VIOLENCE AND VOTING BEHAVIOR:

EVIDENCE FROM 2015 TURKISH ELECTIONS

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Violence and Voting Behavior: Evidence from

2015 Turkish Elections

How does violence affect voting behavior? Using the Turkish elections in June and November 2015 as a case study, this thesis tries to answer this question. To do that, first, I conduct a variety of quantitative analyses based on district-level data I have gathered on the location of deadly clashes and attacks as well as the funeral locations of security forces and civilians in between two elections. Second, in order to unpack possible mechanisms behind statistical correlations, I use qualitative evidence gathered from a variety of primary and secondary sources. In my analysis, I emphasize the importance of context and argue that the literature on voting behavior and violence/terrorism should pay greater attention to the contextual factors such as the nature of electoral competition, electoral strategy and counter-terrorism policies of political parties, the targets (civilian or security force) and the level of violence, the nature of warfare, and identities and political orientations of the civilians. Moreover, I argue that under high levels of violence, macro-dynamics rather than the micro-dynamics of the conflict influence voting behavior.

ÖZET

Şiddet ve Oy Verme Davranışı:
2015 Türkiye Seçimlerinden Bulgular

Şiddet oy verme davranışını nasıl etkiler? Bu tez 2015 Türkiye seçimlerini örnek bir olay olarak kullanarak bu soruya cevap arıyor. Bunu yapmak için önce, iki seçim arasındaki ölümle sonuçlanan çatışma ve saldırıların, ve güvenlik güçleri ve sivil cenazelerinin konumlarına ilişkin ilçe seviyesinde topladığım verileri kullanarak çeşitli nicel analizler yapıyorum. İkincisi, istatistiksel korelasyonların arkasındaki olası mekanizmaları anlamak için çeşitli birincil ve ikincil kaynaklardan toplanan nitel bulguları kullanıyorum. Her iki soruya cevap verirken bağlamın önemini vurguluyor; şiddet/terörizm ve oy verme davranışı üzerine olan literatürün seçim rekabetinin doğası, siyasi partilerin seçim stratejileri ve teröre/ayaklanmaya karşı koyma politikaları, şiddetin hedefi (sivil vs güvenlik gücü) ve seviyesi, savaşın yapılma biçimi, seçmenlerin kimlikleri ve siyasal yönelimleri gibi duruma bağlı/spesifik faktörlere daha çok önem vermesi gerektiğini iddia ediyorum. Buna ek olarak, şiddetin yoğun olduğu durumlarda çatışmanın mikro dinamiklerinden ziyade makro dinamiklerinin oy verme davranışını etkilediğini savunuyorum.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADYÖD Ankara Democratic Higher Education Association (*Ankara Demokratik Öğretim Derneği)*

AKP Justice and Development Party *(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)*

BDP Peace and Democracy Party *(Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi)*

CHP Republican People's Party *(Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)*

DDKO Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths *(Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*)

FKF Federation of Debating Societies *(Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu)*

HEP People's Labour Party *(Halkın Emek Partisi*)

HDP Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi)*

İHD Human Right Association's (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*)

ISIS Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

MHP Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)*

PKK Kurdistan Workers' Party *(Partîya Karkerên Kurdistanê)*

PYD Democratic Union Party *(Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat)*

SHP Socialdemocratic Populist Party *(Sosyal Demokratik Halkçı Parti)*

TPCONED Turkish State–PKK Conflict Event Database

TİP Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi)*

YDG-H Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (*Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik Hareketi)*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Democracy is often praised for being a nonviolent method of settling claims to rule by different political groups. However, in some cases elections themselves may cause violence, which is oftentimes studied under the label of "electoral violence" (Birch, Daxecker, & Höglund, 2020). In other cases, armed groups including paramilitaries, insurgents and terrorists use violence strategically to influence the election results (Acemoglu, Robinson, & Santos, 2013; Aksoy, 2014; Gallego, 2018; Joshi & Mason, 2008). Moreover, it is not uncommon for political parties to have close relationships with armed organizations or to have armed wings and participate in elections at the same time (Ayan Musil & Maze, 2021; Berti, 2016; Bhasin & Hallward, 2013; Matanock & Staniland, 2018; McAllister, 2004; Reno, 2011; Staniland, 2015; Watts, 2010; Weinberg, Pedahzur, & Perliger, 2009; Wilkinson, 2006; Wood, 2003) or for democracies to be targets of terrorism (See Gaibulloev, Piazza, & Sandler, 2017 for a study on the relationship between regime type and terrorism). In short, elections -even those that take place in competitive settings- does not rule out the use of violence by actors competing for power in the political arena.

This is the rule rather than the exception in countries such as Israel, Colombia and Turkey, where competitive elections have been long taking place in the shadow of civil conflict and terror attacks by various groups. Elections determine who holds the power and make decisions, and therefore are arguably the single most important and influential institution in competitive electoral systems. Thus, understanding the relationship between violence and voting behavior is key to understanding the political processes in these countries. Violence and civil wars have also long-term

impacts on individuals as they may radically transform identities and social networks (Wood, 2008), that is, with whom civilians frequently interact and whom they avoid (Kalin & Sambanis, 2018), and increase political polarization and make ethnic identities more salient (Wood, 2008; Kibris, 2014).

For example, in Greece, the election victory of the socialist PASOK almost 40 years after the Greek civil war ended, invoked high levels of polarization largely based on civil war memories, and the main areas of socialization in villages, the coffee shops, became segregated along partisan lines. Thus, the impact of violence on political identities and polarization may be salient even decades after the civil war ends (S. Kalyvas, 2006, p. 404), not only among those who experienced civil war but generations that come after (Balcells, 2012; Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017), which naturally impacts political behavior and preference formation (See Kalin & Sambanis, 2018 for a review on identities and political behavior). That is to say, beyond its importance in influencing elections results, understanding the relationship between violence and voting behavior can have crucial implications for conflict resolution, peace-making and overcoming polarization.

To this end, in this thesis, I examine an interesting and extremely important period in recent Turkish history, namely the period between 7 June and 1 November elections of 2015. The regular national election took place in June 2015 in the absence of large-scale violence when there was an on-going Peace Process between the government and the insurgent Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê-PKK). The incumbent Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP)) got only 40% of the votes and failed to achieve the required number of deputies to form a single-party government. On the other hand, Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi-HDP), which has close ties with the

PKK, far exceeded the 10% electoral threshold for the first time in the history of Kurdish nationalist parties by doubling its vote in the previous general election and getting 13% of the votes.

After the elections, both the PKK and the government escalated and polarized the political atmosphere with their words and deeds, as a result of which the Peace Process collapsed. As the political parties failed to form a coalition government, the snap election was called by the president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The election took place in November less than five months after the first, in the presence of large-scale violence between the state and the PKK killing close to 400 people. Moreover, in between two elections two separate suicide attacks by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) killed close to 140 people. In the November election, the AKP increased its vote share by 25% and got 49.5% of the votes, whereas the HDP was down to 10.8%.

This timing and condition of the elections give me a leverage to answer a straightforward but profound question: How does violence impact voting behavior? As I talk in greater detail in the individual chapters, I try to answer two questions: First, how does exposure to terrorism affect voting behavior and most specifically, how does subnational variation in exposure to terrorism affect subnational variation in the vote share of the incumbent government and the opposition? (chapter 3) Second, what is the relationship between subnational variation in insurgent violence and subnational variation in the vote share of insurgent associated political party? Or is there a relationship (chapter 4). Below, I first briefly review the literature on violence and elections and explain why I chose to ask two different questions one that frames the question as subnational variation in exposure to terrorism and subnational variation in insurgent violence, and their impacts on voting behavior.

1.1 Violence and voting

Much of the literature on political violence and elections revolve around the concept of "electoral violence" (Birch et al., 2020; Matanock & Staniland, 2018; Steele & Schubiger, 2018). Many of these studies focus on communal violence (Wilkinson, 2006), violent protest before and after elections, the creation of armed wings by political parties and the transformation from armed groups to political parties (Matanock & Staniland, 2018).

Beyond electoral violence, there are studies which focus on conflict and civil war triggering effects of democracy and democratization (Cederman, Hug, & Krebs, 2010; Hegre, 2014), how international pressures for democratization and elections create new forms of violence (Reno, 2011), how and why rebel groups participate in elections (Matanock & Staniland, 2018), role of insurgency in making of a new insurgent counter elite and subsequent democratization (Wood, 2000), how rebel governance influence prospects for democratization in post-conflict settings (Huang, 2016), causes and consequences electoral participation provisions (Matanock, 2017a, 2017b), elections and their unintended consequences for civilian victimization by displacement and killing (Belge, 2016; Steele, 2017; Steele & Schubiger, 2018), electoral competition and targeted killings of civilians in conventional civil wars (Balcells, 2017), how democratization and decentralization can empower armed groups (Eaton, 2006), how democratization can challenge the insurgents groups' support among the constituency and create incentives for the insurgents to escalate violence (Tezcür, 2010).

However, the literature on the impacts of violence on voting behavior during civil war and the literature on the impacts of terrorism on voting behavior are rather small. Moreover, framing of violence as terrorism or insurgent violence is not

constant across these studies. For instance, in the Turkish case, Kıbrıs (2011) measures exposure to terrorism through being exposed to funerals of security forces that were killed by the PKK. Yet, terrorism is often times defined as the use of violence against non-combatants for political purposes. Indeed, this is a big issue in the conflict and terrorism literature which hinders development of cumulative knowledge within these fields as different conceptualizations and operationalizations of violence and terrorism yield to different results (Also see S. Kalyvas & Straus, 2020; See Saul, 2019 for a recent review). Another problem is driven by the realities on the ground, namely, most acts of terrorism are perpetuated by rebels and insurgents fighting in civil wars (Findley & Young, 2012; Stanton, 2019).

However, from the perspective of voting behavior what matters is how voters perceive and think about violence rather than how we conceptualize different types of violence. One can easily imagine the killing of a security force to have different meanings for the constituency of the armed organization than it would do for pro-government/anti-armed-organization population or the reaction to a killing to be contingent upon who the victim is.

For instance, in the Basque region of Spain, de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2013) found that citizens reacted differently to the killing of different types of civilians. When ETA targeted non-nationalist Basque politicians, ETA's political wing Batasuna was electorally punished, however, killing of informers and drug dealers increased Batasuna's vote share.

Relatedly, previous research in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq has shown that civilian responses to violence to be not uniform but contingent upon the identity of the civilians and combatants (Condra & Shapiro, 2012; Lyall, Blair, & Imai, 2013; Sambanis, Schulhofer-Wohl, & Shayo, 2012; Silverman, 2019). Similarly, in the US,

Huff and Kertzer (2018) found a variety of factors, including the type and the severity of violence, the attributed motivation of the attack and the social categorization or the identity of the perpetuator to influence whether public perceives an act as an act of terrorism or not. Thus, they have shown that terrorism is indeed a socially constructed concept through a survey experiment.

In the Turkish context, PKK's support base is almost exclusively Kurdish, and we can expect that the PKK violence to be perceived as act of terrorism among most ethnic Turks regardless of the target type, i.e security forces or civilians - although I am not aware of any empirical study to confirm this claim. Moreover, most of the PKK violence has historically been confined to the eastern and southeastern provinces of Turkey, in which Kurds make up the substantial proportion of the population and oftentimes the majority. Rest of Turkey, however, has been largely exempt from violence where people are exposed to terrorism through funerals of state security forces (Kibris, 2011).

In vast majority of these provinces and their districts, the Kurdish national movement has no voter base and receives less than three percentage of the vote share, which also creates problems for statistical analysis. Lastly, given the history of violence in the eastern and southeastern provinces of Turkey including the permanent state of emergency that run between late 80's and early 2000's, and meanings attached to violence as well as possible implications of clashes,[1] we can expect civilians responses in these localities to be quite different than the other parts of Turkey.

For this reason, I study voting behavior in the Turkish elections of 2015 through two different theoretical frameworks. First, I study voting behavior in

[1] For instance mere presence and deployment of security forces can impact people's daily lives even if there are no clashes

relation to the literature on terrorism and voting behavior in the historically non-violent parts of Turkey. Second, I study voting behavior in the eastern and southeastern Turkey building on the literature on irregular warfare, political behavior and identities, and insurgent organization-constituency relations.

1.2 Methodology and data

This thesis can be broadly called a multi-method research (Seawright, 2016a), where I combine qualitative evidence from primary and secondary sources on Kurdish conflict in Turkey with quantitative data at the subnational level, where unity of analysis is districts (N=970). This type of multi-method research design where the researcher leverages subnational variation in a single country is becoming increasingly popular in comparative politics subfield (See Pepinsky, 2019 for a recent overview), and in civil war literature. Indeed, most of the voting behavior and violence literature cited in this thesis utilizes disaggregate data at the subnational level. However, there are some differences in the empirical chapters.

In chapter three, I study the effects of terrorism and on the vote shares of AKP, CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - Republican People's Party), MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partiesi – Nationalist Movement Party) and the voter-turn out. I specify a Spatial Durbin Error Model (SDEM), which is a regression model which accounts for both the spatial error and spatial diffusion effects of independent variables, which has been recently advocated by various scholar over classical spatial lag and error models (Elhorst, 2014; Halleck & Elhorst, 2015; LeSage, 2014; LeSage & Pace, 2009). My main independent variable of interest in the model is security force funerals and civilian funerals per 20.000 voters in a given district, which I use a

proxy measure for exposure to terrorism. In this chapter, I also provide qualitative and anecdotal evidence.

For quantitative analysis in this chapter, I have created two data-sets. The first data set has information on security force casualties, where I have coded the location of the security force funeral, age, profession (village guard, police, military), duty (traffic police, special forces etc.), rank (police officer, chief of police, corporal, lieutenant etc.) and whether the person was a professional soldier or on compulsory military duty. The second data-set includes information on the funeral location of civilians who were killed by ISIS in suicide bombings.

Chapter 4 has a truly multi-method research design, where I combine various simple multivariate regression analysis with a within case qualitative analysis of Cizre district. The within case helps me to test whether hypothesized causal paths that are expected to produce the statistical association between variables are present (Lyall, 2014; Seawright, 2016a). In selecting the case study, I have used the so-called "extreme case strategy", which is particularly useful when demonstrating the existence of a causal pathway since the independent variable of interest in the extreme case is expected to have a high impact on the dependent variable (Seawright, 2016b).

My main independent variable of interest in this chapter is conflict intensity, that is total number of security force, insurgent and civilian causalities in a given district. For combatant fatalities, I use the Turkish State–PKK Conflict Event Database (TPCONED) (Kibris, 2021) which has spatially coded data for insurgent and security force fatalities at the district level. To create a data-set on civilian fatalities, I use the Human Right Association's (İnsan Hakları Derneği, İHD) 2015 report (İHD, 2016). TPCONED relies on Human Right Association's 2015 report,

this helps me prevent double-counting in cases when the distinction between civilians and PKK militants become blurry, which was the case in the urban settings.

For qualitative evidence, I have systematically perused news articles from various sources such as Bianet, T24, Milliyet, Hürriyet, BBC Turkish and Al-Monitor through going over the entire list of news articles that were published in between two elections. I also systematically read reports written by human rights organizations and political parties. Moreover, I have watched videos of clashes between security forces and PKK militants and interviews with Kurdish voters through keyword searches.

Lastly, it is important to note that I have followed an inductive iteration (Yom, 2015) approach in this thesis. That is to say, I did not choose the case after I have developed a set of hypothesis and ideas, rather my substantive knowledge of the case showed me what has happened in the double elections of 2015 was completely opposite of what the literature would have predicted. After realizing that, I have started moving back and forth between the theory and the empirics. Thus, whenever I follow a deductive template (Yom, 2015), it is done for the purpose of clarity. In reality the process was rather iterative. Moreover, in this thesis, my main aim is to develop a set of ideas and generalizations using double elections of 2015 in Turkey as a case study, which necessarily required some trade-offs between particularities of the Turkish case and generalizations.

1.3 Organization of the thesis and the arguments

In Chapter 2, I give a brief overview of the history of the Kurdish Issue and the PKK insurgency in Turkey, and present the background to the double elections of 2015. Chapter 3 is the first empirical chapter of this thesis where I analyze the voting

behavior outside of the Kurdish region specifying a Spatial Durbin Error Model and engaging with the literature on voting behavior and terrorism. In this chapter, I argue that the terrorism literature may benefit from first, moving beyond left-wing and right-wing dichotomy; second, paying greater attention to context and especially policies and electoral strategy of the political parties (Balcells & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; See Criado, 2017); third, nature of the electoral competition, especially the regime type; fourth; disaggregating the targets of terrorism (Also see Criado, 2017; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Huff & Kertzer, 2018).

In this chapter, first, my empirical analysis shows that the literature on voting behavior and terrorism should account for possible diffusion of effects for terrorism. To best of my knowledge this study is the first study to do so. Second, I found no statistically significant relationship between exposure to terrorism and voting for the incumbent AKP despite expecting a positive relationship and controlling for possible diffusion effects. Supplementing this finding with anecdotal evidence, I speculate that when the level of violence exceeds a certain threshold and when politicians build a campaign around insecurity and instability and drive ontological insecurity among the electorate as an electoral strategy (also see Sahin, 2021), terrorism may impact voting behavior throughout the country, not just who are exposed to it.

Third, I found a positive relationship between exposure to security force funerals and the MHP-vote share despite MHP losing its vote share in almost every district. Supplementing this finding with anecdotal evidence, I speculate that anger that is caused by being exposed to security force funerals may have overcome concerns over security and fear, thus, helped the MHP to retain some of its vote share.

Fourth, I found a negative relationship between the CHP vote-share and exposure to civilian funerals. However, I expected to find a positive relationship between the CHP vote share and civilian funerals given that the CHP's vote share decreased in some districts and increased in others and given that civilians were killed during two left-wing rallies and their funerals were scene to left-wing mobilization which I expected to boost the CHP's vote share.

