Turkey and led to a major political realignment during 2002-2011, when central-right and religious-right voters consolidated under the AKP banner.[1]

A much smaller and shorter-lived realignment involving an incumbent party took place between 1973 and 1975. Before the 1973 election, a political faction split from the Justice Party (AP), the leading incumbent party then, and formed the Democratic Party (DP2). This new party siphoned off many votes from the AP in the 1973 election, as most supporters of the party were confused as to which of the two parties really represented their worldview and interests. However, these votes largely returned to the Justice Party in the following election, in 1975, and the DP2 virtually disappeared from the political scene after that. In 1975, the AP also attracted a large chunk of the Republican Reliance Party's (CGP) supporters when that party came to the end of its life, for all practical purposes.[2]

2.2 Strategic Voting

In every election, a portion of the electorate votes for a party other than their first choice. In other words, they vote strategically. They behave this way mainly for two reasons: to check the power of the incumbent party and to avoid wasting their vote by voting for a party not likely to surpass the national threshold necessary to gain representation in the parliament. In elections, such as midterm congressional elections in the US., European Parliamentary elections in European Union countries, and local administrations or parliamentary by elections in Turkey, supporters of the incumbent party get a chance to check the power of the central government without toppling it. Then, even more of them vote with the intention of diluting the power of the government. Consequently, incumbent parties tend to do poorly in these types of elections. The existence of threshold regulations in parliamentary general elections, such as Turkey's required minimum of a 10% nationwide vote share to gain the right to sit in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, contributes to this effect as well. Some of the supporters of small political parties, who had voted strategically for one of the major parties in the previous parliamentary election rather than waste their votes on a party that couldn't reach the threshold, re-

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[1]   Analysis of this realignment is beyond the scope of the present paper. Readers who are interested in a more detailed discussion of it are referred to Akarca (2015).

[2]   The latter party was formed by politicians who left the Republican People's Party (CHP) during 1969-1973, in protest over the change in the party's ideology.

turn to their "heart's choice" in elections where no such handicaps apply, such as local contests in Turkey. However, in a parliamentary election, with the control of government at stake, the incumbent party experiences fewer deserters. Furthermore, the party attracts additional supporters from its smaller ideological cousins as well who fear wasting their vote if they vote for their favorites. Therefore, holding other factors constant, we should expect the vote losses of the incumbent party, due to such strategic voting, to be greater in a local election that follows a parliamentary one, lower in a parliamentary election that follows a local election, and to be in between these when the two elections involved are of the same type. Incumbent party vote losses due to strategic voting in parliamentary by elections should be even worse than in local elections, as not even the control of local administrations are at stake then.

2.3 Cost of Ruling

Ruling involves making some compromises and unpopular or bad decisions, and shelving some promises. These actions also cost incumbent parties votes. The "cost of ruling,", as some refer to it in the literature, rises with the time spent in power, as disappointments with the incumbent party accumulate. The amount of this cost depends also on the size of the initial political capital an incumbent party has. Losses will be bigger when the previous vote share was higher. In other words, having more leads to losing more.

2.4 Incumbency Advantage

Incumbency has its advantages, too, which can partially offset the losses from strategic-voting and cost of ruling. Besides benefits like access to the media and name recognition, the incumbency advantage involves the ability to indulge in transfer activities, such as providing services, subsidies, and patronage and picking locations for government investment and public-works projects—all of which might entice supporters from other parties. There is much anecdotal evidence on all incumbent parties in Turkey, especially those in coalition governments, behaving this way.

2.5 Economic Conditions

Voters tend to reward incumbents for a good economic performance but punish them for a bad one. However, in making their economic evaluations, they tend to be retrospective and myopic, looking back no more than a year or so. They also place far more weight on growth than inflation. Such voter behavior gives incentives to governments to conduct expansionary economic policies before an election and then switch to restrictive ones (to tamp down

the resulting inflation) after it. It also induces governments to postpone painful adjustments needed for the economy until after elections. In short, the behavior of the voters is at the root of the political business cycles observed in so many countries. However, parties with a high probability of remaining in power may not feel compelled to indulge in such policies.

