

Democracy at the Intersection of Religious Cleavage and Populism

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Economic Vote vs. Religious Vote

“If economic distress or frustration is mobilized around class lines/economic conflict, liberal democracy can be saved, but organized along ethnic or religious lines, then liberal democracy can be in danger as we have recently witnessed in Poland & Turkey” (Karakoç 2018, 314).

“...we average the predicted changes in support (*stemming from a unit change in economic perceptions*) over the sample to get an estimate of the average *general economic vote*” (Duch and Stevenson 2008, 51).

Religious Vote: In addition to religious affiliation and self-reported religiosity being utilized for electoral behavior research, there is utility in realizing that it can be conceived of as a moving force just like the economic vote. In shortened form, I define the average predicted change in support for a party *stemming from a unit change in religiosity* as the *general religious vote*.

Case and Time Period Selection

Case Selection: I chose Turkey as the case to illustrate the concept and initial results as the last two decades under single party government and regime change to a presidential system were marked by the salience of religion. However, when we conceptualize religious vote in line with economic vote, we see that it is not static even in this case where religion is salient.

Time Period Selection: The turbulent period in 2013 and 2014 was selected as there were a series of high-stakes events relevant to the Islamist discourse AKP (Justice and Development Party-). These include corruption Gezi Park protests, corruption investigations, the coup in Egypt, released recordings implicating the upper reaches of the government in corruption, Erdogan's clash with institutions and finally the presidential election.

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Applicability

The analysis offered here is readily applicable to a vast number of countries, especially the developing context.

Research Questions

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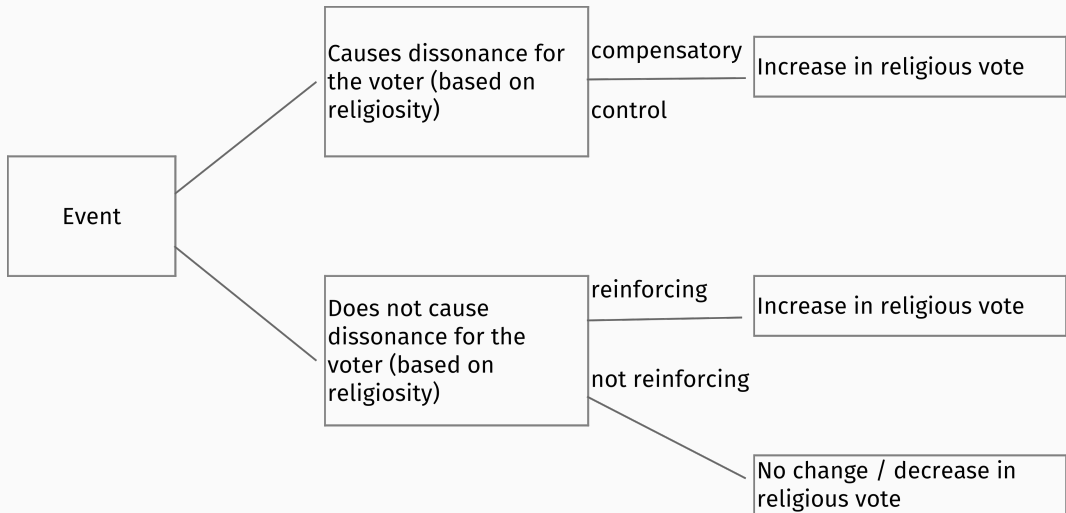
II

How does the religious vote change? What are some determinants of the variation?

III

Can we distinguish between compensatory control (Margolis 2016) and reinforcing cognition?