Chapter 4 is the second empirical chapter of this thesis, where I analyze the voting behavior in eastern and southeastern Turkey, where Kurds constitute the majority of the population. In this chapter, I utilize both qualitative and quantitative evidence and focus on the case of Cizre district of Şırnak province as a within case study analysis. In this chapter, I criticize conceptualization and operationalization of violence as civilian victimization through the killing of civilians by insurgents in the related literature (e.g Birnir & Gohdes, 2018; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Heger, 2015). First, I argue that civilians are victimized beyond being directly targeted by insurgents as collateral damage in fatal or non-fatal ways during the clashes between insurgents and the state. Second and relatedly, conflicts are at least dyads, thus, insurgent violence begets state violence and vice-versa, which can further victimize civilians. I, therefore, argue that to be able to truly capture impacts of violence on behavior of the civilians one should also consider the state's actions beyond one-sided civilian killings by insurgents.

On the empirical front, I show that clashes between insurgents and the state tend to take place in localities of high insurgent support. Second, I show that voters punish insurgent-associated political party for the violence disproportionately across localities. I argue that the identity and political orientation of civilians influence how they perceive violence and whom they blame for violence (Condra & Shapiro, 2012;

Lyall et al., 2013; Sambanis et al., 2012; Silverman, 2019), that is civilians who reside in localities of violence are more likely to blame the government for violence rather than the insurgents, compared to civilians who reside in non-violent localities given that clashes between insurgents and the state tend to take place in localities of high insurgent support. Thus, I find a positive relationship between violence and the vote-share of insurgent-associated HDP despite a decrease in its vote share in almost every district in the aftermath of violence.

Recalling Kalyvas (2003), this paradoxical finding raises important questions about ontology of violence in the study of political behavior in violent context. On the basis of this paradoxical finding, i.e HDP being punished primarily in localities that were not exposed to violence, I differentiate civilian response to violence as the response to actual use of physical force or to act of infliction of bodily harm from civilian response to violence as response to escalation of the conflict which is constituted by and emerges from the multiple acts of use force but is qualitatively different than them.

Albeit using different perspectives, both of these chapters emphasize, first, the importance of the context in the study of violence and voting behavior. As I have explained above studying voting behavior in different parts of Turkey requires different theoretical lenses, thus context matters. In the third chapter, I emphasize the nature of electoral competition (competitive authoritarian system of Turkey, where government had superior tools to campaign), electoral strategy of the political parties (AKP's strategy of securitization of the elections), type of target (security forces and civilians), and policy choices towards terrorism rather than arbitrarily focusing on right-wing-left-wing dichotomy (AKP's policy change from negotiation to full-scale counter-insurgency). In the fourth chapter I emphasize the nature of warfare, first

how civilians are victimized (as collatarel damage or targeted killing) and second, the dyadic and relational nature of warfare between insurgents and counter-insurgents; and the central role of identities and political orientations in shaping civilian responses to violence.

Second, both chapters emphasize the central role the macro-level political processes rather than micro-level dynamics of violence have on voting behavior, and relatedly the importance of conflict intensity in influencing violence to have local or global impacts, i.e whether violence impacts voting behavior only in localities that are exposed to it or voting behavior throughout the country. This raises an important methodological question about making inferences regarding the effect of violence on voting behavior.

Studies that leverage subnational variation in violence and terrorism and voting behavior (Berrebi & Klor, 2008; Birnir & Gohdes, 2018; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Kibris, 2011) implicitly assume violence to effect the voting behavior in that locality but not in others, or assume it to influence voting behavior in localities of violence more than the others. However, voters do not only observe developments in their own districts but throughout the country. Thus, once this implicit assumption does not hold making inferences about the individual impacts of each act of violence become extremely difficult. I talk about this conceptual issue in the fourth chapter in greater detail. In Chapter 5, I summarize the findings of this thesis, discuss their implications and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2

KURDISH ISSUE AND INSURGENCY IN TURKEY

The origins of the Kurdish Issue and the rise of Kurdish nationalism can be traced back to the dissolution period of the Ottoman Empire when the multi-ethnic character of the Empire was challenged by the appeal of rising nationalism and formation of nation-states. Yet, until mid 1910's "the Kurdish nationalism remained Ottomanist in outlook" (H. Bozarslan, 2008, p. 337). By mid 1910's several Kurdish tribes started articulating ethno-nationalist demands including education in Kurdish language and regional autonomy. However, with the First World War and Ottoman policy of relocation and mass killing of Armenians in 1915 and later the War of Independence pushed Kurdish elites to form an alliance first with Unionist government and later with anti-occupation forces led by Mustafa Kemal (H. Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 337–338).

The debates in the first parliament founded by the anti-occupation forces and Mustafa Kemal's statements during this period indicate that the Kurdish and Turkish identities were not yet deemed as rival and antagonistic but one that could be compatible and that in the would-be-founded new state of Turkey Kurds would have some form of political autonomy (Somer, 2016a, pp. 143–152). However, this was to change after the foundation of the Republic.

Yeğen (1999) explains that the formation of the new Republic in 1923 and the 1924 Constitution marked a change in the Turkish leaderships' discourse from legal and political recognition of multi-ethnic character of Turkey during the War of Independence to a denial of the existence of Kurds as a distinct ethnic group. However, this did not mean that the state was not aware of Kurdish Issue or did not

address it, rather the Kurdish Issue was perceived and talked about as a question of religious reactionary politics, tribal resistance or regional backwardness rather than as a ethno-political question.

Similarly, Somer (2016a, pp. 143–152) argues that the 1924 Constitution has indications of a change in the discourse and future of the national state project or at least that was perceived as so by the Kurdish elites. He argues from the perspective of Turkish elites, the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925 marked a rupture as it created concerns regarding Turkey's territorial integrity and a fear of partition as a result of which the rival and antagonistic definitions of Turkish and Kurdish identities became dominant.

Bozarslan calls (2008, pp. 338–342) the period between 1923 and 1938, the period of radicalisation and revolt which witnessed several Kurdish rebellions all of which were violently suppressed through mass mobilization of the Turkish army as well as co-option of some Kurdish tribes as paramilitias by the government. The repression of Dersim Rebellion in 1938 marked a new phase of silence between 1938-1961, where there were no signs of Kurdish dissent (H. Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 343–344). Although there were several reasons behind this relatively calm period, the most important one was Turkey's transition to the electoral democracy or to the two-party system from the one-party rule. The Democrat Party, which was founded by a group of high ranking members of the ruling elite including former prime minister Celal Bayar, offered a new opportunity for Kurdish elites and incorporated them to party and government structure.

The 1960's and 70's was an important period for the Kurdish politics in Turkey as it was to give rise to the PKK. Already by the late 50's a new generation of Kurdish intellectuals was emerging. The revival of Kurdish nationalism in this

period can be attributed to several factors. First, Mustafa Barzani's return to Iraq after the 1958 and his rebellion in 1961 had greatly impacted the Kurdish youth (H. Bozarslan, 2008, p. 345). Second, the 1961 military coup and the new constitution that was adopted expanded the civil and political liberties, thus the opportunities for mobilization and organization. This also coincided with and gave rise to the development of a robust left-wing movement in Turkey which became popular among large segments of Kurdish society particularly among the students and urban intellectuals, which were to challenge the dominance of traditional Kurdish elites in the political sphere (H. Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 345–346).

2.1 The emergence of the PKK

Perhaps the most interesting fact about the PKK is that it was born "from the revolutionary Turkish left" rather than the Kurdish movements at the time (J. P. Jongerden & Akkaya, 2011, p. 126). By the late 60's and early 70's there were dozens of leftist organizations in Turkey inspired by left-wing movements in the Third World. These organizations varied in in their ideologies and practices. Intra-left competition, violence and splintering was common.

During these years, Kurdish activists were involved in various left-wing organizations including Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP-Türkiye İşçi Partisi) and in the Federation of Debating Societies (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu - FKF) and later, an umbrella organization called Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths (Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları - DDKO), that was founded by Kurdish students who split from the FKF, which was to inspire Kurdish organization that were to be founded thereafter (Tezcür, 2015b, p. 5). In these years, the Turkish left entered a period of radicalization and militarization and turned to urban and rural guerilla warfare

methods, which greatly influenced Kurdish political activists (Tezcür, 2015b, p. 5). However, most of the Kurds still remained within the realm of legal politics (H. Bozarslan, 2008, p. 347).

The period of radicalization in Kurdish movement came truly after the coup in 1971. Despite not being targeted as much as the Turkish left did, arrest and torture of hundreds of politically active Kurds and the process of radicalization in the prisons made many activists lose their faith in legal methods (H. Bozarslan, 2008, pp. 347–348). Moreover, "Kurdistan is a colony" thesis became a widely accepted idea during the same period (Akkaya, 2013, p. 9).

The core group of students who were later to form the PKK were active in the left-wing student movement in Ankara, particularly within the Ankara Demokratik Öğretim Derneği (Ankara Democratic Higher Education Association-ADYÖD), where Abdullah Öcalan and Haki Karer were among the senior members of the organization. Öcalan was in prison between April and October 1972 for his role in the organization of protests after the killing of Mahir Çayan- one of the most important leaders of the left at the time- and Çayan's friend (J. P. Jongerden & Akkaya, 2011, p. 127).

As Jondergen and Akkaya (2011, pp. 127–128) explains the years between 1973 and 1977 can be considered the formation years of the PKK, when the group transformed itself from a loose network of students around Öcalan to an organization with a program and strategy. During these years, the group undertook ideological discussions and expanded its base mainly through friendship networks, who were introduced to the group in hundreds of house meetings in Ankara. These house meetings were crucial for the formation of the PKK since the discussion in these meetings shaped the ideological outlook of the movement and since they created

strong ties between the members. In 1976, the group decided to expand their activities to Turkish Kurdistan and by 1978 the group was founded under the name of the PKK, already started expanding its base in cities like Tunceli, Maraş, Batman and Urfa. However, when the PKK was founded there were more than ten other Kurdish political organizations. The PKK differed from these organizations in various ways which explains its transformation from a loose network of students to the single most popular Kurdish organization in Turkey.

According to Tezcür (2015b, pp. 7–11), first, PKK addressed the socio-economic conditions and deep inequality within the Kurdish society. It did that by strategically employing violence against exploitative Kurdish landlords as well as rival Kurdish and leftist organizations in its formative years between 1978 and 1984. The PKK's willing to act, that is going beyond the rhetoric, increased its credibility among the peasants and students. Moreover, it recruited members from tribes who were the rivals of the ruling-tribe in localities they organized. Third, the PKK offered poor peasants social mobility, where uneducated and poor peasants could become powerful PKK commanders. Lastly, the PKK offered peasant girls a way out of patriarchy and oppression.

Moreover, the coup in 1980 and the indiscriminate state violence especially the torture in the prisons helped the PKK to gain popularity among large segments of the society, who developed strong grievances against the state (Cemal, 2015; Tezcür, 2015b, p. 12). Lastly, Öcalan and the PKK did not refrain using violence against internal opposition to silent dissent and ensure unity within the organization (Marcus, 2007; See Türk, 2020 for a study on Öcalan's perspective on violence).

This dynamic of indiscriminate state repression became more pronounced after the PKK started its insurgency in 1984. Losing state authority in several border towns and cities mostly in rural areas but also in urban centers such as in Cizre, the Turkish army started sweep operations as well forced displacement of rural Kurdish population that victimized large segments of the Kurdish society. These victimized civilians, who had to immigrate to the urban centers and lost their lifehoods, were to be the main support base of both the PKK but also the legal Kurdish national movement in Turkey (There are hundres of books and articles on these issue if not thousands, e.g Cemal, 2015; Tezcür, 2016)

The PKK reached peak of its power by early 90's when it was able to control a considerable territory and became a mass movement (Gunes, 2015). However, already by mid- 90's, the state was able to push PKK back through large-scale counter-insurgency operations and village evacuations. For example, the prominent journalist Kadri Gürsel who was abducted by the PKK in 1995 and spent 26 days in the mountains with the PKK militants explains (1996) that the militants frequently sighed and invoked the phrase "We were like a state here," explaining the relative control they had over the territory prior to 1995 (See Kayhan Pusane, 2015; Ünal, 2016; Unal & Cafnik Uludağ, 2020 for an analysis of the military strategy of Turkey).

PKK's increasing popularity also greatly influenced the legal political sphere. In 1990, several Kurdish members of the Sosyal Demokratik Halkçı Parti (Socialdemocratic Populist Party-SHP) were expelled from the party on the ground that they attended the "Kurdish National Identity and Human Rights" conference. Protesting this decision, other members of SHP, mainly the Kurdish ones, including members of the parliament resigned from SHP and founded Halkın Emek Partisi

(People's Labour Party-HEP). Although it was not an exclusively Kurdish political party, it can be considered the first pro-Kurdish or the first mass legal political party of the Kurdish National Movement in Turkey. It can also be considered the first political party to form the legal political tradition that has close ideological links and shared a similar constituency with the PKK (See Ayan Musil & Maze, 2021; Çiçek, 2017; O'Connor, 2017 on the relationship between the PKK and political parties of the Kurdish national movement).

Nevertheless, the violent political atmosphere continued until Abdullah Öcalan's arrest in 1999 and subsequent declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the PKK. During these years HEP and its successor parties were banned, their members were not only jailed but were killed by unknown perpetrators.

2.2 Post 1999 period

In 1999, Turkey arrested Abdullah Öcalan in Kenya with the intelligence from the United States. After that, PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire that was to stay in place until June 2004. Nevertheless, Turkish army continued its operations but the death toll remained significantly low. Meanwhile major political changes happened in Turkey.

Between 1999 and 2004 Turkey experienced a rapid democratization process. On 11 December 1999 Turkey was recognized as a candidate for full membership in the EU. This period coincided with a deep political and economic crisis in Turkey. In 2002 general elections, newly founded AKP that had its root in political Islamist tradition came to power as a single party government. The AKP differed from its predecessors in various ways. It rebranded itself as a "conservative democratic" party, that respected liberal and market values and included a broad coalitions of

political actors from various segments of Turkey. The EU-anchored reforms that started in 1999 continued under the AKP rule between 2002 and 2004.

These reforms included improvements in the Turkish legal system, human right violations, ill-treatment and torture, anti-terror law, individual and civic liberties such as freedom of association and expression, allowance for broadcasting and education other than Turkish and the changes also ensured international agreement's superiority over domestic law (Baç 2005). Most of these reforms were also passed through elite-cooperation (Somer 2016, pp. 258–271).

As a result, in the period the conditions in the Kurdish majority cities significantly improved (Aslan 2014, pp. 156–158). The state of emergency that was in place for 15 years since 1987 was gradually lifted, the last one being lifted in 2002. Moreover, by 90's and early 2000's, the state discourse has changed and the ethno-political nature of Kurdish Issue has been recognized (Yeğen, 2011). On the public realm, the expression of Kurdish identity and culture became widespread (Somer 2005).

After the reform period between 1999-2004 was over, AKP's policies and discourse towards Kurdish Issue seemed rather ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. Yet, AKP also signaled that it was willing to take some action to solve the Kurdish Issue (Somer, 2016a, pp. 261–263; Yeğen, 2011, pp. 75–79), nevertheless AKP managed to get support of the majority of the Kurdish population, which threatened PKK's control over its Kurdish constituency. This, in turn, pushed PKK to escalate violence in order to polarize the political atmosphere and maintain support of its constituency (Tezcür, 2010).

Beginning from 2006,[2] the state officials negotiated with Öcalan in prison and with the PKK leaders through third-party mediators in various locations in Europe, especially in Oslo. Following these talks, the government announced its "Democratic Opening" or "Kurdish Opening" process as it was named in public in 2009, which aimed to find a political-social solution to the Kurdish Issue. The government introduced a second-wave of reforms, however, this process became obsolete as it resulted in a serious Turkish-nationalistic backslash and the expectations and demands of the government of the PKK and the government differed (See Çiçek, 2011; Kardaş & Balci, 2016; Kayhan Pusane, 2014 for detailed analysis).

However, the back-channel negotiations continued between the government and the PKK, with periods of relative calm, ceasefires and escalation of the conflict. The process came to an end when the PKK killed 13 soldiers in Diyarbakır in July 2011. Indeed, there was already an escalation trend before this attack. Moreover, both the government and the PKK adopted a harsher rhetoric during the general election campaign period in 2011. In 2012, the level of violence reached to a level that was not experienced since Abdullah Öcalan's capture in 1999 (Tezcür, 2014, p. 181). Moreover, PKK members in prison and leading Kurdish politicians started a campaign of hunger strikes demanding an end to isolation of Öcalan in Imrali Island in September 2012. The hunger strikes continued for two months and was ended only when visitors were allowed to get in contact with Abdullah Öcalan. Later it became clear that prime minister Erdoğan sought to achieve Kurdish nationalist support to amend the constitution to establish a presidential system (Tezcür, 2014, p. 181).

[2] The exact date of the negotiations are still debated but it seems like they started in 2006 and accelarated towards 2008, when the parties met in Oslo (See Kadıoğlu, 2019)

On 28 December 2012, prime minister Erdoğan acknowledged that they were in fact negotiating with Öcalan. Few days later Ahmet Türk and Ayla Akat from the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi-BDP) visited Öcalan in Imrali island. The public nature of these events indicated that negotiations were heading towards a positive direction. On 21 March 2013, at the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır, MP's from the BDP, Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder read Öcalan's message in Kurdish and Turkish in front of approximately one million people. Öcalan was calling the PKK to withdraw from the Turkish territory. His proposal was accepted by the PKK. However, the PKK paused the withdrawal Process in September 2013 on the grounds that the government have not taken the necessary steps. However, despite being fragile the Process continued without any major clashes between the security forces and the government.

In April 2014, the government introduced legal amendments that granted the Turkish intelligence authority to negotiate with the PKK. In June 2014, the government adopted another law entitled "Law to End Terror and Strengthen Social Integration", which basically created a roadmap and legalized the necessary steps that was to taken for disarmament of the PKK and reintegration of the PKK militants. The Deputy Prime Minister Beşir Atalay said that the law indicated government's commitment to the Peace Process ("Turkish Gov't Submits Bill to Boost Kurdish Peace Bid, Provide Legal Framework for PKK Talks," 2014) In August 2014, the presidential elections took place and then prime minister Erdoğan became the first president of Turkey that was elected by a popular vote. His long-time friend, former minister of Foreign Affairs became the prime minister and formed the new government. The new government program emphasized the government's

commitment to the Peace Process, whereas Öcalan declared the 30-year long war would end (Yeğen, 2015, p. 173).