Voters judge governments both ego-tropically and as socio-tropically. That is, they consider not only changes in their own economic well-being but others' as well. The latter gets much larger weight. This may be out of concern that voters have for their fellow citizens, but it may also reflect a belief on the part of the citizenry that the government's nationwide economic performance is the best indicator of its competence.

3. Special Determinants of the 2015 Election Outcome

Besides the factors mentioned in the previous section, two events played crucial roles in the June 7th election. The more important of the two was the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) participating in the election officially, rather than fielding independent candidates, as its predecessors had done in order to circumvent the 10% threshold in parliamentary elections. The other one was the government's refusal to help the Syrian Kurds defending themselves in the Syrian border town of Kobani from the onslaught of DAESH (aka ISIS or ISIL) militants, who are waging war to take over Iraq and Syria.[3]

The HDP's decision was a calculated gamble, as the national percentages its predecessor parties had garnered were in the 5-6% range; and in addition, the vote share of the HDP Leader Demirtaş in the 2014 presidential election was slightly less than 10%. Had the HDP failed to surpass the 10% threshold this time around, the AKP would not only have been returned to rule as a single-party government, it may even have gotten a parliamentary majority sufficient to amend the constitution to replace parliamentary system with a presidential one. This goal of the AKP was opposed by all of the other parties. It turned out that a higher than usual proportion of incumbent party supporters (mostly ethnic Kurds) deserted the AKP strategically to check the party's projected power, to express their displeasure with the government's failure to intervene in Kobani, and out of a feeling that presence of a party in the par-

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[3] Several analysts have mentioned, in addition, the Gezi Park protests during the summer of 2013, the December 17-25, 2013 corruption allegations against certain cabinet members, and the government's ongoing feud with the Gülen movement, since the beginning of 2012, as events affecting the outcome of the 2015 election. However, these occurred before the 2014 election, the outcome of which would supposedly have reflected any ramifications of these incidents. Actually, Akarca (2014), using the same approach outlined in this paper, showed why these events had no significant effect on the result of the 2014 election.

liament voicing Kurdish grievances would be good for democracy and for the solution of the Kurdish problem. Some supporters of other parties appear to have defected to the HDP as well. Contrary to common belief, however, these came mostly from the small parties and not from the CHP. From Table 1, one can see that all parties other than the HDP lost votes between March 2014 and June 2015, but the changes in the vote shares of People's Republican Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) were negligible. As explained in Subsection 2.2, many fans of small parties, who vote for their favorites when no national threshold applies (as is the case in local races), change their behavior when it comes to national contests, where such threshold applies. Then, they switch their allegiance temporarily to one of the major parties in order not to throw away their votes. Apparently, this time, close to half of them came over to the side of the HDP.

We should also point out that the HDP's official entry into the contest made it worthwhile for its followers in Turkey's western provinces to vote for it as well, even though the HDP candidates in that part of the country had no chance of winning. In previous elections, either the party had not fielded candidates in these provinces or its supporters had voted for their second choices or not voted at all. In the June 7th election however, they faced a situation in which they were not able to elect a candidate to parliament from their provinces, but by helping the party surpass the threshold, could effectively bring it dozens of deputies from other provinces. Consequently, this time, many of them turned out and voted for their first choice, instead of for the AKP or the CHP.

4. Measuring Impacts of Various Determinants

A vote equation, which accounts for the usual factors listed in Section 2, is the following:[4]

$$V_t = a + b\, V_{t-k} + c\, \Delta L_t . V_{t-k} + d\, \Delta B_t . V_{t-k} + f\, D02_t . V_{t-k} + h\, D04\text{-}11_t . S_{t-k}$$
$$+ m\, D73_t . V_{t-k} + n\, D75_t . Q_{t-k} + u\, r_t . V_{t-k} + v\, g_t + w\, p_t + e_t \qquad (1)$$

where Δ is the differencing operator ($\Delta X_t = X_t - X_{t-k}$), and the variables are defined as follows:

V_t: vote share of the major incumbent party in election held at time t,

V_{t-k}:   vote share of the major incumbent party in the previous election held k years earlier,

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[4]   The specification of this equation is the same as the one used by Akarca (2011a), except in two minor regards. Here the strategic voting effects are allowed to differ between local and parliamentary by elections, and the Q variable includes the Republican Reliance Party (CGP) vote share, in addition to the DP2 vote share.