Theory



Hypotheses

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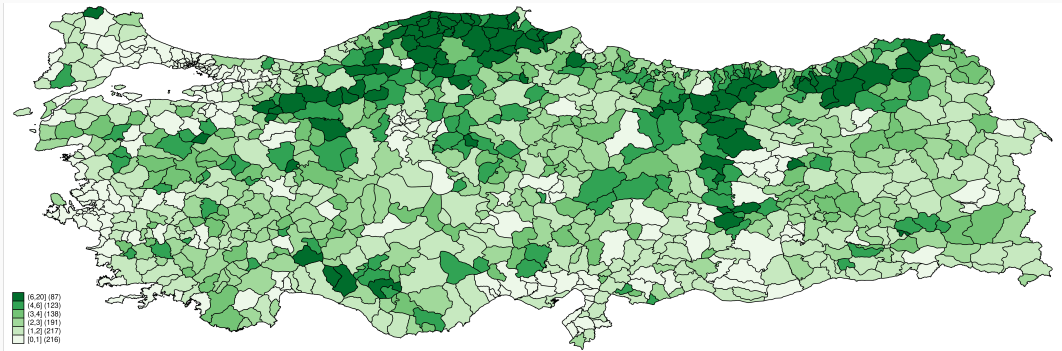
Hypothesis 2

Religious vote will increase (decrease) when voters are exposed to an event reinforcing their beliefs (based on the religious credentials of the party).

Hypothesis 3

Religious vote will not change/decrease when voters are exposed to an event not reinforcing their beliefs (based on the religious credentials of the party).

Mosque Density



Dependent Variables

- Vote intention for AKP

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Independent Variables

- Religiosity
- Ethnic dummy
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- Multi-level logistic regression

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- Age
- Age-squared
- Monthly household income
- Gender dummy
- Household population
- Educational status
- Residential area
- News on government TV
- Housewife
- Mosque density

Data and Method

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- 12 nationally representative surveys done in 2013-2014, total $N=30,062$.