However, the Peace Process continued in a fragile setting due to mistrust between parties particularly related to the Syrian Civil War. During the Kobane Siege of the ISIS in Fall 2014, Selahattin Demirtaş, the co-president of the HDP requested the government to open the borders so that combatants and weapons could be transferred to Kobane against theISIS. Government's hesitation triggered mass protests on 6-8 October, which escalated into riots between the PKK supporters and the Kurdish Hizbullah supporters in the Kurdish-majority cities leaving 37 people dead ("Kobani (6-8 Ekim) Olayları: 2014'te Nasıl Başladı, Sonrasında Neler Yaşandı?," 2020)

On 29 October, the government allowed the Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani's forces to advance to Syria through Turkish territory to help PYD, the Syrian sister-party of PKK, in its fight against the ISIS. The Kurdish national movements and its supporters perceived the late government response was as a covert-support for the ISIS, whereas the government justified its action through that it saw the PKK, ISIS and PYD as terrorist organizations. After these events, the Turkish military was deployed to the Kurdish cities. Moreover, the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik Hareketi, YDG-H), an urban militia that is considered the PKK's urban youth organization which was formed in February 2013 one month before the beginning of Peace Process, increased its activities in Kurdish national movements strongholds and declared autonomy in several districts. The government, then, passed an internal security law package that enhanced police powers (Crisis Group, 2015, p. 4).

Yet, again parties emphasized their commitment to the process. On 28 February 2015 at the Prime Minister's Office at Dolmabahçe, HDP's deputies and members of the Imrali Committee composed of İdris Baluken, Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder and the Deputy Prime Minister Yalçın Akdoğan, Interior Minister Efkan Ala, Group Deputy Chairman of AKP Mahir Ünal and Under Secretariat of Public Order and Security Muhammed Dervişoğlu hold a joint-press conference. Sırrı Süreayya Önder shared Öcalan's message that called the PKK to hold an extraordinary congress to end the armed struggle and a ten point statement that delineated the main principles of the political reforms that would ensure the peace, that was called Dolmabahçe Consensus (Dolmabahçe Mutabakatı) in public.[3]

However, the talks continued in a fragile context, when both sides accused each other for using negotiations as a tool to strength their position (Crisis Group, 2015, p. 6). Not long after Dolmabahçe Consensus, on March 22, president Erdoğan told the reporters that he disapproved both the meeting in Dolmabahçe and the ten-article text that was announced in the meeting ("Erdoğan: Ben 10 Maddelik Deklarasyona Da Karşıyım," 2015) Meanwhile the elections were to take in place on June 7.

2.3 Elections and the campaign period

Overall, the election period took in an extremely polarized and a violent atmosphere particularly marked with the physical attacks against HDP and its members (See O'Connor & Baser, 2018) despite the fact that there was no significant clashes between PKK militants and security forces. The AKP campaign was led by both the prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, and president Erdoğan, who according to

[3] See www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/ortak-aciklamanin-tam-metni for the full text

constitution had to be impartial yet continued acting like the leader of the government and the AKP alongside prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Their campaign emphasized AKP's performance in office since it came to power in 2002, the economic and political stability it brought to the country. Moreover, president Erdoğan in particular campaigned for transition from a parliamentary system to a presidential system that would bring further political and economic stability to the country. To change the constitution, the government needed two-thirds (367) of the seats in the parliament. During the election campaign Erdoğan has famously said "Give us 400 deputies and this matter will be solved peacefully." ("Erdoğan'dan Tehdit: 400 Vekili Verin, Bu Iş Huzur Içinde Çözülsün," 2015) which was interpreted as a threat by the opposition at the time.

Meanwhile, HDP announced that it would enter the elections as a party rather than fielding its candidates as independents, which has been the party's strategy in last two general elections in order to bypass ten percentage threshold, which caused HDP to send less deputies to the parliament relative to its vote share. HDP built a campaign around peace, passing ten percentage threshold, and stopping further authoritarianization of the country. If HDP was to get less ten percentage of the votes, AKP would benefit hugely as other parties did not have significant support in HDP strongholds.

In one of the landmarks event during the election period on 17 March the co-president of HDP Selahattin Demirtaş stated "We won't let you become the President" three times in his parliamentary meeting. The speech increased Demirtaş's popularity widely and his words "Seni Başkan Yaptırmayacağız" soon became worldwide trending topic on Twitter. By that Demirtaş strongly rejected the claims that HDP was bargaining with Erdoğan to receive concessions in exchange for

Kurdish nationalist support for Erdoğan's presidential ambitions ("We Will Not Make You the President, HDP Co-Chair Tells Erdoğan," 2015). Thus, another strategy of the AKP during the inter-election period was to argue that HDP did not distance itself from violence, that it was using violence and the PKK to alter people's vote choices (Bardakçi, 2016, p. 7).

The secular Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), on the other hand, built a campaign around deteriorating economic situation and civil and rights and liberties, autocratization of Turkey under the AKP government, to overcome which they offered several projects. On the other hand, the far-right Turkish nationalist MHP built a campaign around the Kurdish Issue, blaming the government for negotiating with terrorists as well as for the worsening economic situation in the country.

In such a context, elections took place on June 7 and was a major blow to AKP. For the first time since it came to power in 2002, the party failed to get the mandate to form a single party government. The HDP far exceed ten percentage threshold and doubled its previous vote share by getting 13.1 of votes and 80 deputies thanks to geographical concentration of its votes. MHP received 16.3% of the votes, the second highest vote share in its history after 1999 elections and also 80 deputies. CHP received 25% of the votes, a one point decrease compared to 2011 elections (Table 1). An analysis of the election results showed that worsening economic situation was one of the main reasons behind AKP's decreasing vote-share (Kalaycıoğlu, 2018; Kemahlıoğlu, 2015).

On July 9, Davutoğlu was appointed as the prime minister of the care-taker government. In the following weeks, CHP tried to convince Devlet Bahçeli by giving him the prime minister seat despite MHP having considerably less MPs than CHP. On the other hand, CHP's Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was willing to form a coalition. After

MHP refused to act together with CHP, then prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu started coalition talks with CHP, which has proven to be void after several weeks.

Table 1. Election Results

	June 2015		2011		2007		2002	
	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats	Vote %	Seats
AKP	40.9	258	49.8	327	46.6	341	34.3	363
CHP	25	132	26	135	20.9	112	19.4	178
MHP	16.3	80	13	53	14.3	71	8.4	–
HDP*	13.1	80	–	–	–	–	6.2	–
Independents†	1.1	–	6.6	35	5.2	26	1	9
Others	3.6	–	4.6	–	13	–	30.7	–
Total	100	550	100	550	100	550	100	550

Source: Kemahlıoğlu, 2015

It was widely argued that president Erdoğan was strongly against a coalition government as it would undermine his power and influence in his party and tried to prevent formation of the coalition with the help of the AKP elite, who had better relations with him rather than Davutoğlu. Moreover, the three opposition parties failed to act together in the election process of the new speaker of the parliament, which has an important role in legislative processes. Instead of supporting a joint candidate, they each supported their own candidates, thus, failed to form a majority. In the end AKP's candidate was elected as the new speaker of the parliament (Sayarı, 2016, p. 267).

It seemed like president Erdoğan tried to come up with a strategy that would return the AKP a majority (Öniş, 2016). As coalition talks went on, president Erdoğan and PKK leadership's rhetoric became increasingly harsh. On July 11, PKK declared the end of the ceasefire and stating that it was ready to "mobilise all means necessary, including the guerrilla forces" to prevent the building of dams and military outposts ("KCK Ateşkesin Bittiğini Açıkladı: Bundan Sonra Tüm Barajlar

Gerillanın Hedefinde Olacaktır," 2015). On the 15th of July Bese Hozat, one of the leaders of the PKK published an article titled "The New Process is the People's Revolutionary War" (Hozat, 2015). On 20 July, a suicide attack by ISIS in the border town Suruç of Şanlıurfa province killed 34 socialist pro-HDP activists who carried humanitarian aid to Kobane town in Syria.

Two days later, the PKK claimed killing of two police officers as a reprisal for the suicide attack. On 24 July, Turkish army started an air operation against PKK targets in Northtern Iraq (Crisis Group, 2015, p. 8). This effectively ended the Peace Process. On August 18, after prime minister Davutoğlu announced that he has been unsuccessful in building a coalition government, president Erdoğan did not give the mandate to form a coalition government to Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. After the constitutional deadline of 45 days ended on August 24, Erdoğan immediately called snap elections (Sayarı, 2016, pp. 268–269).

Meanwhile, the level of and nature violence during this phase of the conflict was unprecedented. In less than four months close to 400 people died, close to a fourth of which was civilians. Moreover, whereas previously the conflict was mostly confined to rural areas in the form of guerilla warfare with limited civilian victimization (Tezcür, 2013), this time PKK started an urban insurgency. On August 10, speaking on the behalf of the Şırnak People's Parliament, an unofficial group that is led by the Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi which can be considered regional party of the Kurdish national movement, declared "self-rule" (öz yönetim) and announced they would govern themselves and declared the state institutions illegitimate in Şırnak, one of the main strongholds of Kurdish national movement (Oral, 2015)

The next day president Erdoğan responded to this announcement very harshly and said: "In this country, a state other than the Turkish Republic will never be

accepted. Whoever makes this statement will pay a heavy price. They will pay both a legal price and pay another kind of price" ("Öz Yönetim Ilan Edilen Merkez Sayısı 16'ya Yükseldi," 2015).On 12 July, PKK announced the declaration of "self-rule" in four districts and that in case of an attack to these districts they would use their right to "self-defense". In the following days, self-rule was declared in 16 districts ("Öz Yönetim Ilan Edilen Merkez Sayısı 16'ya Yükseldi," 2015).

The urban youth militias associated with the PKK started building barricades and trenches in order to stop security forces entering their neighborhoods. The government responded heavy-handily with arrest of politicians, dismissal of elected mayors of districts, massive deployment of security forces. Between 16 August and elections at least 62 curfews were declared at least 35 times in 15 districts spanning from 8 hours to 8 days.[4] The clashes in urban centers resulted in heavy civilian victimization. The Kurdish national movement was particularly outraged by the imagines and stories coming from the urban centers, where the state conducted counter insurgency operations. As Crisis Group (2015) reports:

> The Kurdish movement asserts that security teams linked to the president and/or remnants of the "deep state" are stirring up the region. The HDP and the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) submitted a parliamentary motion of inquiry about the "Esedullah team", which they say, based on reports by locals, is a paramilitary group with alleged links to the police that threatens civilians and vandalizes Kurdish neighbourhoods with militarist, ultra-nationalist graffiti. Reports of rights violations and violence by security forces have become commonplace; a particularly grave case concerns the death of Hacı Lokman Birlik, a militant whose body was filmed by security officials as it was dragged behind a police car on the streets of Şırnak in October. Investigations have begun, but the fear of unresolved rights abuses and killings raise Kurdish fears of paramilitary tactics the state used in the 1990s. (p. 9)

[4] See tihv.org.tr/sokaga-cikma-yasaklari/16-agustos-2015-16-agustos-2017-bilgi-notu/

Moreover, the inter-election period saw high-levels of non-violent street mobilization by the Kurdish national movement and pro-Kurdish actors as well as Turkish nationalist and pro-government marches and rallies against the PKK, HDP and terror attacks, some of which were attended by prime minister Davutoğlu and president Erdoğan themselves. Lastly, there was some degree communal violence against Kurdish individuals and at least 60 attacks against HDP members or offices (O'Connor & Baser, 2018). According to HDP's own statement, only in between 6-8 September, when 16 soldiers and 14 polices were killed in two separate attacks, there has been 400 attacks on Kurdish businesses and individuals as well as 126 attacks on HDP buildings.[5]

In such a violent atmosphere, yet came another attack. On 10 October, two suicide bombers linked to ISIS killed 103 people in an peace rally that was attended by unions, left-wing NGO's, CHP and HDP members. This suicide attack also triggered mass reaction and street protests. After this attack, CHP and HDP largely avoided big gatherings and paced down their campaigning efforts.

The electoral campaign took place in the shadow of violence. On the AKP side, president Erdoğan changed his strategy and instead of addressing crowds in election rallies, he communicated with the public mainly through his meeting with muhtars (neighborhood and village headman or woman who are elected by popular vote) and through other communication channels. The campaign was mainly led by prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who organized mass electoral rallies. Moreover, the government used state resources including both the resources of the central state and municipalities to finance its election rallies and mobilize the voters (Sayarı, 2016, p. 271).

[5] See www.amnesty.org.tr/icerik/turkiye-son-zamanlarda-yasanan-milliyetci-saldirilari-sorusturun

Moreover, the government sought a deliberate strategy of securitization and demonization of the HDP, which the PKK has willingly or unwillingly contributed to through escalating violence. As Şahin (2021, p. 14) analyzes in greater detail, the AKP's strategy was based on four pillars: first, prioritization of the existential threats against the nation and re-securitization of the Kurdish question, second, adoption of Turkish nationalism, third, demonization of the HDP and equating it with terrorism, and fourth, equating the AKP's victory in snap elections to the only way out of 'chaos'. For instance, in an election rally, prime minister Davutoğlu addressed crowds by saying "The date of November 1, 2015 will be the door of hope, not anxiety. Turkey will once again say 'trust', 'stability', and once again say 'no' to chaos. Turkey will once again say 'yes to justice and development, no to unknown and obscurity" ("Türkiye 1 Kasım'da Güven ve Istikrar Diyecek," 2015).

Additionally, the government did not focus on threat posed by ISIS but the PKK as the long history of Kurdish Issue and 30-years old conflict with the PKK could easily resonate with the voters (Sahin, 2021, p. 21). Moreover, given the close links between PKK and the HDP, most voters in Turkey perceive HDP as the political wing of the PKK. Thus, it was easier for the government to securitize elections by demonizing the HDP.

Opposition on the other hand did not hold election rallies as frequent as the AKP did. The MHP looked particularly uninterested in mobilization of its voters. Whereas, the CHP and HDP in particular limited their political activities and rallies given the security concerns. While condemning the PKK violence, the CHH criticized AKP's foreign and domestic policies arguing seeing them as responsible for the growing radical Islamist threat in Turkey. The CHP also condemned the PKK attacks while criticizing government for mismanagement of the Peace Process. The

HDP, on the other hand, heavily criticized government and arguing that it ended the Peace Process and ignited violence to attract Turkish nationalist votes.

Moreover, as two suicide bombings in Suruç and Ankara directly targeted the HDP, the party heavily emphasized the threat posed by the ISIS and blamed government for downplaying the ISIS threat and paving the way to bombing. While the HDP tried to remain relevant and called both the PKK and the government to stop violence, the violent atmosphere brought the PKK to spotlight and the HDP was far from being as effective and it was unable to set the agenda in the midst of high levels of violence.

In such a context, the snap election took place in November 1. Most of the polling companies expected the results to be similar to the June 7 Election. Yet, the election was a major victory for the AKP, and major disappointment for the opposition. The AKP increased its vote share from 40,8% to 49,5%, increasing its vote share almost in every single 970 districts of Turkey. The CHP increased its vote share slightly from 24,9% to 25,3%, increasing its vote share in some districts and losing in others. MHP's vote share was down to 11,9% from 16,3% and HDP's vote share was down to 10,8% from 13,2% (Table 2). Both experiencing a decrease in almost every single district of Turkey (See Çarkoğlu & Yildirim, 2015; and KONDA, 2015 for detailed analysis).

In this chapter, I have given the background to the 2015 elections. The following chapter is the first empirical chapter of this thesis, where I analyze the relationship between voting behavior and terrorism in the Turkish majority cities.

Table 2. Election Results

Party	November 2015			June 2015			Change (November – June)		
	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats	Votes	%	Seats
AKP	23,681,926	49.5	317	18,867,411	40.8	258	+4,814,515	+8.6	+59
CHP	12,111,812	25.3	134	11,518,139	24.9	132	+593,673	+0.3	−2
MHP	5,694,136	11.9	40	7,520,006	16.2	80	−1,825,870	−4.3	−40
HDP	5,148,085	10.7	59	6,058,489	13.1	80	−910,404	−2.3	−21
Independent	51,038	0.1	0	488,226	1.0	0	−437,188	−0.9	0
Other	1,202,272	2.5	0	1,710,952	3.6	0	−508,680	−1.0	0
Total	47,840,231	100.0	550	46,163,243	100.0	550			
Turnout (%)		85.2			83.9		+1.31		

Source: Sayarı, 2016

CHAPTER 3

TERRORISM AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

In this chapter, I analyze the relationship between terrorism and voting behavior by using security force and civilians funerals as a proxy for exposure to terrorism. I exclude 18 Eastern and Southeastern provinces[6] with substantiative Kurdish population where historically almost all PKK attacks and activity took place and which is also home to the PKK's main support base. The voters in these provinces voted in very different circumstances compared to other provinces due to the high-level of violence and deployment of security forces in between two elections. Moreover, these provinces have historically experienced very high-levels of violence and a state of emergency that run between the late 80's and early 200's. Given the possible legacy of violence, the analysis of the relationship between voting behavior and violence in those areas not only requires a different kind of data but also a different theoretical perspective that considers the relationship between insurgents, insurgent-associated political party and the civilian constituency of the insurgents.

First, my empirical analysis shows that the literature on voting behavior and terrorism should account for possible diffusion effects of terrorism. Second, despite the scholarly and public consensus regarding the effect of terrorism in AKP's electoral victory, my empirical analysis find no statistically significant relationship

[6] Adıyaman, Ağrı, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak, Tunceli and Van are fully excluded. From Elazığ, Alacakaya, Arıcak, Merkez, Karaçoban, Kovancılar, Maden, Palu, Sivrice districts are excluded and from Erzurum Çat, Hınıs, Horasan, Karaçoban, Karayazı, Köprüköy, Şenkaya, Tekman districts are excluded. Erzurum and Elazığ are more heteregonous compared to above mentioned provinces and have considerable variation in terms of Kurdish population, support for Kurdish national movement and history of violence. Thus, as a decision rule, I have excluded the districts that border above mentioned sixteen provinces.

between exposure to terrorism and voting for the incumbent AKP despite controlling for possible diffusion effects. With the usual caveat related to poor data and statistical analysis, I speculate that when the level of violence exceeds a certain threshold and when politicians build a campaign around insecurity an instability and drive ontological insecurity among the electorate as an electoral strategy (also see Sahin, 2021), terrorism may impact voting behavior throughout the country, not just who are exposed to it.