L_t :   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one if the election involved is for local administrations, and zero otherwise,

B_t :   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one if the election involved is a National Assembly by election (that is, not held simultaneously with a Senate election), and zero otherwise,

$D02_t$:   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one in 2002, and zero in all other years,

$D04\text{-}11_t$:   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one between 2004 and 2011, and zero in all other years,

$D73_t$:   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one in 1973, and zero in all other years,

$D75_t$:   a dummy variable, which takes on the value of one in 1975, and zero in all other years,

S_{t-k} :   the aggregate vote share of the independent candidates and the right-wing parties other than the AKP, in the previous election (or 100 minus aggregate vote share of CHP, DSP, and the ethnic Kurdish party, in the previous election), [5]

Q_{t-k}:   aggregate vote share of the DP2 and the CGP in the previous election,

r_t :   number of years the major incumbent party was in power since the previous election,

g_t :   growth rate of the per capita real GDP during the four quarters preceding the election held at time t (henceforth referred to as the growth rate),

p_t :   inflation rate in GDP implicit price deflator during the four quarters preceding the election held at time t (henceforth referred to as the inflation rate),

e_t :   error term, representing combined effects of all variables not in the model.

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[5]   Votes cast for the independents are included in the variable because leaders of some of the decaying right-wing parties ran as independent candidates in the 2002 and 2007 elections to bypass the nationwide 10% nationwide threshold for a party's admission to the parliament. The ethnic Kurdish parties ran their candidates as independents in the 2007 and 2011 elections to avoid the threshold requirements. The votes received by such independent candidates are treated as if they were cast for their parties, and not for independents.

The parameter a in the above equation represents the incumbency advantage and is expected to be greater than zero. Parameters b, c, and d, on the other hand, are expected to be negative. Vote loss due to strategic-voting between two parliamentary or two local elections is given by 1+b, between a parliamentary general election and a local election by 1+b+c, and between a local election and a parliamentary general election by 1+b-c. [6] Similarly, the same type of vote loss between parliamentary general and by elections, and between parliamentary by and general elections, are given by 1+b+d and 1+b-d, respectively. The parameter u represents the cost of ruling per year, and v and w, the effects of economic conditions. The coefficients f and h, and m and n, capture the political realignments that have taken place during 2002-11 and 1973-75, respectively. The specification presumes that the movement of votes from the DP2 and CGP to the AP occurred in one election, whereas the shift of the right wing and independent candidate votes to the AKP was gradual and scattered over five elections.

The speed of vote transfers from the decaying right-wing parties to the AKP probably was not constant over time. Ideally, the model should also permit strategic voting and cost of ruling to differ under the AKP rule. Unfortunately, measurement of such nuances is not feasible with only five data points under the AKP incumbency, four of which coincide with the political realignment. The interaction terms needed to allow them would exhaust the degrees of freedom. Consequently, the parameter h probably represents transfer of votes to the AKP due to other reasons as well.

Table 2 presents the Ordinary Least Squares estimates of the parameters of Equation (1), obtained by fitting it to the nationwide time-series data, pooling 28 National Assembly (general and by), Senate and local elections, covering the 1951-2014 period. Also included in the table are the t-statistics for the parameter estimates, the R-square, the adjusted R-square, and F values, for judging the fit of the equation, and Durbin's (1970) h and White's (1980) chi-square statistics and their probability values, for checking autocorrelation and heteroskedasticity in the residuals and any misspecification in the model. The equation fits the data very well. The table in the Appendix presents the data used. The notes to that table provide sources of the data and explain how the variables are defined and measured in detail.

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[6] Note that ΔL_t equals zero in a parliamentary general election, which follows a parliamentary general election, and in a local election, which follows a local election. It equals -1 in a parliamentary general election, which follows a local election, and equals +1 in a local election, which follows a parliamentary general election.