Estimated Models

Table 1: AKP Vote Intention 2013-2014

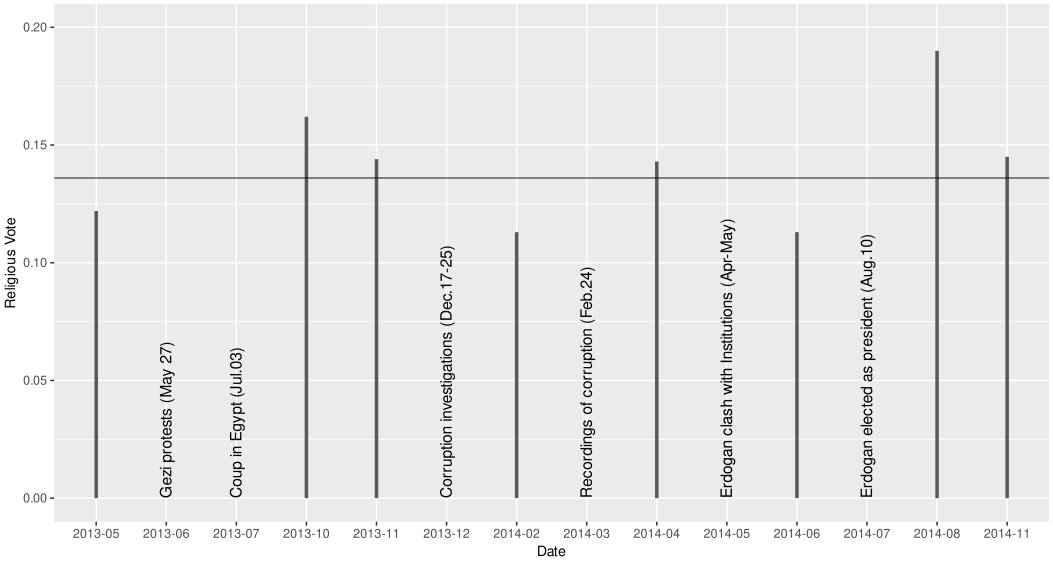
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
<i>Individual-level</i>									
Age	.02**(.01)	.00(.01)	.04**(.01)	.05***(.01)	.01(.02)	.03(.03)	.06*(.02)	.03**(.01)	.01(.01)
Age squared	-.00***(.00)	-.00(.00)	-.00**(.00)	-.00***(.00)	-.00(.00)	-.00(.00)	-.00*(.00)	-.00**(.00)	-.00(.00)
Female	-.17***(.05)	-.18**(.06)	-.31*(.12)	-.39**(.14)	.11(.14)	-.15(.10)	-.38**(.12)	-.35(.19)	-.35**(.13)
Household population	.05*(.02)	.03(.04)	.01(.08)	.09(.05)	.07(.09)	.24(.13)	.07(.08)	.13*(.06)	.04(.06)
Housewife	.39***(.04)	.48***(.07)	.26(.14)	.41***(.1)	.06(.14)	.48*(.24)	.59**(.21)	-.36*(.14)	.47**(.16)
Educational status	-.39***(.03)	-.44***(.05)	-.42**(.14)	-.31***(.04)	-.47***(.05)	-.27***(.07)	-.44***(.12)	-.36*(.14)	-.46***(.08)
Monthly household income	.05*(.02)	.02(.03)	.09(.05)	.06(.06)	.09(.07)	.06(.05)	.04(.09)	.07(.08)	.05(.06)
Residential area	-.11(.06)	-.15(.08)	-.26(.14)	-.06(.13)	.08(.16)	.02(.08)	.04(.09)	-.07(.12)	-.09(.11)
News on government TV	.57***(.04)	.25***(.04)	.36***(.08)	.19**(.07)	.81***(.11)	.97***(.13)	.98***(.12)	.97***(.07)	.87***(.08)
Kurdish	-.61*(.26)	-.74**(.26)	-.58(.31)	-.66*(.27)	-.01(.31)	-.54(.32)	-.55(.36)	-.47***(.10)	-.89**(.38)
Alevi	-.237***(.18)	-.218***(.21)	-.296***(.7)	-.185***(.27)	-.291***(.52)	-.38***(.94)	-.293***(.52)	-.293***(.38)	-.189***(.43)
Religiosity	.65***(.05)	.57***(.06)	.81***(.09)	.67***(.07)	.53***(.12)	.74***(.14)	.58***(.11)	.97***(.17)	.73***(.06)
<i>Regional-level</i>									
Mosque density	.08(.06)	-.00(.07)	-.00(.13)	.11(.1)	.37**(.14)	.21*(.09)	.19(.1)	.14(.11)	.07(.12)
Constant	-2.2***(.29)	-1.2**(.42)	-2.8***(.64)	-2.9***(.61)	-2.6***(.44)	-3.7***(.49)	-2.6***(.37)	-3.8***(.10)	-2.1**(.66)
N	24660	8977	2013	1965	1950	2120	2050	1976	3609

Multi-level logistic regression estimates where vote intention for AKP is the dependent variable. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. Models were checked for multicollinearity. Mosque density is the only regional-level control variable in the models.

Models were estimated on the surveys as follows: Model I uses the pooled 12 surveys. Model II uses the pooled surveys from Jan.2013, Feb.2013, Mar.2013 and May 2013. Model III is estimated with the survey from Oct.2013. Model IV is estimated using the survey from Nov.2013. Model V is estimated using the survey from Feb.2014. Model VI is estimated using the survey from Apr. 2014. Model VII is estimated using the survey from June 2014. Model VIII is estimated using the survey from Aug.2014. Finally, Model IX is estimated using the pooled surveys from Oct.2014 and Nov.2014. The religious vote that forms the main argument of the analysis is calculated from the estimated models.

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Religious Vote 2013-2014



Limitation, Implication, and Future Work

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This study and the findings are subject to the usual caveats and shortcomings of a single-country study. However, the main ideas tested are relevant for a wider scope and the results help in further theory building.

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III

I will seek to further clarify and develop my theoretical ideas and extend the scope of tests for further theory building.

Thank you!