Third, I expected to find that a negative relationship between exposure to terrorism and vote-share of far-right Turkish nationalist MHP since its vote share decreased in almost every district in the November elections. However, I found a positive relationship between exposure to security force funerals and MHP-vote share. Through anecdotal evidence I speculate that anger that is caused by being exposed to security force funerals may have overcome concerns over security and fear, thus, helped MHP to retain some of its vote share. Fourth, I expected to find a positive relationship between CHP vote share and civilian funerals given that CHP's vote share decreased in some districts and increased in others and given that those civilians were killed during two left-wing rallies and their funerals were scene to left-wing mobilization which I expected to boost CHP's vote share. Instead, I found a negative relationship between CHP vote-share and exposure to civilian funerals.

All in all both the quantitative analysis and qualitative description of the political context shows the highly contextual nature of terrorism and voting behavior. This suggest that the terrorism literature may benefit from first, moving beyond left-wing and right-wing dichotomy; second, paying greater attention to context and especially policies and electoral strategy of the political parties (Balcells & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; Criado, 2017); third, nature of the electoral competition, especially

the regime type and the incumbent's control over media since it greatly influences how terrorism is framed as well as how political parties reach out to voters; fourth; the importance of disaggregating the targets of terrorism (Criado, 2017; see de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Huff & Kertzer, 2018) .

This chapter is structured as follows: First, I discuss the literature on terrorism and voting behavior and present the hypothesis. It is important to note that hypothesis developed below are informed by my substantive knowledge of the case and the literature. The elections results were complete opposite what the literature would have predicted, i.e incumbent will be punished for the violence and nationalist party will be rewarded. Thus, the case was not selected to test a deductively established theoretical framework (See Yom, 2015 for a a discussion of inductive iteration and deductive hypothesis template). Therefore, I first formulate the hypothesis relying on the elections results, conduct the empirical tests and then discuss possible theoretical explanations for the election results. This chapter is structured as follows: First, I review the literature and present the hypothesis. Second, I explain the data and the method. Fourth, I specify the model. Then, I discuss the results and conclude.

3.1 Terrorism and voting behavior

The literature on the impacts of terrorism on voting behavior is a rather small literature. One segment of the literature studies how terror attacks or violence against civilians impact the vote-share of the political parties that are associated with insurgents (e.g de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2013; Birnir and Gohdes 2018). Some focus on the impact of violence on voting behavior in the localities where violence takes place (Gallego, 2018; Joshi & Mason, 2008; Kibris, 2014; Tezcür,

2015a), remaining studies focus on the impacts of terrorism on elections and specifically how it influences the vote shares of the incumbent governments, right-wing political parties, and voter turnout.

For the vote shares of incumbent governments, studying the US, Hetherington and Nelson (2003) find that the constitutional nature of the presidency as both chief of state and chief of government caused "the rally around the flag effect" in the post-September-11 period. However, in the case of the 2004 Madrid bombings, Bali (2007) finds the terror attacks caused many non-voting citizens to mobilize and other voters to switch parties, who blamed failed foreign policy (Iraq) of the incumbent government for the attacks. Thus, she concludes that terror attacks may have an anti-rally effect depending on the perceived performance of the government. Studying the same event and comparing votes which were cast before and after the attacks, Montalvo (2011) finds that voters punished the incumbent government for the terror attacks and brought the socialist to the government.

Exploiting the subnational variation in insurgent violence in Peruvian civil war, Birnir and Gohdes (2018) find that voters punish the incumbent governments for not being able to contain the insurgent violence. In a cross-national study, Gassebner, Jong-A-Pin, and Mierau (2008) using more than 800 elections in about 115 countries over the period 1968–2002 find that terrorism increases the probability of incumbent government being replaced. In the Turkish case, by analyzing the location of funerals of over 3000 security personnel between 1987 and 1995, thus leveraging subnational variation in exposure to terrorism, Kıbrıs (2011) finds that people blame the incumbent government for their losses and vote for right-wing political parties.

Similar to Kıbrıs, in the Israeli case, in a series of two articles Berrebi and Klor (2006, 2008) find that terrorism benefits right-wing political parties but its effect is mediated by the location of the attack and the relative power of the left and right-wing political parties in those localities. Whereas Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014) show that even being in the range of rocket threat (threat of terrorism) increases the right-wing vote-share. They also find that within the right-wing political parties, nationalistic parties rather than religious parties gain more votes. In the aftermath of Paris terror attacks in France, Vasilopoulos, Marcus, Valentino and Foucault (2019) argue that anger caused by terror attacks as opposed to fear as commonly argued in the literature drove voting for far-right.

Another research utilizing cross-national data found that not only in France but throughout Europe far-right political parties benefit from terrorism (Wheatley, Robbins, Hunter, & Ginn, 2020). Thus, regardless of the country and studying the impacts of a single attack or exploiting variation of violence in time and space in civil conflict contexts, the literature mostly finds the right-wing nationalist parties to benefit from the terror attacks, whereas incumbent governments gets punished.

On the other hand, Robbins, Hunter and Murray (Robbins, Hunter, & Murray, 2013) argue that anxiety induced by terror attacks makes political events more salient, thus results in an increase in voter turnout. Exploiting a natural experiment like setting created by ETA attacks in Spain and comparing survey responses before and after the ETA attacks, Balcells and Torrats-Espinosa (2018) have found the ETA attacks to increase the voter-turn out, thus have a mobilization effect but more interestingly, no effect on intended vote choice. According to them (2018, p. 10628) "the main political parties in Spain agreed on a counterterrorist agenda to confront ETA, there was not much political competition around this issue, and the right did

not have a clear valence advantage." That is to say context in which terror attacks take place matters.

Despite that, most of the literature explicitly frame their findings in terms of right-wing and left-wing dichotomy and argue that the terror attacks increase the vote share of right-wing political parties. However, as the Spain elections of 2004 after the Al-Quida attacks have shown sometimes the left-wing opposition political parties gain from the attacks, when the citizens see the government policy as responsible for the attacks. Thus, rather than the ideology of the political parties, perceived performance of them seem to be more important.

Moreover, as Criado (2017) argues for many countries that have been experiencing some sort of civil conflict or domestic terrorism, terrorism and violence is rule rather than the exception. Thus, for terrorism to impact voting behavior it has to be considered salient by the electorate which depends on two factors according to her (also see Huff & Kertzer, 2018 on which attacks are perceived as terrorism by the public).

First, the nature of the attack such as lethality, timing and the target of the attack may impact salience of the attacks. Indeed, studying ETA in Basque Region, she (2017) finds that voters are more sensitive to killing of civilians and politicians than they are to killing of security forces. Studying the same organization de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2013) found that citizens reacted differently to the killing of different types of civilians. When ETA targeted non-nationalist Basque politicians, ETA's political wing Batasuna was electorally punished, however, killing of informers and drug dealers increased Batasuna's vote share (de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013). Second, the dynamics of competition between political parties matter as political parties strategically choose to emphasize the issues that are likely to

electorally benefit them (Criado, 2017). Thus, depending on the strategies of political parties and their performance in influencing perception of the electorate terrorism may be salient and influence voting behavior.

Second, it is commonly assumed the right-wing political parties to be parties of "law and order", thus benefit from uncertainty and insecurity caused by terror attacks. However, the left-wing and right-wing political ideologies do not overlap in different contexts. In different countries, political parties that are considered left-wing and right-wing may have remarkably different policies. Moreover, depending on the armed group's ideology, history and goals, political parties may have a voter base and party organization that has a favorable view on one group but not on others. Indeed, it is not uncommon for political parties to have close relationships with armed groups or to have armed wings.

Thus, one cannot expect a uniform response to terrorism among left-wing or right-wing political parties across different countries and contexts. For instance, in Israel, one can easily imagine terror attacks by a Palestinian Islamist organization and a far-right Israeli nationalist organization to have a remarkably different consequences and reactions from different political parties and electorate given the cleavages in Israeli society and the history of the conflict.

Third, political parties' policies change over time and sometimes rapidly. For example, in Turkey AKP is considered a right-wing political party. Yet it had a reformist and accommodative policy on the Kurdish Issue, initiated reforms and openly negotiated with the PKK- an organization that is considered to be terrorist by the AKP itself and vast majority of Turkey's population. Yet, when the Peace Process failed, the AKP adapted a nationalistic policy and rhetoric and polarized the political atmosphere. In short, the left-wing and the right-wing dichotomy in the

literature gives us little leverage and the context, that is the nature of the terror attacks and political parties policies and election strategies should inform the research.

Given my emphasis on the context, I, first test the relationship between exposure to terrorism to votes shares of three major political parties in the double elections of 2015 relying on the election results. The incumbent AKP increased its vote share almost in every district, thus I expect a positive relationship between exposure to terrorism and AKP vote (Hypothesis I). MHP lost its votes almost in every districts, thus I expect a negative relationship between exposure to terrorism and MHP vote share (Hypothesis II). The voter turnout increased in vast majority of the districts, thus, I expect a positive relationship between exposure to terrorism and voter turnout (Hypothesis III). CHP increased its vote share in some districts and lost in others without a very clear pattern. Thus, it may be the case that there is a negative relationship between exposure to security force funerals and CHP vote share since security force funerals are more likely to mobilize Turkish nationalists (Hypothesis IV) but since civilians were killed in a left-wing rally that was attended by left-wing political groups, NGO's, HDP and CHP members and since their funerals were scene to a leftist mobilization, I expect a positive relationship between exposure to civilian funerals and CHP vote-share (Hypothesis V).

Lastly, total vote share of AKP and MHP increased in vast majority of the districts, that is to say, we can talk of a general increase in the right-wing bloc after the elections. Thus, I expect a positive relationship between exposure to terrorism and total vote share of AKP and MHP (Hypothesis VI). On the contrary, I expect a negative relationship between exposure to terrorism and total vote-share CHP and HDP (Hypothesis VII). I do not test the relationship between HDP vote-share and

exposure to terrorism as HDP receives less than 3% in vast majority of the districts and close to zero in many districts that will be studied in this chapter.

In the next sections, I briefly talk about the data and the research design and then present the results of the quantitative analysis. In the discussion section, I analyze the results of the quantitative analysis and turn back to my argument regarding the importance of context and describe the incumbent AKP's campaigning strategy in between two elections.

3.2 Data

The dependent variables are vote shares of political parties and the voter turnout in November Election which is available online in the website Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey. My main independent variable of interest is exposure to terrorism. For that, I, first, use security force funerals as a proxy that has been proved to be useful in the literature (Kibris, 2011; Yaylacı & Bakıner, 2018). In the words of Kıbrıs (2011, p. 224): "…casualties from their hometowns constitute the most tangible and important cost of terrorism for the Turkish people living outside the terror-stricken south-eastern parts of the country and the funeral ceremonies are the occasions when they really feel this cost."

That is to say for voters in Turkish majority cities, terrorism is something they mostly experience through security force funerals. When a security force gets killed, he/she is officially considered a "terror martyr." Beyond official recognition and state support in various ways, families of the martyrs are highly respected and supported by the society. A typical martyr funeral would be as follows: When a security force gets killed officers from the military visit the family of the killed security force to inform about the death. Occasionally, there are protests in the

hometown of the martyr even before the funeral as the news spread. Often, there are tents established in front of the family's house where they receive condolences from the people, civil servants, and politicians. The funeral is then first brought to the family home to receive his parent's blessing, then is taken to the mosque for the funeral prayer. After the prayer, the funeral is brought to the cemetery to be buried. Usually, this process involves a cortege of thousands of people and cars marching through the streets and have historically been a scene to nationalist mobilizations where thousands of people chant anti-PKK/anti-terror and nationalist slogans such as "Martyrs never die, the nation won't be divided", "Down with PKK", "How happy is he who says I am a Turk."

Moreover, in between two elections the ISIS has killed close to 140 people in two separate suicide bombinsg, one which took place in Suruç district of Şanlıurfa in the Syrian border and the second one in the capital city of Turkey, Ankara. However, the victims of these attacks were from different parts of Turkey. Many of the funerals of the victims of the suicide bombings were also attended by hundreds of people. But unlike security force funerals these were not attended by state officials and mostly attended by left-wing organizations and were scene left-wing mobilization and were smaller. Thus, I use civilian funerals as a second variable of interest for exposure to terrorism.

I have compiled a data set on security force casualties, where I have gathered information about the time and location of the clash and the funeral as well as personal information about the security forces. Firstly, I have consulted a list prepared by Sözcü Newspaper to gather the names of each security force that was killed in between two elections. I have read every article that included the word "martyr" in Milliyet, a mainstream newspaper, in between June and November 2015

to double-check the date-set. Then, I have done keyword search online by the names of the martyrs and mainly consulted Anadolu Ajansı, the official news agency of Turkey, to learn about the details of the martyr and funeral. When I could not find the details in Anadolu Ajansı, I consulted other mainstream newspapers of Turkey such as Hürriyet, Milliyet, Haberturk, and occasionally the website of respective state institutions such as district governorships. For the civilian funerals, I have followed a similar approach and mostly relied on left-wing newspaper such as Bianet and Birgün, which provided a list of civilians that died in suicide attacks and have covered these funerals more extensively than the others. When I could not find the information in Bianet or Birgün, I have consulted Hürriyet and Milliyet.

The news articles on security funerals are extremely detailed and consistent across newspapers. They include information on the location funeral, where the family of the martyr resides, sometimes as detailed as having the name of the street (in the vast majority of cases funerals are held where the families reside since it is usually their hometowns), his marital status, age, rank, when he started his profession, detailed background of the family if there is any particularly interesting story such as being very poor family, having another martyr or having other brothers and sisters who serve in the military, list of politicians bureaucrats who attended the funerals, the language of the lament in the funerals -when the killed security force is Kurdish, newspapers emphasize laments were in Kurdish to implicitly argue that it is not a war between Turks and Kurds but between terrorist and patriots without directly referring to the ethnicity- The news articles on the funerals of civilians were less detailed yet included information on the name of the mosque, districts and

province of the funerals. I also watched the footages from the funerals, which can be found easily online through keyword searches.[7]

For 819 districts analyzed in this study, there are 90 civilian and 138 security force funerals which are visualized in Figure 1 and 2. Since security force funerals and civilian funerals are remarkably different -the security force funerals being attended by the state officials, high-level military commanders and a scene to Turkish nationalist mobilization whereas civilians funerals being scene to left-wing mobilization- I evaluate their impact separately. In bigger districts of cities such as Istanbul and Ankara in which a district has almost up to one million residents, it is possible for funerals to go unnoticed, whereas in other districts where only a couple thousand people live funerals are likely to have a large impact. Indeed, the number of voters in districts varies between 600,000 voters and 1000. To account for this difference, my main variable of interests are security force funerals and civilian funerals per 20,000 people in a given district.

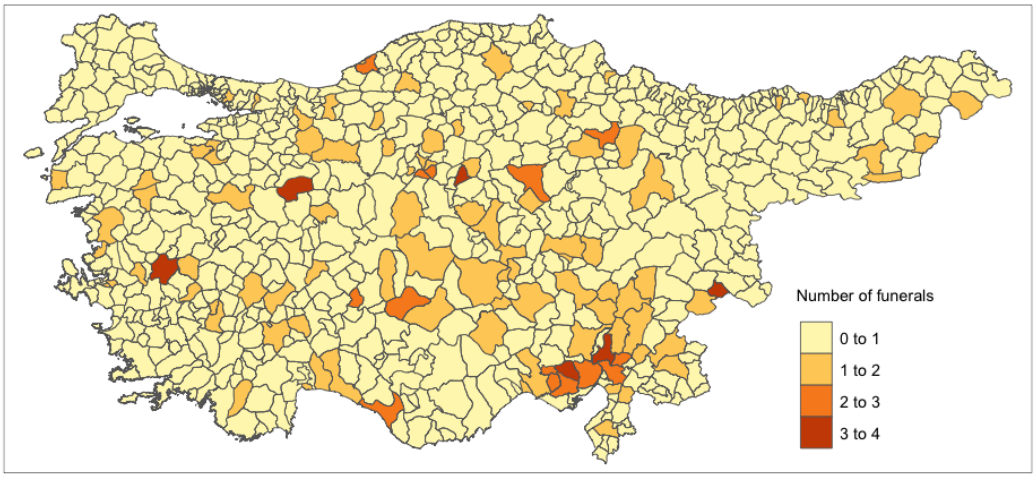


Figure 1. Security force funerals

[7] Information about 2 civilian funerals are missing in the data-set. Since they are not covered in the newspaper, it is likely for these funerals to be rather small.