The results show that a percentage-point increase in the growth rate of per capita real GDP, during the one-year period before the election, is expected to raise the incumbent party's vote share by 0.81 percentage point.[7] Each percentage-point increase in the inflation rate during the same period, on the other hand, lowers this share by 0.12 percentage point, or by about one-seventh of that of the growth rate. Thus, an incentive exists for Turkish governments to adopt populist policies before elections, especially considering the fact that prevailing economic conditions more than a year before the election do not matter. As long as it does not raise the inflation rate by more than seven percentage points, a stimulation of the economy that results in a percentage-point jump in the growth rate is politically advantageous to a Turkish incumbent party.

The coefficient of V_{t-k} is close to unity, indicating strong political inertia. However, the parameter is less than unity, consistent with strategic-voting. The estimated model implies that the major incumbent party is likely to lose 11.4% of its vote in the previous election of the same type for simply being the incumbent. This figure rises to 16.7% in local elections and to 24.4% in by elections that follow regular parliamentary elections, going down to 6.1% in regular parliamentary elections that follow local elections.[8] In parliamentary general elections that follow a by election, the incumbent party vote share should rise by 1.6%. In addition, the incumbent party's vote share is anticipated to depreciate at the rate of 5.7% per year while in office. The incumbency advantage is estimated as 6.9% of the votes.

According to the results in Table 2, the political realignment cost the DSP, the incumbent party in 2002, two-thirds of its supporters over and above what it lost due to other causes. The AKP is believed to have captured in each election between 2004 and 2011 about 18.1% of the remaining supporters of other right-wing parties and independent candidates. As can be seen from Table 1, after 2011, not many center-right and independent votes were left to transfer. Similarly, it appears that the fragmentation of the incumbent party in 1973 led

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[7] Three cross-section studies of Turkey, one macro and two micro, find a strong link between the economy and the election outcomes as well. Akarca and Tansel (2007), using cross-provincial data, show that, in 1995, incumbent party votes in Turkey tended to be higher in areas where the growth rate before the election was higher and to be lower in those where the growth rate was lower. Growth rate more than a year before the election is found to not affect its outcome. Başlevent and Akarca (2009) and Akarca and Başlevent (2009), using individual data, show that economic evaluations – especially retrospective ones – had a strong association with the party choices of Turkish voters in 2002 and 2007, respectively.

[8] Contrary to common belief, it appears that any advantage a ruling party enjoys in local elections through its ability to channel central government resources to those local administrations under its control is more than offset through strategic voting by the electorate.

it to lose 14.4% of its supporters to DP2. However, in the next election, in 1975, the party was able to get back almost half of these and the CGP votes.

Table 2. Estimated Vote Equation

Variables	Coefficient estimate
Constant	6.854 (1.69)
V_{t-k}	0.886 (10.62)
$\Delta L_t \cdot V_{t-k}$	-0.053 (3.09)
$\Delta B_t \cdot V_{t-k}$	-0.130 (4.54)
$D02_t \cdot V_{t-k}$	-0.664 (4.97)
$D04\text{-}11_t \cdot S_{t-k}$	0.181 (3.87)
$D73_t \cdot V_{t-k}$	-0.144 (2.34)
$D75_t \cdot Q_{t-k}$	0.485 (2.98)
$r_t \cdot V_{t-k}$	-0.057 (4.69)
g_t	0.813 (5.45)
p_t	-0.122 (3.86)
F	76.41
Prob > F	0.00
Durbin-h	-0.95
Prob > h	0.17
White Chi-square	25.83
Prob > Chi-square	0.92
R-square	0.98
Adj. R-square	0.96

Notes: The dependent variable in the regression is V_t, the vote share of the sole incumbent party in case of single-party governments and of the major incumbent party in case of coalitions. For the definitions of variables, see Section 3, and for their measurement, the notes to the Appendix Table. The data cover 28 local and parliamentary elections between 1951 and 2014. The Ordinary Least Squares method is used in the estimation of the equation. The numbers in parantheses, next to the parameter estimates, are the t-values.
Source: Author's computations with the data given in the Appendix.