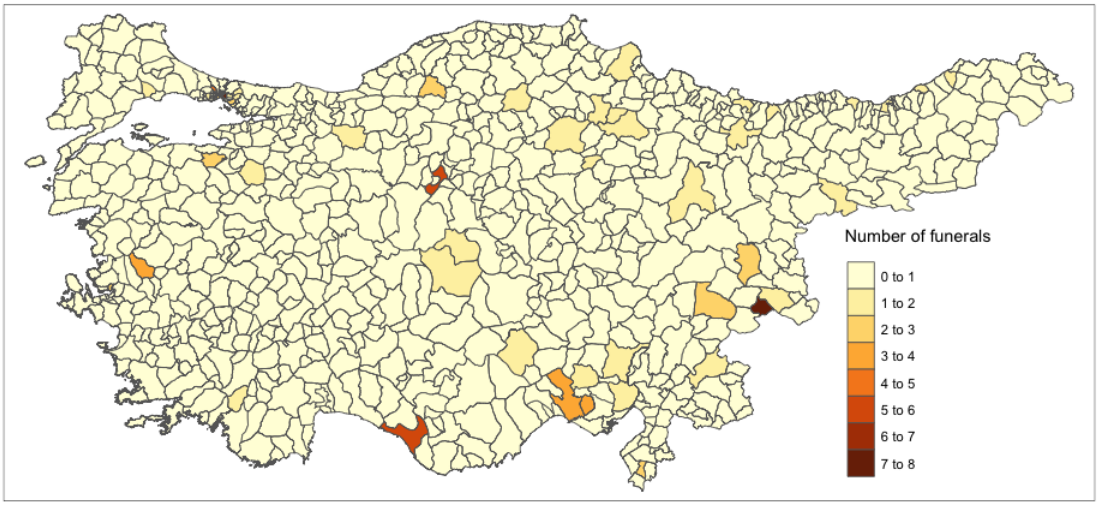


Figure 2. Civilian funerals[8]

3.3 Voting behavior in Turkey and control variables

First control variable is socio-economic development of the districts. Another important determinant of the voting behavior in Turkey is ethnicity. Especially, after AKP's rise to power in 2002 there has been a competition over the Kurdish votes between AKP, who used a relatively accommodative Kurdish policy and initiated reforms, and the Kurdish national movement (Akdağ, 2015; Tezcür, 2010). Thus, in the model, I use socio-economy and percentage of the Kurdish population of the district as control variables which is also the preferred approach in Kıbrıs (2011).

The socio-economic data of the districts is obtained from the newly published (December 2019) research by the Turkish Ministry of Industry and Technology (Yilmaz et al., 2019). The scores of the districts are computed through principal component analysis using 34 variables under 7 sub-groups using 2014 data. The seven sub-groups are the demographic variables, employment variables, education variables, health variables, competitiveness variables, fiscal variables, quality of life

[8] Given the size of the map many funerals in Istanbul are not easily visible but there were 22 funerals in Istanbul

variables. The Ministry has access to data that is not available to researchers obtained through other ministries and organizations, which they cannot share for security and privacy reason (e-mail exchange by the author with the Ministry). Thus, it is the most up to date and detailed analysis of districts of Turkey for 2015.

Reliable data on the Kurdish population is harder to find. The last time Turkey has published data on mother tongue was in 1965, using this publication as a base Mutlu (1996 taken from Tezcür 2015) provides the most reliable data on Kurdish population at the provincial level for the year 1990, to the date, it still is the most widely used data by the researchers. To account for immigration and estimate the Kurdish population in districts, I first extracted the number of people registered to each province for every district from the Turkish Statistical Institute's Address-Based Population Registry System for 2015. Then for each district, I multiplied the number of people registered to a particular province in that district with the percentage of the Kurdish population of that province in 1990. For example, when a district has 10.000 people registered to a particular province with 10% Kurdish population, I assumed 10.000*0.1=1000 people from that province in that district to be Kurdish. I, then, divided the total sum of the estimated number of Kurdish people to the population in that district. Although imperfect, I estimate the Kurdish population in Turkey to be 17.3%. This is consistent with the findings of KONDA, where they found the percentage of the Kurdish population to be 17.7% in 2013 (Erdem, 2013). At the local level the estimate performs well as it shows a lot of variation in the bigger provinces in Turkey and higher percentages of the Kurdish population in immigration prone districts such as Bağcılar (%20), Sultangazi (21%), Sultanbeyli (%21) in Istanbul, Akdeniz (%34) in Mersin, Seyhan (%28) in Adana, Dilovası (%39) in Kocaeli.

Apart from personally experiencing this period. For qualitative evidence, I have systematically perused news articles from various sources such as Bianet, T24, Milliyet, Hürriyet, BBC Turkish, Al-Monitor through going over the entire list of news articles that were published in between two elections. I also systematically read the reports written by human rights organizations and political parties. I have also watched the footages of the clashes in the urban centers, funerals, and television news to get a sense of how media portrayed the events.

3.4 Method and model

Arguably, all social science data are spatial. Often, there is some kind of spatial dependence between different units. The spatial dependence in the units may be caused by shared characteristics or through the diffusion of certain behavior from one unit to another. This creates certain problems for modeling. For example, in OLS models, which assume independence between units, not incorporating spatial dependence may cause biased and inconsistent parameter estimates or may ignore spatial variation in error terms (Darmofal, 2015, p. 6).

The spatial modeling of terrorism and voting behavior may be especially important. First, various studies have shown the importance of space and geography in the study of conflict and terrorism (Buhaug, Gleditsch, Holtermann, Østby, & Tollefsen, 2011; Cho & Gimpel, 2010; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Öcal & Yildirim, 2010; Schutte, 2017; Weidmann & Salehyan, 2013; Yildirim & Öcal, 2013; Zhukov, 2012). Second, there is an increasing regionalization of Turkish elections since the 1980s (Tezcür, 2012). More recently using district-level data Ozan and Kalkan (2017) has found both the electoral competition and electoral concentration to be more spatially dependent since AKP's first election victory in 2002.

The diagnosis of spatial dependence requires the specification neighborhood definition which is used then for the specification of the spatial weight matrix. The standard spatial matrix is an n x n matrix, W. In this study, I employ a simple contiguity definition, districts that share a border are considered neighbors. That is to say, if two districts share a border $w_{ij} = 1$, if not $w_{ij} = 0$. For the four islands of Turkey[9], I have defined the districts which have the main port and ferry services to these islands as the neighbors since the presence of isolates creates problems in modeling and the islands are expected to be affected by their connection to the mainland. The connectivity histogram is presented in Figure 3[10] and has a fairly normal distribution with most districts having 5 neighbors.

To see whether the data exhibits spatial dependence as predicted, I first test the data for the global spatial autocorrelation and then for the local autocorrelation. I use Moran's-I test which arguably is the most popular test for global spatial autocorrelation developed by Moran (Anselin, 2018; Moran, 1948). I test the dependent variables AKP, MHP, CHP vote shares and voter turn-out in the November election using the permutation approach to Moran's I which gives us a pseudo-p-value to assess whether the data is not randomly distributed. I employ 9999 permutations for each of the dependent variables to obtain a reference distributions under spatial randomness, i.e creating 9999 new data-sets for each variable where observed values in the original data-set are randomly assigned to locations. The results for THE AKP vote share, MHP vote share, CHP vote share and voter turn-out are given in Figure 4, 5, 6, 7 respectively. All variables have a positive global Moran value indicating that the data as a whole exhibits spatial autocorrelation (and pseudo-

[9] Marmara/Balıkesir, Bozcaada/Çanakkale, Gökçeada/Çanakkale, Adalar/Istanbul
[10] Created by the author using GeoDa (Anselin, Syabri, and Kho 2006).

p-value of 0.0001 which is the most extreme p-value one can obtain in this test when using 9999 permutations (Anselin, 2018).[11] That is to say, the null hypothesis of spatial randomness of the dependent variables is rejected.

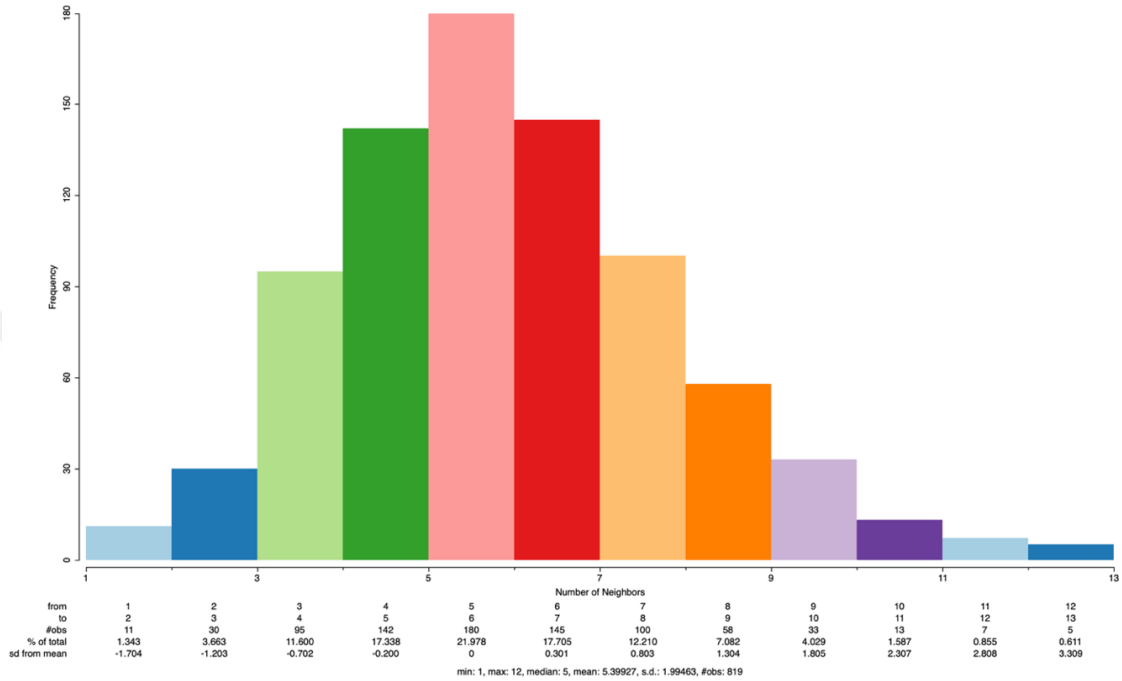


Figure 3. Connectivity histogram

I then test the data for the local spatial autocorrelation, which identifies specific observations that have spatial autocorrelation with their neighbors. I use LISA statistics developed by Anselin (1995), which is a particularly useful technique when combined with Moran scatterplot (Anselin, 2019; Darmofal, 2015, pp. 52–53). Similar to the permutation approach to global Moran's I, I again permute data 9999 times to obtain the reference distributions. However, this time the data is permuted not for the data as a whole but for each location separately (Anselin, 2019; Darmofal, 2015, pp. 53–54).

[11] Calculated by the author using GeoDa (Anselin et al., 2006).

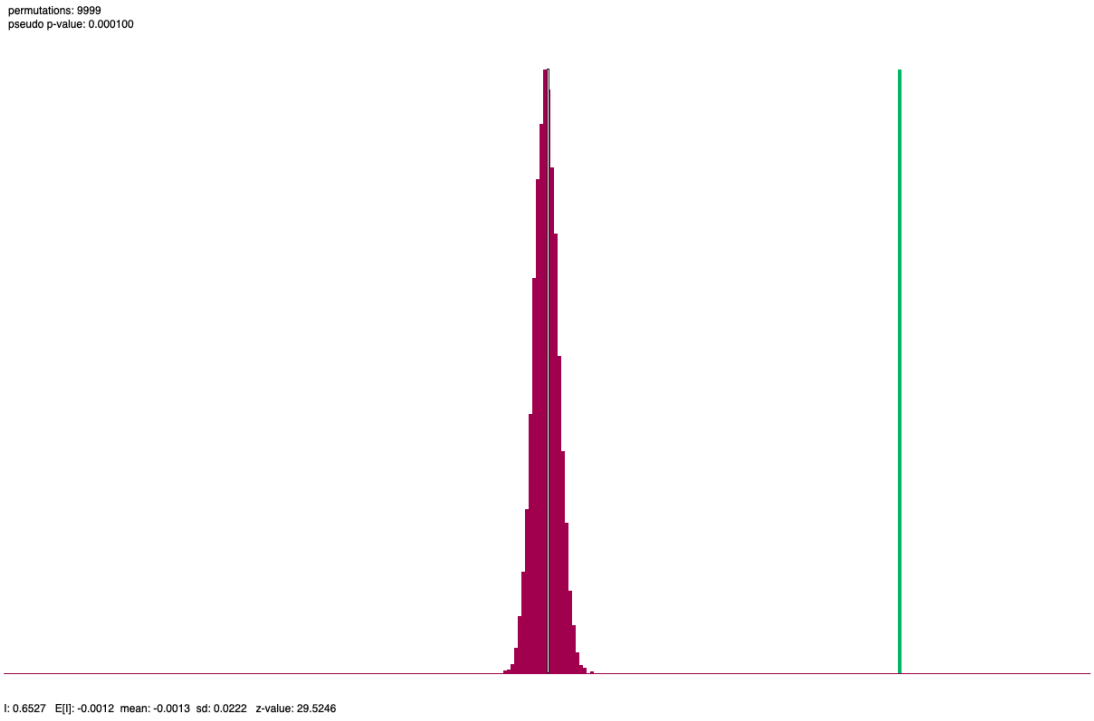


Figure 4. Permutation for the AKP vote share

The results of significant clusters, that is unlikely to be caused my randomness, for the AKP, MHP, CHP vote shares and voter turnout are mapped in Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11 respectively. For the incumbent AKP vote share, 303 of the 819 districts exhibit positive spatial autocorrelation, whereas 16 districts exhibit negative spatial autocorrelation. For the MHP vote share, 227 of the 819 districts exhibit positive spatial autocorrelation, whereas 17 districts exhibit negative spatial autocorrelation. For the CHP vote share, 308 of the 819 districts exhibit positive spatial autocorrelation, whereas 13 districts exhibit negative spatial autocorrelation. For the voter turnout 286 of the 819 districts exhibit positive spatial autocorrelation, whereas 14 districts exhibit negative spatial autocorrelation.