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it to lose 14.4% of its supporters to DP2. However, in the next election, in 1975, the party was able to get back almost half of these and the CGP votes.

Table 3 presents the expected vote share of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in June 2015, computed under the assumption that pre-2014 voting patterns will continue to hold. The contributions of typical factors on the vote swing are estimated in the table as well. The parameter estimates given in Table 2, the time elapsed between March 30, 2014 and June 7, 2015 elections, the outcome of the former election, the types of the two elections mentioned, and the economic conditions prevailing before the latter election were utilized in the computations The difference between the expected (pre-dicted) and actual AKP vote shares can be taken as the combined impacts of events specific to the 2015 election, following the procedure suggested by Box and Tiao (1976).

The actual AKP vote share for 2015 falls outside the 95% confidence interval for the expectation presented in Table 3. In other words, HDP's entry into the 2015 election officially had a significant effect on the election outcome. Apparently, this event has cost the AKP 3.7 percent of the vote in extra strategic voting. Had the HDP fielded independent candidates as before or the election threshold been lowered, the AKP's vote share would have been 44.6%, that is, 1.2 points higher than what it received in the 2014 local elections and 5.2 points less than its showing in the 2011 parliamentary election. Indeed, a poll, conducted by the IPSOS Social Studies Institute (2015) one day after the election, found that the AKP would have gotten about 45% if the public could have voted again after learning the results of the actual election. Obviously, most of those who voted for the HDP strategically did not anticipate the party surpassing the threshold by 3.1 points.

According to the information presented in Table 3, usual amount of strategic voting cost the AKP about 2.6 percent of the vote, and the cost of ruling, about 3.1 percent of it. Incumbency advantage of 6.9 percent more than compensated for these, but economic conditions were weak and provided no such help. Table 4 shows how much the AKP vote share would have differed under various hypothetical circumstances. For example, if the economy in 2015 were the same as in 2011, the party's vote share would be 4.9 percentage points higher. If the 2014 economic conditions were still prevailing in 2015, then it would be 1.8 points higher.

Table 3. Conditional Expectation of the AKP Vote Share in 2015 (Percentage Points)

Vote share in 2014	43.40
Impact of	
Strategic-voting	- 0.061 X 43.40 = - 2.65
Cost of ruling	- 0.057 X 43.40 X 1.25 = - 3.09
Incumbency Advantage	+ 6.85
Growth	+ 0.813 X 1.2 = + 0.98
Inflation	- 0.122 X 7.3 = - 0.89
Estimated vote swing	+ 1.20
Expected Vote Share in 2015 (point estimate)	44.62
Expected Vote share in 2015 (interval estimate)	41.95 to 47.28
Actual Vote Share	40.87
Difference between actuality and expectation	-3.75

Note: Due to rounding, the expected vote change and the sum of its components differ slightly. Growth and inflation figures used are for the period 2014.2 – 2015.1 because the data for 2015.2 were not available at the time this paper was written. The interval estimate given is the 95% confidence interval.
Source: Author's computations based on the vote equation presented in Table 2.

Table 4. Change Expected in the AKP Vote Share Under Various Situations (Percentage Points)

Economic conditions were the same as in 2011	+ 4.92
Economic conditions were the same as in 2014	+ 1.80
Election was for local administrations	- 2.84

Source: Author's computations based on the information given in Table 2 and Table A.

5. Conclusions

In the June 2015 election, all parties, other than the HDP, lost votes relative to the 2014 election. In particular, the vote share of the AKP, the incumbent party, decreased by 2.5 points (9 points relative to the 2011 election), causing it to lose its parliamentary majority. Poor economic conditions and more than usual amount of ballots cast strategically to help the HDP surpass the threshold were essentially behind this drop. The HDP raised its vote share by 6.6 percentage points, or by more than 100 percent, and gained 80 of the parliament's 550 seats. The votes shed by the AKP and the small parties fueled this increase. Contrary to common belief, the number of CHP supporters casting their ballots strategically for the HDP was negligible. This party's vote share in 2015 was only 0.6 points less than its 2014 share.