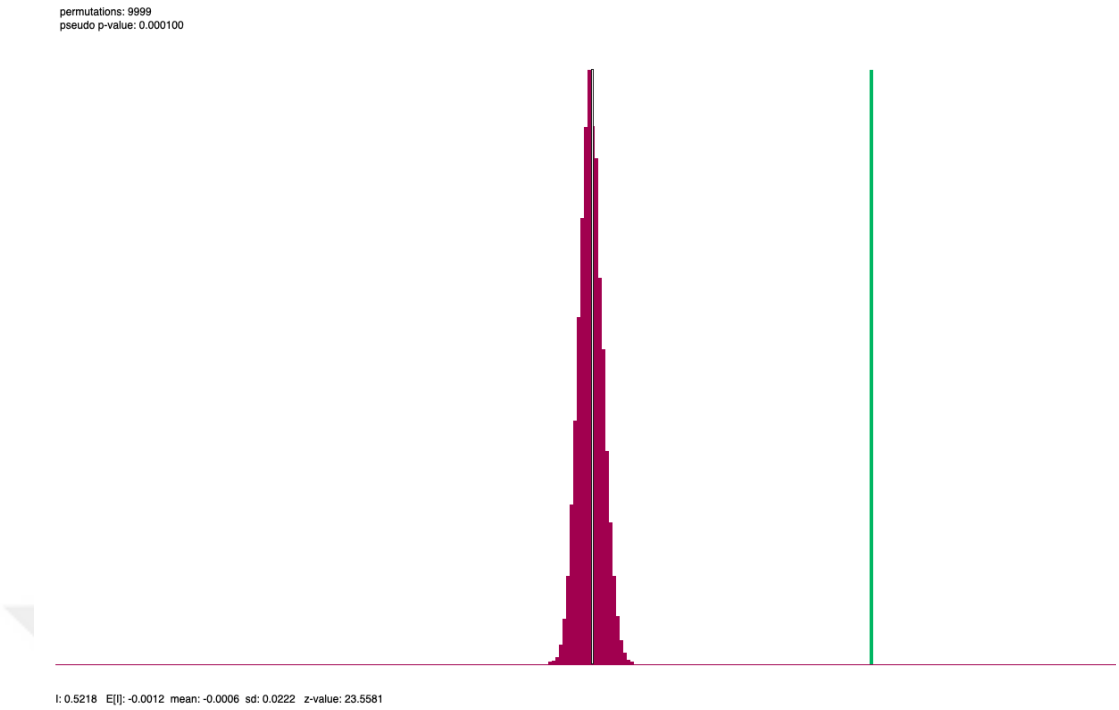


Figure 5. Permutation for the MHP vote share

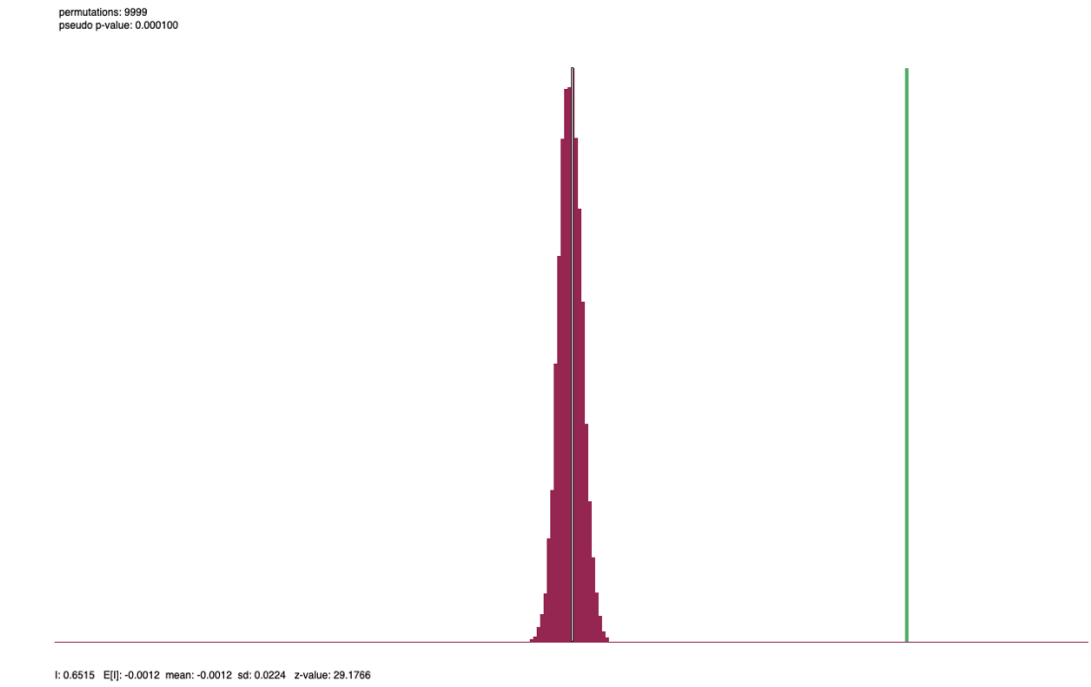


Figure 6. Permutation for the CHP vote share

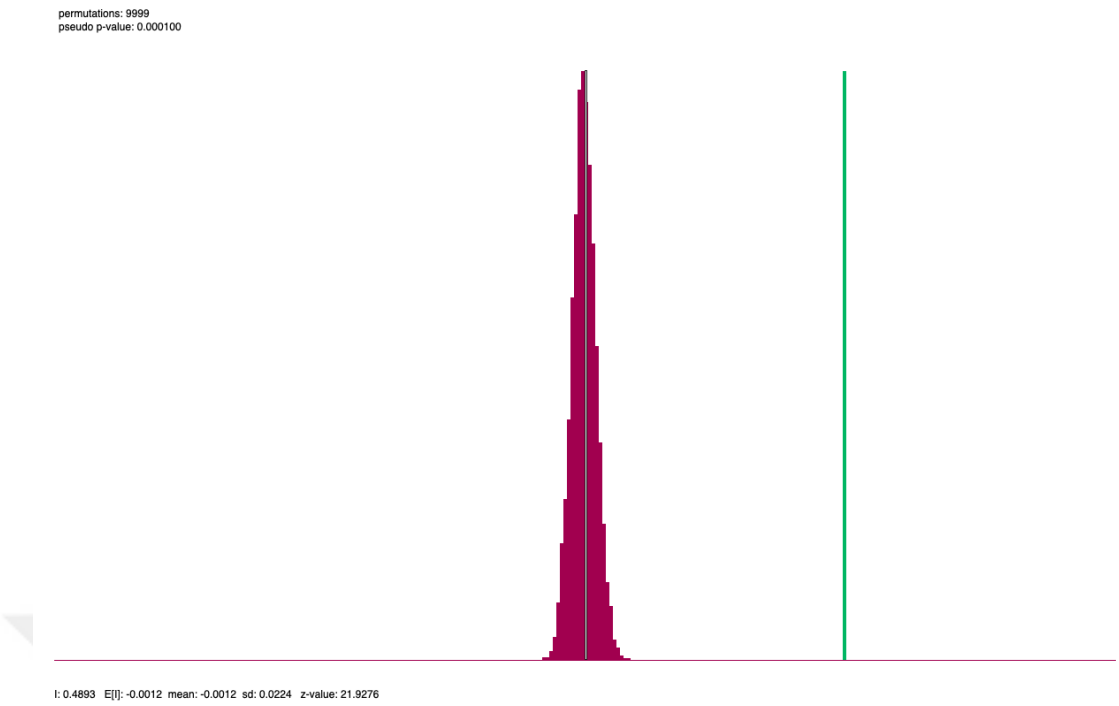


Figure 7. Permutation for the voter turnout

The dark-red (high-high, higher than average values surrounded by higher than average values) and dark blue districts (low-low, lower than average values surrounded by lower than average values) indicate positive local autocorrelation as these districts have similar values with their neighbors, whereas light-red (high-low, higher than average values surrounded by lower than average values) and light-blue (low-high districts, lower than averages values surrounded by higher than average values) indicate negative spatial autocorrelation.

For example for Figure 8, in everyday language, districts in red can be interpreted as the AKP's strongholds which include districts of Konya, Trabzon, Rize, Sakarya, Kütahya among others. It is important to note tha these districts only represent core of the clusters, i.e there may be districts where AKP is relatively strong and which are neighbors of these core districts from one direction but not from other directions, thus are not shown in red.

Thus, for the AKP, MHP, CHP vote shares and the voter turnout, positive spatial autocorrelation has been diagnosed both at the global and local levels. Overall, one can conclude that neighboring districts tend to exhibit similar patterns of voting as expected. Now that I have diagnosed strong spatial dependence for the data, I have to specify the exact spatial model to be used.

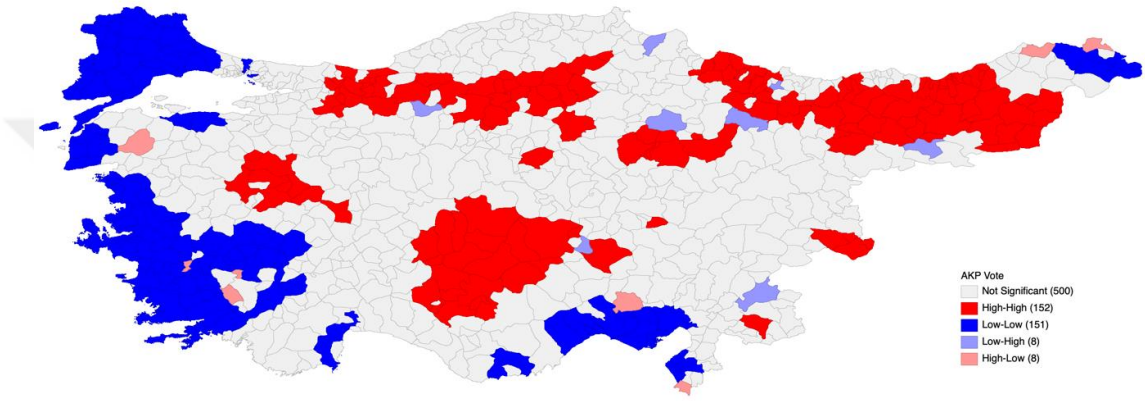


Figure 8. Cluster map for the AKP vote share

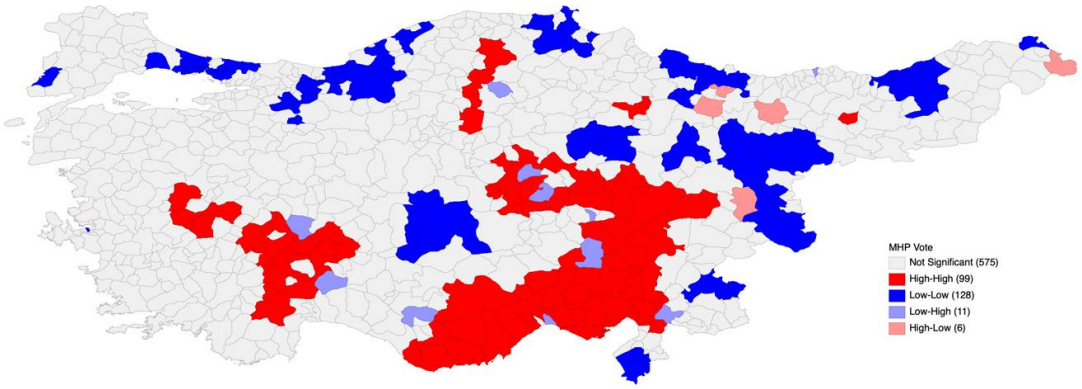


Figure 9. Cluster map for the MHP vote share

3.5 Model specification

To specify which model to use Anselin (2005) proposed a multi-level decision rule. First, the researcher uses Lagrange Multiplier diagnostics for spatial lag dependence and spatial error dependence. If both tests have significant results then the researcher estimates the robust version of LM diagnostics. The researcher, then, estimates the spatial regression model matching the most significant statistics (Darmofal, 2015, pp. 78–88), the results are slightly in favor of a spatial error model.

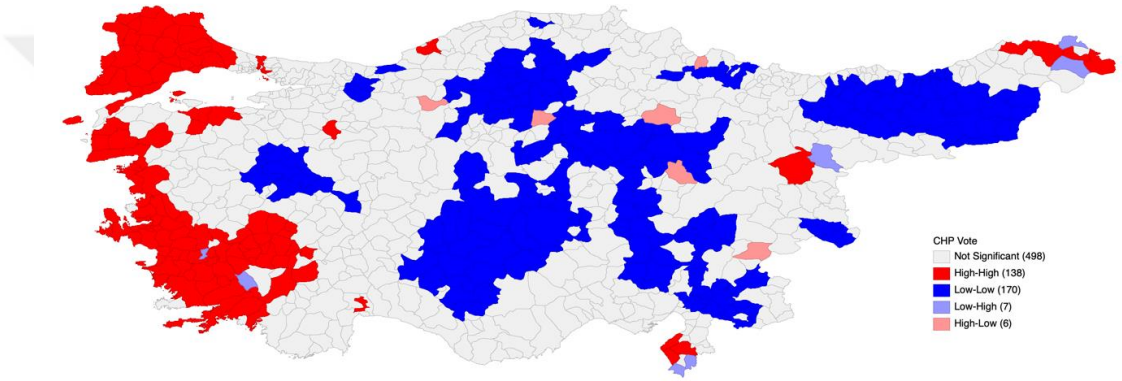


Figure 10. Cluster map for the CHP vote share

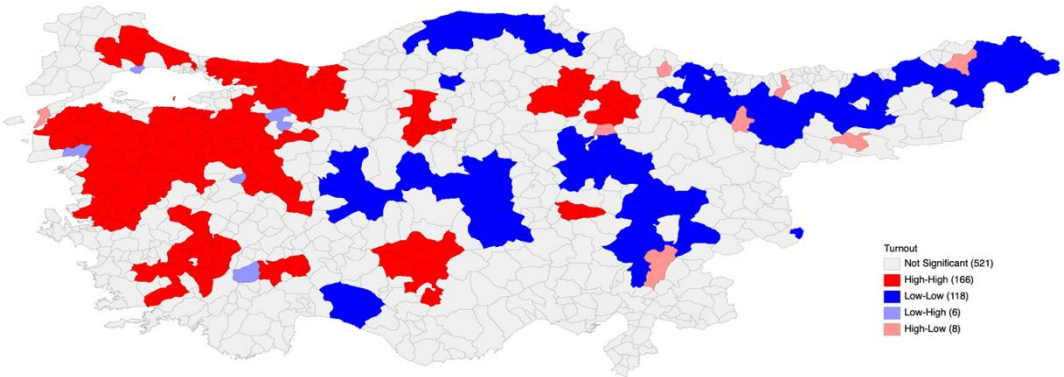


Figure 11. Cluster map for the voter turnout

However, a spatial error model won't be appropriate because it cannot account for possible diffusion effects. First, funerals in a district are attended by people from neighboring districts, and people are exposed to the funerals when the cortege passes by multiple locations. Moreover, especially in less populated regions in Turkey, many people are connected to each other through kinship networks and attendance to a security force is considered a duty even if one does not directly know the martyr. Second, it may be the case that two districts identical in every aspect but in its neighbors to behave differently in terms of voting. Consider, two districts one being neighbor of highly developed districts, the other one being neighbor of poorly developed districts. Here we would expect each district to resemble their neighbors because of the possible interaction between the neighbor units, that be in terms of lifestyle, economy, culture and so on. Thus, we have both theoretical and empirical reasons to incorporate diffusions effects into our model.

There are two ways in which diffusion effects can be incorporated into an error model. First, one may incorporate a spatial lagged dependent variable, where the dependent variables of the neighbors influence each other. Second, one may incorporate spatial lagged independent variables, where a unit is influenced by its neighbors' independent variables. Incorporation of the spatially dependent variable has global spillover effects since a change in the dependent variable of any unit influences its neighbors which then influences their neighbors and so on. The incorporation of spatially lagged independent variables has local spillover effects because they only have an impact on their neighbors' dependent variable. Voting is a simultaneous process, the vote-share of the political parties do not diffuse in time across districts and cannot influence each other. Following this expectation, I use a spatial Durbin error model (SDEM) where both spatially lagged independent

variables (local spillover effects) and spatial errors (autocorrelated error terms) are incorporated into the model, which can be called an extended version of an OLS model in matrix notation where spatial weight matrix W describes the spatial relationship between the units (see LeSage and Pace 2009; LeSage 2014; Elhorst 2014; Halleck and Elhorst 2015 advocating this model over classical spatial lag and spatial error models):

$$Y = \alpha\iota_n + X\beta + WX\theta + u$$

$$u = \lambda Wu + \varepsilon$$

ι_n denotes the constant, X independent variables, WX spatial lag term, and Wu the spatial error term and ε the error term and α, β, θ, λ are parameters to be estimated. To put it qualitatively, the vote share of a party in November elections in a given district will be impacted by the socio-economy, percentage of the Kurdish population, the vote share in June election, funerals, residual of the district itself and of its neighboring locations.

3.6 Results and analysis of the impact of the funerals

The descriptive statistics are given in Table 3 and the results of both OLS and SDEM are presented in Table 4 and Table 5, where standard errors are given in parenthesis.[12] Before proceeding to analysis of the results for each party it must be noted that when a SDEM model is specified the lagged effect of the security force funerals become statistically significant for the MHP vote share in November (Table

[12] To arrange the data and to run regressions, I have used various R packages: tidyverse (Wickham et al., 2019), ggplot2(Wickham, 2016)spatialreg, (R. Bivand & Piras, 2015), spdep (R. S. Bivand & Wong, 2018), rgeos (R. Bivand & Rundel, 2020), rgdal (R. Bivand, Keitt, & Rowlingson, 2020), stargazer (Hlavac, Marek, 2018).

4, model 4). Similarly, for the total vote share of right-wing political parties (AKP and MHP) lagged effect of the civilian funerals become statistically significant, neither of which are statistically significant when an OLS model is specified. Lastly, for the total vote-share of the left-wing parties, the lagged effect of the funerals falls short of becoming statistically significant with a p value of 0.05086.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Kurdish Population	819	6.658	6.196	0.098	1.819	9.873	42.480
Socio-economy	819	0.178	0.960	-1.549	-0.448	0.617	7.730
Civilian Funeral	819	0.110	0.583	0	0	0	8
Civilian Funeral Per 20.000	819	0.031	0.192	0	0	0	3
Security Force Funeral	819	0.168	0.475	0	0	0	4
Security Force Funeral Per 20.000	819	0.092	0.403	0	0	0	4
AKP vote share June	819	47.534	14.593	4.207	36.866	57.962	84.957
AKP vote share November	819	55.759	16.406	4.504	44.236	68.177	92.046
CHP vote share June	819	24.207	14.063	0.732	13.113	33.346	77.109
CHP vote share November	819	24.110	14.899	0.573	12.228	33.446	79.495
MHP vote share June	819	19.658	7.366	1.367	14.664	24.302	50.123
MHP vote share November	819	14.037	5.973	0.999	9.830	17.105	41.512
Voter turnout June	819	83.627	4.008	65.447	81.550	86.520	92.435
Voter turnout November	819	85.193	3.784	66.278	83.123	88.021	97.177
AKP+MHP vote share in June	819	67.192	15.836	5.573	56.911	79.976	95.712
AKP+MHP vote share in November	819	69.796	16.345	5.503	59.430	82.967	97.382
CHP+HDP vote share in June	819	27.930	16.047	1.295	14.848	38.468	89.095
CHP+HDP vote share in November	819	26.883	16.688	0.709	13.464	37.360	93.504

The results indicate that the literature on terrorism and voting behavior can benefit from accounting for spatial diffusion, at least should not overlook its possible impact. One thing to keep in mind is that research on subnational variation in violence and voting behavior relies on the borders of administrative units which may or may not reflect the interactions both within and across the administrative boundaries. For instance, in our case, a funeral in a district may impact several of its neighbors more than the district itself, if the funeral took place at the edge of the district or in some way the exact location of the funeral has more interaction with neighboring units.

Table 4. Result of OLS and SDEM for Vote Shares and the Voter Turnout

	AKP November		MHP November		CHP November		Turnout November	
	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
AKP June	1.113***	1.060***						
	(0.008)	(0.009)						
MHP June			0.743***	0.724***				
			(0.012)	(0.013)				
CHP June					1.038***	1.008***		
					(0.006)	(0.007)		
Turnout June							0.795***	0.859***
							(0.016)	(0.017)
Security Force Funeral	0.367	0.133	-0.107	-0.049	-0.055	-0.058	0.043	0.019
	(0.248)	(0.221)	(0.224)	(0.197)	(0.192)	(0.178)	(0.160)	(0.139)
Socio-economy	0.065	0.133	0.268***	0.127	0.272***	0.353***	0.435***	0.075
	(0.118)	(0.116)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.072)	(0.069)
Kurdish Population	0.045***	0.132***	0.068***	0.002	0.057***	-0.003	0.028***	-0.015
	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.013)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.016)
Civilian Funeral	-0.931*	-0.674	0.274	0.479	-0.872**	-0.880**	0.143	-0.031
	(0.517)	(0.467)	(0.465)	(0.417)	(0.400)	(0.375)	(0.335)	(0.295)
AKP June (lag)		0.060***						
		(0.016)						
MHP June (lag)				0.048*				
				(0.027)				
CHP June (lag)						0.042***		
						(0.012)		
Turnout June (lag)								-0.111***
								(0.036)
Security Force Funeral (lag)		-0.356		1.228**		-0.280		-0.473
		(0.643)		(0.581)		(0.512)		(0.410)
Socio-economy (lag)		-0.329		0.371*		-0.127		0.346**
		(0.226)		(0.194)		(0.173)		(0.141)
Kurdish Population (lag)		-0.100***		0.080**		0.065**		0.048*
		(0.039)		(0.035)		(0.030)		(0.025)
Civilian Funeral (lag)		0.669		1.627		-1.135		-0.885
		(1.243)		(1.123)		(0.984)		(0.796)
Constant	2.557***	2.300**	-1.063***	-1.903***	-1.420***	-1.686***	18.451***	22.395***
	(0.411)	(0.927)	(0.287)	(0.697)	(0.184)	(0.385)	(1.379)	(3.310)
Observations	819	819	819	819	819	819	819	819
R^2	0.970		0.818		0.978		0.765	
Adjusted R^2	0.970		0.817		0.978		0.764	
Log Likelihood		-1,865.097		-1,759.637		-1,695.133		-1,475.191
$sigma^2$		5.065		3.838		3.410		1.901
Akaike Inf. Crit.		3,756.194		3,545.275		3,416.266		2,976.382
Residual Std. Error (df = 813)	2.844		2.557		2.200		1.840	
F Statistic (df = 5; 813)	5,279.876***		730.365***		7,341.188***		529.769***	
Wald Test (df = 1)		347.676***		483.576***		242.207***		550.393***
LR Test (df = 1)		239.470***		320.200***		191.998***		300.225***

Note: *p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01

Table 5. Result of OLS and SDEM for the Dependent Variable Vote Share of the AKP+MHP and CHP+HDP

	Vote share of AKP+MHP		Vote Share of CHP+HDP	
	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
AKP+MHP June	1.025***	0.995***		
	(0.008)	(0.009)		
CHP+HDP June			1.032***	0.996***
			(0.006)	(0.007)
Security Force Funerals	-0.108	-0.161	-0.141	-0.109
	(0.279)	(0.243)	(0.208)	(0.194)
Socio-economy	0.015	-0.292**	0.172*	0.308***
	(0.134)	(0.127)	(0.100)	(0.101)
Kurdish Population	0.123***	0.174***	-0.074***	-0.140***
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.014)	(0.023)
Civilian Funeral	-0.003	0.174	-0.943**	-1.029**
	(0.581)	(0.516)	(0.432)	(0.410)
AKP+MHP June (lag)		0.022		
		(0.018)		
CHP+HDP June (lag)				0.052***
				(0.012)
Security Force Funerals (lag)		-0.171		-0.184
		(0.716)		(0.553)
Socio-economy (lag)		0.183		-0.283
		(0.266)		(0.187)
Kurdish Population (lag)		-0.053		0.072**
		(0.045)		(0.032)
Civilian Funeral (lag)		3.530**		-2.075*
		(1.392)		(1.063)
Constant	0.124	0.511	-1.432***	-1.841***
	(0.597)	(1.460)	(0.190)	(0.377)
Observations	819	819	819	819
R^2	0.962		0.980	
Adjusted R^2	0.962		0.980	
Log Likelihood		-1,929.566		-1,776.649
$sigma^2$		5.755		4.226
Akaike Inf. Crit.		3,885.133		3,579.298
Residual Std. Error (df = 813)	3.198		2.377	
F Statistic (df = 5; 813)	4,110.866***		7,903.176***	
Wald Test (df = 1)		565.130***		172.551***
LR Test (df = 1)		331.708***		134.121***
Note:	*p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01			

First, there is not a statistically significant relationship between the AKP vote share or voter turnout and exposure to neither security force funerals nor civilian funerals. Thus, I cannot reject the first and third null hypothesis. This is a surprising finding given that there is a very strong consensus both in academic and public discussions on the impact of terrorism on AKP's electoral victory in November elections. How can we explain this?