If the economy improves, some votes lost by the AKP due to the economy would return as it has happened between the 2009 and 2011 elections. However, in the short time until the November 1 election, we cannot expect similarly large changes in the economy and the votes. Now that they realize that they have clipped the AKP's wings more than they had intended, and that the HDP did not need as much help as they thought, we can expect some of the AKP supporters who sided strategically with the HDP on June 7 to return also, especially if the 10-percent threshold is lowered. Three new developments will make this more likely as well: the government's decision to join the international fight against DAEŞ militarily, the PKK's return to violence, and the reluctance of the HDP to distance itself from it. We can expect for the same reasons, small party supporters who voted strategically for the HDP on June 7, instead to pick as their second choices the AKP or the CHP on November 1. On the other hand, depending on the duration of the fight with the PKK and the way it is conducted, some of the voters who intended to support the HDP temporarily may get realigned permanently.

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APPENDIX

Table A: Political and economic conditions, and electoral outcomes: 1950-2014

Election Date	Election Type [a]	Provinces covered by the election	Incumbent Parties [b]	Vote Share (%) Major Incumbent Party	Vote Share (%) All Incumbent Parties	Previous Vote Share (%) Major Incumbent Party	Previous Vote Share (%) All Incumbent Parties	Time in Power since last election (years) Major Incumbent Party [c]	Time in Power since last election (years) All Incumbent Parties [d]	Growth Rate [e] (%)	Inflation Rate [f] (%)
May. 14, 1950	A	63 of 63	CHP	39.45	39.45	52.68	52.68	3.75	3.75	-3.5	-0.2
Sept. 16, 1951	B	17 of 63	DP1	52.73	52.73	52.73	52.73	1.25	1.25	9.2	4.3
May 2, 1954	A	64 of 64	DP1	57.61	57.61	52.73	52.73	2.50	2.50	4.8	4.9
Oct. 27, 1957	A	67 of 67	DP1	47.88	47.88	57.61	57.61	3.50	3.50	3.6	20.3
Oct. 15, 1961	A	67 of 67	Military rule [g]								
Nov. 17, 1963	L	67 of 67	CHP/YTP/CKMP	36.21	45.73	36.73	64.41	2.25	1.50	6.8	5.7
June 7, 1964	S	26 of 67	CHP	40.85	40.85	36.21	36.21	0.50	0.50	4.2	4.1
Oct. 10, 1965	A	67 of 67	AP/CKMP/YTP/MP	52.87	65.10	50.28	56.81 [h]	0.50	0.50	0.1	4.2
June 7, 1966	S + B	24 of 67	AP	56.49	56.49	52.87	52.87	0.75	0.75	4.6	5.2
June 2, 1968	L	67 of 67	AP	49.06	49.06	56.49	56.49	2.00	2.00	3.7	5.3
Oct. 12, 1969	A	67 of 67	AP	46.53	46.53	49.06	49.06	1.25	1.25	2.5	6.5
Oct. 14, 1973	A	67 of 67	AP/CGP	29.82	35.08	46.53	53.11	4.00	2.50 [i]	1.7	19.2
Oct. 12, 1975	S + B	27 of 67	AP/MSP/CGP/MHP	41.34	52.98 [j]	29.82	50.26	0.75	0.50	4.4	21.0
June 5, 1977	A	67 of 67	AP/MSP/CGP/MHP	36.88	53.73	41.34	52.98 [j]	1.75	1.75	4.7	19.4
Dec. 11, 1977	L	67 of 67	AP/MSP/MHP	37.08	50.59	36.88	51.86	0.50	0.50	1.3	23.7
Oct. 14, 1979	S + B	29 of 67	CHP/CGP/DP2	29.22	31.59 [k]	41.81	43.42	1.75	1.75	-2.2	68.4
Nov. 6, 1983	A	67 of 67	Military rule								
Mar. 25, 1984	L	67 of 67	ANAP	41.48	41.48	45.14	45.14	0.25	0.25	4.1	48.2
Sept. 28, 1986	B	10 of 67	ANAP	32.12	32.12	41.48	41.48	2.50	2.50	3.9	40.3
Nov. 29, 1987	A	67 of 67	ANAP	36.31	36.31	32.12	32.12	1.25	1.25	7.1	33.6
Mar. 26, 1989	L	71 of 71	ANAP	21.80	21.80	36.31	36.31	1.25	1.25	-2.5	69.2
Oct. 20, 1991	A	74 of 74	ANAP	24.01	24.01	21.80	21.80	2.50	2.50	1.5	55.2
Mar. 27, 1994	L	76 of 76	DYP/SHP	21.44	35.01	27.03	47.78	2.25	2.25	6.4	66.1
Dec. 24, 1995	A	79 of 79	DYP/CHP	19.18	29.89	21.44	39.64 [l]	1.75	1.75	5.6	87.2
Apr. 18, 1999	A	80 of 80	ANAP/DSP/DTP [m]	13.22	35.99	19.65	34.29 [n]	2.00	1.75	-1.8	68.4
Nov. 3, 2002	A	81 of 81	DSP/MHP/ANAP	1.22	14.71	22.19	53.39	3.50	3.25	-0.6	46.4
Mar. 28, 2004	L	81 of 81	AKP	41.67	41.67	34.28	34.28	1.25	1.25	4.5	18.8
July 22, 2007	A	81 of 81	AKP	46.58	46.58	41.67	41.67	3.25	3.25	4.6	9.0
Mar. 29, 2009	L	81 of 81	AKP	38.39	38.39	46.58	46.58	1.75	1.75	-5.6	13.3
June 12, 2011	A	81 of 81	AKP	49.83	49.83	38.39	38.39	2.25	2.25	7.3	7.6
Mar. 30, 2014	L	81 of 81	AKP	43.40	43.40	49.83	49.83	2.75	2.75	3.4	7.2