As Criado (2017) explains for terrorism to impact voter behavior, it needs to be salient which depends on the nature and fatality of violence as well as electoral strategy of political parties. In the literature review we have seen that the researchers in the Turkish (Kibris, 2011), Peruian (Birnir & Gohdes, 2018) and Israeli contexts (Berrebi & Klor, 2008) leverage the subnational variation in terrorism and voting behavior. Exploiting subnational variation implicitly assumes terrorism to be salient for voters in terrorism-affected localities but not in others or at least assume it to be more salient in terrorism-affected localities, thus, assume these voters to behave differently than others.

I argue that AKP's electoral strategy of framing the November elections as a choice between chaos and stability and the extremely high levels of violence made voters not only in localities that were exposed to terrorism but throughout the country behave in similar ways in terms of voting for the incumbent AKP and turning out to vote.

Studying the same period leveraging a panel data-set compromised of two surveys conducted before June elections and in between June and November elections, Kalaycıoğlu (2018) shows that percentage of those who saw terror and national security as the most important problem increased from 9.1% to 51.8% percentage. Moreover, there was a shift in the self-reported ideological position of

the voters from center to the right. Through various analysis, he concludes that "it seemed as if concerns over terror, insecurity and economic satisfaction seemed to have motivated the voters to vote for the governing AKP as the party closest to form the government alone and delivery some semblance of political stability." (Kalaycıoğlu, 2018, p. 15)

Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) leveraged three-wave panel data through surveys conducted before, in between and after the elections. Similarly, percentage of respondents who saw terrorism as most important problem facing Turkey rose to 47% from %10 in their study. Moreover, they found a statistically significant relationship between seeing terrorism as most important problem facing Turkey and intended vote for AKP in the November elections, which was not the case in June. Among the switchers to AKP, there is also a significant increase in the favorability of the president Erdoğan and then chairman of AKP and prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

Lastly, their analysis show that voters perceived the incumbent AKP to be more competent in solving Turkey's problems. The field work for the survey in between the elections was done before the ISIS attack that killed more than one hundred people in the Turkish capital Ankara. Thus, the resurgence of the conflict between PKK and the security forces already drove salience of terrorism.

As I have mentioned in chapter 2 previously, after Abdullah Öcalan's capture in 1999, the conflict between the state and PKK can be described as a mutually tolerable stalemate, where most of the fighting occurred in the remote mountainous regions in warmer months, and with limited fatalities for both sides as well as very limited civilian victimization (Tezcür, 2013). This changed after the collapse of the Peace Process and the PKK started an urban warfare in several locations alongside its

traditional rural guerilla tactics. In 3.5 months, after the collapse of the Peace Process, voters in Turkey witnessed an unprecedented level of violence where in the clashes between the PKK and the government close to 400 people have died and many more wounded.

The scenes and reports from these districts were particularly shocking for the public. The news reports and scenes of the clashed rather seemed like scenes from the Syrian Civil War. It seemed rather like urban youth militias associated with the PKK used the new tactics learned during the urban warfare in Syria. Moreover, children as young as 10 years old seen helping the armed militia, who themselves are mostly teenagers and youth, building barricades and trenches filled with explosives. It was also reported that YDG-H militants acted like local police forces, enforcing rules and patrolling the streets (see Gurcan 2015; Bozarslan 2015b; Yıldıray 2015 for information on urban youth militias). Moreover, the government declared curfews ranging from 8 hours to 8,5 days in different localities and initiated a series of counter-insurgency operations, clearly signaling that the government strategy has changed. As a result of these urban warfare civilians including children and the elderly have died.

Moreover, except for the security force funerals, there were also many protests and Turkish nationalist mobilization against terror events. One of the events was named “Millions of Breaths and One Voice against Terror" organized by a pro-government NGO which was more of a rally attended by the president Erdoğan and the prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. In the event, veterans and families of the martyrs were in the protocol. The event started with the reading of the Qur'an and hundreds of thousands of people prayed for the martyrs with the presence of the director of Religious Affairs. Then both the president Erdoğan and the prime minister

Davutoğlu made the speeches, heavily criticizing the pro-Kurdish HDP and the PKK.[13]

As Şahin explains in greater detail (2021) the government deliberately pursued a strategy of securitization to trigger ontological insecurity of voters by "prioritization of the existential threats against the nation and re-securitization of the Kurdish question, adoption of Turkish nationalism, demonization of the HDP and equating it with terrorism and equating the AKP's victory in snap elections to the only way out of chaos" (Sahin, 2021, p. 14). To do that the government mobilized a huge campaign using state resources, which the competitive authoritarian setting of Turkey enabled. Prime Minister Davutoğlu held many rallies all around Turkey with a simple but clear message "Chaos or Stability". He has repeatably referred to the past 13 years of the AKP government, how the single-party government of AKP ensured stability and welfare. Moreover, the media was controlled by the government to a large extent. According to the report of the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE) television channels, including the state television TRT had given the AKP significantly more time and had a broadcasting policy favoring AKP. Moreover, several television channels owned allegedly by Gülenist were shut down (OSCE, 2015).

Thus, by further increasing the tensions and adopting a more nationalistic rhetoric and using the media and resources, AKP was able to twist the elections. Affirming the findings of these panel surveys mentioned above, a focus group study of Turkish nationalist who switched to AKP in the November elections showed that government's harsh rhetoric anti-terror campaign against the HDP and the PKK and

[13] See www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXKOy0ax_Jw

fear of violence and stability was the main reason in AKP's ability to increase its vote particularly among Turkish nationalist (Günay & Yörük, 2019, pp. 36–38).

Naturally, failing to reject the null hypothesis, i.e failing to find a statistically significant effect does not indicate a negligible effect. However, above mentioned findings where half of the voters saw terrorism as the most important problem facing Turkey is suggestive that when the level of violence exceeds certain threshold voters throughout the country may behave in similar ways. This may be especially important to consider in the age of mass and digital media, where citizens are easily exposed to terrorism and violence through "indirect ways".

Moreover, AKP was able to frame the November elections as a choice between stability and chaos through its strong grip on state and media institutions. Thus, further research on voting behavior and terrorism may benefit from paying a greater attention to context, particularly to the electoral strategy of political parties and the setting in which the competition takes places.

Recall that MHP's vote share was down to 16,3 from 11,9 percentage and decreased almost in every single districts and I expected a negative relationship between MHP vote-share and exposure to terrorism given that MHP's vote decreased almost in every single district of Turkey. There is no statistically significant relationship between exposure to civilian funerals and MHP-vote share. Yet, there is a positive relationship between lagged security force funerals and MHP vote share (Table 4, Model 4). Indicating that MHP lost less votes in districts that were neighbors to districts that experienced a security force funeral than it did not.[14] This is an unexpected given that MHP lost a great deal of its votes mostly at the expense

[14] Moreover, total effect of security force funerals (direct+lagged impact) is 1.18 positive. But combined p-value is 0.09, thus is not significant at 5%.

of AKP as a result of violence. If funerals affected neither AKP vote share nor the voter turnout, why did it affect right-wing nationalist MHP vote share?

My own interpretation through qualitative and anecdotal evidence is that the funerals may have created resentment towards the government, thus may have mediated the concerns over security. Of 138 security force funerals in the data-set, four were attended by the president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself, five were attended by the Prime Minister Davutoğlu, 70 of the funerals were attended by at least one minister and 133 were attended at least one member of the parliament and all of the funerals were attended by high and middle-level members of the army, as well as district-level politicians and civil servants such as district mayors. In the authoritarian context of Turkey, funerals were places where citizens come into direct contact by high-level politicians and could criticize the government for the loss of loved one's directly in a more or less legitimate way and with less threat of repercussion given the societal respect given to security forces.

One of the widely known incidents was in Captain Ali Alkan’s funeral. When a member of the parliament and the provincial head of AKP approached the front line for the funeral prayer, someone from the crowd yelled "What are you doing here? You don't have a place here," then another one added, "I am his relative, yet I am not in the front row, what are these looters doing in front of me?". After the funeral, the cousin said: "What agreement did you have, why are these countries children are dying? What agreement is this? When will this end? How much longer will the children of the homeland lay here? Why does Turkey not stand up? Why does Turkey sleep? Is this the Solution Process? The solution lies here." (Gulf Times 2015; Sözcü 2015; see İhlas Haber Ajansı 2015 for the footage). Referring to the Peace Process, president Erdoğan himself initiated.

The most dramatic scene was to follow where Ali Alkan's brother Mehmet Alkan who himself is a Lieutenant Colonel came to the coffin in his army uniform and started yelling at the cameras. He said: "Who has killed this son of our land at the age of 32? He could not get enough of loved ones, he could not get enough of this world! Who caused this? Those who lusted for a "solution" (refers to Peace Process between the PKK and the government) until yesterday are now lusting for war till the end? Those who live high in their castles, surrounded by 30 bodyguards, driving around in armored vehicles cannot say 'I want to be a martyr.' Just get out of here"(Gulf Times 2015; Sözcü 2015; see İhlas Haber Ajansı 2015 for the footage). Referring to the president Erdoğan, and to the Energy Minister Taner Yıldız who stated that he wanted to be a martyr too.

In another incident in Bursa, the Health Minister Mehmet Müezzinoğlu was protested. At first, someone yelled at the minister "Mr. Minister, if we had chosen the president, this would not have happened? You said that. How much blood will spill until the president is elected". Referring to his remarks that there would be no terror if Turkey were to be governed by a presidential system rather than a parliamentary system, as the president Erdoğan have been calling for. After the funeral, the crowd started protesting the Minister and threw water bottles and he had to be escorted to a safe building ("Bursa'da şehidin cenaze töreninde Bakan Müezzinoğlu'na protesto," 2015).

Vasilopoulos et. al (2019) has found anger to drive far-right vote in French context. As these incidents in the funerals reveal, being exposed to funerals may have created resentment and anger towards the government. Erişen (2018 chapter 7) studied role of emotions in number in number of areas such as how a particular leader makes people feel like, people reactions to leaders, how a particular emotion

towards a leader influences vote-choice using a survey conducted shortly after June elections.

Crucially, for the purpose of this paper, he finds that anger at Erdoğan motivated a vote for CHP and MHP. Moreover, he found that when an individual self-identified as nationalist and is angry with Erdoğan becomes very likely to vote for MHP. Therefore, although MHP lost a substantial part of its votes, it may be the case that it lost less in districts that were exposed to security force funerals where anger towards the government overcame concerns over stability and security to some extent. Obviously, above mentioned qualitative evidence and causal mechanism through anger is suggestive at best.

Another concern might be reverse causality through self-selection into security forces. 12 out of 138 security forces were killed while completing their compulsory military service, thus, their hometowns were truly random. For the remaining 126 security forces, one may expect Turkish-majority districts and districts where Turkish nationalist MHP has relatively more support to be overrepresented in security forces through self-selection into the profession. First, one may expect Kurds to be less likely to seek a career in security forces. However, vast majority of the districts where Kurds make up substantial proportion of the population are excluded from the analysis, thus, cancels out a possible bias. Second, the remaining 126 security forces who are professionals include both police and military personnel with warring duties and age groups including security forces who are not specialized in terrorism and military affairs such as traffic polices killed randomly in urban settings, which is likely to increase as-if randomness of the data.

Third, whereas some of the funerals were held in home-towns of the security forces, others were held in where they resided when not on duty or in bigger cities,

where their families have immigrated, another factor that increases as-if randomness of the data. Moreover, both AKP and MHP have similar voters bases when it comes to Turkish nationalism among ethnic Turks, which again reduces concerns over reverse causality.

However, I must also mention that, it is oftentimes argued that MHP has a network of supporters or at least to be popular in certain branches of military and police specialized in counter-insurgency and terrorism. Thus, I cannot totally rule out the possible of reverse causality through self-selection of MHP supporters into the security forces, which then makes them more likely to be killed by the PKK and to for their hometowns to experience funerals which are more likely to have relatively high-levels of MHP support. If there is indeed a reserve causality, this is also interesting and opens up of a new question for future research. If Turkish nationalists are more likely to die in combat, this may further increase Turkish nationalist attitudes within their families and communities which would then make them more likely to join security forces. Since the PKK-Turkey conflict has been going on since 1984, this relationship between security forces causalities and Turkish nationalism may have created a path dependency and vicious cycle of Turkish nationalism through self-selection into security forces.

Given that the CHP's vote share increased in some districts, I expected a positive relationship between funerals of civilians who were killed in the suicide attacks of the ISIS given that it was attended by unions, left-wing NGO's and many members of CHP died in the attacks and given their funerals were scene to left-wing mobilization. However, there is a negative and significant relationship between civilian funerals and CHP vote share, which is an interesting finding (Table 4, Model 6).

Moreover, looking at the Table 5 Model 4, we see that there is negative and a significant relationship between the civilian funerals and CHP+HDP vote share also a negative lagged effect, that falls slightly short of being statistically significant with a p value of 0.0508. On the other hand, there is a positive and significant relationship between the lagged effect of the civilian funerals and the total vote-share of the AKP and MHP, which they individually did not have in Table 5 Model 2.

Again, the interpretation of this result is extremely hard with the available evidence at hand. It is interesting to observe that the voters did not blame the government for the ISIS attacks, which was arguably a result of the government's foreign policy that escalated the conflict in Syria. Moreover, which makes this result particularly interesting is that the civilians were killed in a leftist election rally, thus, we may have expected a reverse causality problem if we were to find a positive relationship between the civilians funerals and CHP vote-share and total-left wing vote share. Most straightforward interpretation of this result might be that fear over security and stability drove voters away towards right-wing political parties.

Lastly, I run the empirical analysis using security force and civilian funerals together as a single variable of exposure to terrorism (Table 6 and Table 7). When civilian and security forces funerals are treated of one kind, only their lagged effect on the MHP vote-share is significant (Table 6, Model 4). This shows the importance of disaggregating target type as argued in the previous literature (Criado, 2017; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Huff & Kertzer, 2018).

It is important to note that these analysis are far from being perfect. First, there is always the risk of having ecological fallacy when working with district level data. Second, specification of spatial weights is never perfect and does not directly reflect reality. For instance, one can also use distance between districts to specify a

weight matrix or can specify a spatial weight matrix using the road networks. That is to say, understanding of the exact mechanisms behind the impact of terrorism on voting behavior requires extensive fieldwork, surveys, and/or experiments, that can gives us more information on the micro and individual-level dynamics of terrorism. Thus, the analysis in this study is a modest attempt at best.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used a Spatial Durbin Error Model to study the impact of terrorism on voting behavior. I have shown that incorporation of spatial diffusion effects of terrorism changes the results of the analysis. Particularly, it helped me to capture the effects of funerals that were not captured by a traditional OLS model. This indicates that further research may benefit from spatial regression models to understand the relationship between terrorism and voting.

Second, this chapter suggests that under very high levels of violence those who are exposed to terrorism and who are not may behave in similar ways, which did not occur in vacuum but deliberate election strategy of the incumbent government AKP of securitizing the Kurdish issue and framing the elections as a choice between chaos and stability, which was possible due to Turkey's competitive authoritarian system. Third and relatedly, this study shows the importance of disaggregating target type as treating security force causalities and civilian causalities as one of the same have different results. These two points shows that the literature should pay a greater attention to the context both in terms of nature of electoral competition and electoral strategies of political parties as well as nature of terrorism, especially in terms level of violence and the target type.