Notes:

<u>a</u>/   A: National Assembly general election.

    B: National Assembly by election.

    S: Senate election

    L: Local election (election for Provincial Councils until 2014, and for district Municipal Councils in 30 provinces officially designated as having "Metropolis" status and for Provincial Councils for the remaining 51 provinces in 2014).

    S+B: Senate election plus National Assembly by election (only in provinces where no Senate election was held simultaneously).

In instances when different types of elections are held simultaneously or almost simultaneously, the priority for inclusion in the sample was given first to the National Assembly general elections, next to local elections, then to the Senate elections, and last to the by elections. The Senate and by elections were given lower priorities because, unlike the National Assembly general elections and local elections, they did not cover the whole country. The Senate elections involved only a third of the provinces and only a third of the seats in the Senate that were subject to election. The coverage of by elections was even less, about 15-27% of the provinces when they did not coincide with a Senate election. When the Senate and by elections were held simultaneously, their results were aggregated to increase the coverage of the country. In such aggregation, for provinces where the two elections overlapped, the outcome of the Senate election is considered.

<u>b</u>/   The party listed first in the Table is the major incumbent party. The Turkish acronyms used in the table and the parties they represent are as follows:

    CHP: Republican People's Party

    DP1:   Democrat Party

    YTP: New Turkey Party

    CKMP: Republican Peasants' Nation Party

    AP: Justice Party

    MP: Nation Party

    CGP: Republican Reliance Party

MSP: National Salvation Party

MHP: Nationalist Action Party

DP2:   Democratic Party

ANAP: Motherland Party

DYP: True Path Party

SHP: Social Democratic People's Party

DSP: Democratic Left Party

DTP: Democrat Turkey Party

AKP: Justice and Development Party

c/   0.25 times the number of quarters since the last election during which the major incumbent party was in power a majority of the time, either alone or with other parties.

d/   0.25 times the number of quarters since the last election during which all incumbent parties were in power simultaneously a majority of the time, with or without other parties.

e/   The growth rate, g_t, is taken as the growth rate of per capita real GDP during the four-quarter period preceding the election. The latter is obtained by adjusting the growth rate of real GDP during the four-quarter period before the election with the annual growth rate of the population during the year of the election if the election was held in the second half of the year and during the year before if the election was held in the first half of the year. The quarter of the election is included in the four-quarter period if the election was held in the second half of the quarter; if otherwise, it is not included.

For elections prior to 1989, when quarterly data were not available, g_t is computed as follows:

$$g_t = m\,G_t + (1\text{-}m)\,G_{t\text{-}1}$$

where G_t and $G_{t\text{-}1}$ are the annual growth rates for the year in which the election was held, and the one prior to that.

m = 0.00 if the election is held between January 1 and February 14,

m = 0.25 if the election is held between February 15 and May 15,

m = 0.50 if the election is held between May 16 and August 15,

m = 0.75 if the election is held between August 16 and November 15,

m = 1.00 if the election is held between November 16 and December 31,

except for elections in 1965, 1975, and 1984, when m is taken as unity because the governments then were either not in power during the year preceding the election or were in power for less than half a quater.

For the year 1968, growth rate of per capita real GNP is substituted for the missing growth rate for per capita real GDP.

f/ The inflation rate, p_t, is taken as the growth rate of the GDP implicit price deflator during the four-quarter period preceding the election. The quarter of the election is included in the four-quarter period if the election was held in the second half of the quarter and not if other-wise. For the elections prior to 1989, when quarterly data were not available, p_t is computed as the weighted average of the annual infla-tion rates during the election year and the one before it; in a similar way the g_t was computed as explained above.

For the year 1968, rate of change in GNP deflator is substituted for the missing rate of change in GDP deflator.

g/ To increase the number of observations, the Republican People's Party (CHP) was treated as the incumbent party in 1961 by Akarca and Tansel (2006) and Akarca (2009, 2010 and 2011) even though the military was in power. This party was allied with the military regime at the time and supported it or at least was perceived by the public as such. Now that there are more data points at hand, the 1961 election has been dropped from the sample.

h/ Vote share of only AP, CKMP, and YTP. MP did not enter the 1964 election.

i/ The CGP was formed by the merger of the National Reliance Party (MGP) with the Republican Party (CP). In computing CGP's time in power, CGP and MGP are treated as if they are the same party.

j/ Vote share of only AP, MSP, and MHP. CGP did not participate in the 1975 election.

k/ Vote share of only CHP and CGP. DP2 did not contest the 1979 elec-tion.

l/ Vote share of DYP, CHP, and SHP in 1994. SHP merged with CHP in 1995. Therefore, SHP and CHP are treated as one party.

<u>m</u>/   A minority government formed by DSP was in power during the four months preceding the election, but it was just a caretaker government. For that reason, the coalition government in power for more than 18 months prior to that is taken as the incumbent.

<u>n</u>/   Vote share of only ANAP and DSP. DTP was formed in 1997 and thus did not compete in the 1995 election.

Sources of Data:

The dates and the coverage of elections, and the make-up of governments and their time in power, were determined using the information given in Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (2015), Tuncer (2002, 2007, 2009, and 2011), and Tuncer and Kasapbaş (2004).

Vote shares have been computed by the author, using the data provided by Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (2015) for the 2015 election, and by Tuncer (2002, 2007, 2009, and 2011), Tuncer and Kasapbaş (2004) and Tuncer, Yurtsever and Tuncer (2014) for all other elections. For aggregating the Grand National Assembly by elections and Senate elections held in 1975 and 1979, the province level vote data provided by the Turkish Institute of Statistics (TurkStat) were also used.

The growth rates have been computed by the author, as explained in note (e), using the data provided by the TurkStat for all years except 1948 and 1968. For the latter two years, the per capita real GNP growth rate was substituted for the missing growth rate in per capita real GDP. In computing the former, the population growth rate, provided by the TurkStat, and the real GNP growth rate, provided by the State Planning Organization (SPO) of the Republic of Turkey were drawn upon. The GDP series, from which the annual growth rates were obtained, is 1987-based for the years prior to 1998, and 1998-based for the years after 1999.

The inflation rates have also been computed by the author, as explained in note (f) above, using the data provided by the TurkStat for all the years except 1948 and 1968, for which the rate of change in the GNP price deflator was used instead. The rate of change in the GNP deflator was obtained from the SPO.