Table 6. Alternative Results of OLS and SDEM

	AKP November		MHP November		CHP November		Turnout November	
	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
AKP June	1.113***	1.059***						
	(0.008)	(0.009)						
MHP June			0.742***	0.723***				
			(0.012)	(0.013)				
CHP June					1.038***	1.008***		
					(0.006)	(0.007)		
Turnout June							0.795***	0.858***
							(0.016)	(0.017)
Socio-economy	0.060	0.120	0.268***	0.130	0.272***	0.352***	0.436***	0.076
	(0.118)	(0.116)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.072)	(0.069)
Kurdish Population	0.044***	0.130***	0.068***	0.002	0.056***	-0.003	0.028***	-0.015
	(0.017)	(0.025)	(0.015)	(0.022)	(0.013)	(0.021)	(0.011)	(0.016)
All Funerals	0.130	-0.016	-0.037	0.046	-0.205	-0.206	0.061	0.011
	(0.226)	(0.202)	(0.203)	(0.179)	(0.175)	(0.162)	(0.145)	(0.127)
AKP June (lag)		0.063***						
		(0.016)						
MHP June (lag)				0.046*				
				(0.027)				
CHP June (lag)						0.041***		
						(0.013)		
Turnout June (lag)								-0.111***
								(0.036)
Socio-economy (lag)		-0.312		0.363*		-0.110		0.348**
		(0.225)		(0.194)		(0.174)		(0.141)
Kurdish Population (lag)		-0.095**		0.080**		0.064**		0.047*
		(0.038)		(0.035)		(0.030)		(0.025)
All Funerals (lag)		-0.090		1.286**		-0.423		-0.557
		(0.579)		(0.520)		(0.461)		(0.369)
Constant	2.554***	2.206**	-1.045***	-1.830***	-1.412***	-1.662***	18.458***	22.356***
	(0.412)	(0.922)	(0.286)	(0.688)	(0.184)	(0.386)	(1.378)	(3.303)
Observations	819	819	819	819	819	819	819	819
R^2	0.970		0.818		0.978		0.765	
Adjusted R^2	0.970		0.817		0.978		0.764	
Log Likelihood		-1,868.066		-1,760.384		-1,697.144		-1,475.310
$sigma^2$		5.111		3.846		3.425		1.902
Akaike Inf. Crit.		3,758.131		3,542.768		3,416.288		2,972.620
Residual Std. Error (df = 814)	2.852		2.556		2.203		1.838	
F Statistic (df = 4; 814)	6,564.684***		913.323***		9,148.266***		662.946***	
Wald Test (df = 1)		336.636***		482.303***		244.121***		545.671***
LR Test (df = 1)		242.702***		319.946***		194.097***		301.439***

Note: *p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01

Table 7. Alternative Results for the Dependent Variable Vote Share of the AKP+MHP and CHP+HDP

	Dependent variable:			
	AKP+MHP November		CHP+HDP November	
	OLS	SDEM	OLS	SDEM
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
AKP+MHP June	1.025***	0.993***		
	(0.008)	(0.009)		
CHP+HDP June			1.031***	0.996***
			(0.006)	(0.007)
Socio-economy	0.015	-0.315**	0.173*	0.315***
	(0.134)	(0.127)	(0.100)	(0.101)
Kurdish Population	0.123***	0.171***	-0.074***	-0.139***
	(0.019)	(0.027)	(0.014)	(0.023)
All Funerals	-0.089	-0.108	-0.288	-0.272
	(0.253)	(0.222)	(0.188)	(0.177)
AKP+MHP June (lag)		0.020		
		(0.018)		
CHP+HDP June (lag)				0.050***
				(0.012)
Socio-economy (lag)		0.152		-0.249
		(0.266)		(0.188)
Kurdish Population (lag)		-0.047		0.070**
		(0.045)		(0.032)
All Funerals (lag)		0.605		-0.549
		(0.646)		(0.499)
Constant	0.128	0.803	-1.423***	-1.776***
	(0.596)	(1.457)	(0.190)	(0.380)
Observations	819	819	819	819
R^2	0.962		0.980	
Adjusted R^2	0.962		0.980	
Log Likelihood		-1,932.920		-1,779.000
$sigma^2$		5.800		4.245
Akaike Inf. Crit.		3,887.840		3,579.999
Residual Std. Error (df = 814)	3.196		2.379	
F Statistic (df = 4; 814)	5,144.726***		9,856.088***	
Wald Test (df = 1)		568.290***		178.340***
LR Test (df = 1)		332.558***		137.845***
Note:	*p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01			

What is especially interesting in this research is that AKP, itself a right-wing political-party which had the most reformist policy towards Kurdish Issue and started the Peace Process, benefitted from the collapse of it rather than suffering. Whereas

right-wing nationalist MHP, who arguably could have leveraged the argument that "those who negotiated with terrorists are responsible for the violence" lost a substantial share of its vote. But at the same time, it is important to note that AKP's policy has shifted and became increasingly more nationalist between two elections.

As mentioned above, in the case of Spain, it seems like voters have punished the government for the government's Iraq policy which they saw as the cause of Al Qaida bombings and voted for the Socialist Party (Bali, 2007; Montalvo, 2011). In the Turkish context, however, the unprecedented level of violence and the urban insurgency that PKK initiated and government securitization of the Kurdish Issue and downplay of ISIS attacks seem to have pushed voters to think that the government has given the right response to the PKK instead of blaming the government for violence. Thus, as I have explained in the introduction to this chapter, the literature should move beyond the left-right wing dichotomy as it gives us little leverage in understanding the complex relationship between armed groups, violence, political parties and voting behavior.

Lastly, it must be mentioned that the finding regarding the MHP is interesting because it both contradicts and confirms the findings/expectations of the literature. As a right-wing nationalist party it lost a great deal of its votes to the AKP, which contradicts the findings/expectations of the previous literature while at the same time, it is in line with the expectations/findings of the literature since there is a positive relationship between the security force funerals and MHP vote share. This finding suggests that the literature may benefit from studying whether physically being at a funeral has a different impact than observing it through media.

CHAPTER 4

INSURGENCY, COUNTERINSURGENCY AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

In this chapter, I study voting behavior in eastern and southeastern provinces of Turkey with a specific focus on how insurgent violence (PKK) affects the subnational variation in the vote share of insurgent associated party (HDP). I believe such a task needs a different theoretical lens than studying the voting behavior in the Turkish majority provinces of Turkey that are exempt from violence as I have explained in the previous sections. Therefore, I limit my analysis to 151 districts in 18 provinces in southeastern and eastern Turkey since other provinces were largely exempt from violence.[15]

I criticize the conceptualization and operationalization of violence as civilian victimization through killing of civilians by insurgents in the related literature (e.g Birnir & Gohdes, 2018; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Heger, 2015). First, I argue that civilians are victimized beyond being directly targeted by insurgents as collateral damage in fatal or non-fatal ways during the clashes between insurgents and the state. Second and relatedly, conflicts are at least dyads, thus, insurgent violence begets state violence and vice-versa. I, therefore, argue that to be able to truly capture impacts of violence on behavior of the civilians one should also consider the state's actions beyond one-sided civilian killings by the insurgents.

On the empirical front, I show that the clashes between insurgents and the state tend to take place in localities of high insurgent support. Second, I show that the

[15] The list can be found in the previous chapter.

voters punish the insurgent-associated political party for the violence unevenly across localities and argue that civilians who reside in localities of violence are more likely to blame the government for violence rather than the insurgents, compared to civilians who reside in non-violent localities. Put differently, civilians who reside in non-violent localities are more likely to blame insurgents for violence rather than the government compared to civilians who reside in violent localities. That is to say, the insurgent associated political party is paradoxically punished more in nonviolent localities than it is punished in violent localities. Thus, I find a positive relationship between violence and vote-share of insurgent-associated HDP despite a decrease in its vote share in almost every district in the aftermath of violence.

Recalling Kalyvas (2003), this paradoxical finding raises important questions about the ontology of violence in the study of political behavior in violent context. I discuss this issue in the discussion section where I differentiate civilian response to violence as the response to "actual use of physical force or act of infliction of bodily harm (a single observable action)", from civilian response to violence as "response to escalation of the conflict". Put differently, escalation of conflict/violence is constituted by and emerges from the multiple acts of use force/violence but is qualitatively different than them.

This chapter talks to the literatures on civil wars, insurgency and counterinsurgency, repression, political behavior and civilian victimization. More specifically, it is one of the earlier studies to look at the subnational variation in violence and subnational variation in the vote share of insurgent associated parties (Birnir & Gohdes, 2018). Secondly, it contributes to one of the less researched areas in the literature on democracy and civil war, namely the interplay between the democratic institutions and the civil war in the context of on-going civil wars (Steele

& Schubiger, 2018). Thirdly, it contributes to the literature on political behavior and civilian agency in civil wars (e.g Arjona 2017), more specifically it contributes to the literature on voting behavior in civil wars (García-Sánchez, 2016; Tezcür, 2015a). Fourthly, it contributes to the literature on counterinsurgency and repression, and civilian responses to it (e.g Lyall, Blair, and Imai 2013; Rozenas and Zhukov 2019).

The chapter is organized as follows. First, I introduce the theoretical framework. Second, I present the method and the data. Third, I discuss the results of the quantitative analysis and then present the qualitative evidence. Fourth, I discuss the findings as well as possible alternative explanations and conclude. Before proceeding, it is important to note that I follow a deductive template and present the theoretical section for analytical clarity but theory development was a rather iterative process (See Yom, 2015 for an excellent discussion of this issue).

4.1 Theoretical framework

Much of the literature on political violence and elections revolve around the concept of "electoral violence", where violence is oftentimes used strategically and intentionally by different actors to affect electoral outcomes (Birch et al., 2020; see Gallego, 2018; Joshi & Mason, 2008; Acemoglu et al., 2013 for studies in civil war contexts). More relevant for this study is the literature on the impacts of violence and terrorism on electoral outcomes for incumbent governments and right-wing political parties. One of the consistent findings in this literature is that violence and terrorism affect the voting behavior especially in localities of violence but single yet salient terror attacks have also been found to impact the overall voting behavior (See Balcells & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; Bali, 2007; Berrebi & Klor, 2006, 2008;

Gassebner et al., 2008; Getmansky & Zeitzoff, 2014; Kibris, 2011, 2014; Montalvo, 2011; Wheatley et al., 2020 among others).

Directly related to this study, in the Basque region of Spain, de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca (2013) find that when ETA targets civilians that are from non-nationalist political parties, its political branch Batasuna gets punished, whereas Batasuna benefits from killings of criminals such as drug dealers. Heger (2015) finds that insurgents are less likely to attack civilians when they participate in elections, given their need for popular support in the elections. Similarly, in the Peruvian context, Birnir and Gohdes (2018) find that insurgent-associated political parties get punished by the electorate at the localities where they commit violence.

Yet, these studies suffer from two interrelated problems. Firstly, they operationalize violence as the killing of civilians by insurgents. However, the killing of civilians is neither the only nor the most frequent form of civilian victimization. Civilians caught in cross-fire may be victimized due to the psychological effects of violence, loss of life stocks and displacement or the mere presence of security forces can impact their daily lives through loss of basic rights like mobility not to mention civilian deaths as collateral damage (See Condra & Shapiro, 2012 for civilian responses to collateral damage). Moreover, there is considerable variation in the dynamics of violence within different types of civil wars, some have very limited civilian causalities (See Balcells & Stanton, 2021 for a recent review).

Second, civil wars involve at least two actors, thus are dyads. However, the above-mentioned studies treat violence as if it is one-sided and only account for violence by insurgents. Yet, in reality, insurgent violence begets state violence and vice versa. That is to say, to understand to impact of insurgent violence on the behavior of the civilians, we should also consider the state's actions as insurgents

and the counter-insurgents operate strategically in relation to each other in the same localities. For instance, insurgents can target civilians in a locality which signals the state the strength of the insurgents in that particular locality. This provokes counter-insurgency operations which can further victimize civilians.[16] If civilians find the state response disproportionate or if it causes in more victimization than does the killing of civilians by the insurgents, civilians may decide to vote for the insurgents to punish the government despite having reservations about them. Below, I develop a theory of voting behavior in civil wars based on these two points.

Irregular warfare is a subtype of civil war "in which a rebel force, rather than fighting pitched battles in the open, avoids its more powerful opponent's main forces and engages in hit-and-run operations, attacking when an advantage presents itself and melting away into the wilderness or the surrounding civilian population when reinforcements or superior firepower are brought to bear" (Downes, 2007, p. 427). One of the law-like arguments in the literature on non-state armed groups is the need for civilian support for sheltering, provision of supplies, information and money, recruits, camouflage (Akcinaroglu & Tokdemir, 2018; Arjona, Kasfir, & Mampilly, 2015; Downes, 2007; Fearon & Laitin, 2003; S. Kalyvas, 2006; S. N. Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010; Krcmaric, 2018; Wickham-Crowley, 1990; Wood, 2003).

Although the above mentioned literature focuses mostly on rural guerilla warfare, one may expect similar dynamics to unfold in urban settings (e.g Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2015). Urban settings lack an important advantage of guerrilla warfare, which is natural hide-outs such as dense forests or mountainous terrain. Insurgents need networks of support to help them with logistics such as smuggling of weapons to the neighborhood, provide them intelligence, places to hide-out, or at least civilians to

[16] The literature on political violence, especially terrorism literature, extensively talks about logic of provocation as a strategy of armed organizations, e.g (Kydd & Walter, 2006)

not denounce them. Thus, for an insurgency to emerge in an urban setting robust and resilient community structures are needed (Staniland, 2010).

Both the incumbent and insurgents are very aware of the importance of civilian support. Therefore, they usually have networks of spies and collaborators to receive information and intelligence. Yet, civilians are also aware of that and they are uncertain about the consequences of revealing their true preferences and ideas, therefore preference falsification is a likely occurrence in violent contexts (see Matanock and García-Sánchez 2018). Thus, actors face an identification problem.

Election results may help the actors to overcome the identification problem by providing information regarding the political preferences of civilians (Tezcur 2015; Belge 2016; Steele 2017; Balcells 2017). Thus, given the operational necessities, risks and costs involved in staging attacks, it is likely for the insurgents to stage attacks where the political party that is associated with them has high electoral support (See de la Calle and Sánchez-Cuenca 2013 for a similar line of reasoning). Similarly, it is also likely for the states to conduct counter-insurgency operations in the very same localities in response to insurgent attacks or engage in pre-emptive counterinsurgency operations.

Alternatively, even if we assume that both the state and the insurgents have perfect information regarding their relative support in each locality, the vote-share of insurgent associated political party can be used as a proxy measure for relative support for insurgents. This discussion yields to following hypothesis: H1: There is a positive relationship between level of violence and vote share of the insurgent associated political party in the elections prior to violence.

The literature on counterinsurgency centers around the debate between two approaches to civilians namely, “winning hearts and minds” and “draining the sea.”

As the names indicate, “winning hearts and minds” approach advocates policies to receive the support of the civilian population, the “draining the sea” logic advocates killing or displacement of the civilian population to undermine insurgent's support base (Krcmaric, 2018). Very much related to this debate is the literature on repression and counterinsurgency. Some studies found repression to further fuel opposition (Kocher, Pepinsky, & Kalyvas, 2011; Lyall et al., 2013), whereas others find repression to be an effective tool for deterring oppositional behavior at least under certain conditions (Downes, 2007; Lyall, 2009; Young, 2019), another literature has shown that the same event can both deter and inflame opposition depending on the context (Rozenas & Zhukov, 2019; see Valentino, 2014 for a review on violence against civilians).

As mentioned earlier, the literature relies on the killing of civilians as a point of departure to study the impacts of the insurgent violence on the electoral fortunes of insurgent associated parties. Similarly, the counter-insurgency literature mentioned above focuses mostly on the killing of civilians. Yet, the killing of civilians is neither the only nor the most frequent form of civilian victimization. The real battle occurs between the incumbent and the insurgents. Even if civilians are not directly targeted, they may suffer when caught in cross-fire (Condra & Shapiro, 2012) or through non-fatal victimization such as injuries, displacement, damages to property and mobility restrictions. This would be especially relevant in cases of urban warfare, where population size and density are a lot higher than rural areas and clashes are likely to impact the daily lives of residents and psychology, not to mention personal safety. That is to say, to study the impacts of violence on voting behavior one needs to move beyond civilian killings but rather incorporate localities

and intensity of clashes into the analysis to truly capture the impacts of violence on the civilians.

Most of the literature assumes civilian behavior in civil wars to follow a logic of survival. Although important, this view overlooks the importance of identity. Previous research in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq has shown that civilian responses to violence to be not uniform but contingent upon the identity of the civilians and combatants (Condra & Shapiro, 2012; Lyall et al., 2013; Silverman, 2019; Sambanis et al., 2012; also see Huff & Kertzer, 2018 on civilian perceptions of what defines terrorism). Moreover, ethnic defection is a common occurrence in civil wars and different groups from the same ethnic group can have different political alignments and identities (S. N. Kalyvas, 2008; Tezcür, 2009). This insight becomes particularly important for civil wars, especially for those that have been going on for longer periods since civil wars may radically transform identities and social networks (Wood, 2008), that is, with whom civilians frequently interact and whom they avoid (Kalin & Sambanis, 2018), and increase political polarization and make ethnic identities more salient (Wood, 2008; Kibris, 2014).

For example, in Greece, the election victory of the socialist PASOK almost 40 years after the Greek civil war ended, invoked high levels of polarization largely based on civil war memories, and the main areas of socialization in villages, the coffee shops, became segregated along partisan lines. Thus, the impact of violence on political identities and polarization may be salient even decades after the civil war ends (S. Kalyvas, 2006, p. 404), not only among those who experienced civil war but generations that come after (Balcells, 2012; Lupu & Peisakhin, 2017; Rozenas & Zhukov, 2019), which naturally impacts political behavior and preference formation (See Kalin & Sambanis, 2018 for a review on identities and political behavior).

When victimized civilians form ideas about whom to blame.[17] On the one hand, civilians may find insurgent violence to be legitimate or they may perceive the incumbent response to be disproportionate, thus, they may blame the incumbent. On the other hand, civilians may find insurgent violence to be illegitimate or they may blame the insurgents for provoking the state, thus blame the insurgents. At the beginning of this section, I have argued that insurgents tend to stage their attacks where they have high support.[18] Consequently, if civilians responses to violence is not uniform but contingent upon their identities and political orientations, one may expect civilians in localities of high insurgent support, thus civilians in localities of violence following the first hypothesis, to be more likely to blame the government rather than the insurgents compared to civilians in nonviolent localities. Thus, this discussion yields to the following hypothesis: H2: There is a positive relationship between violence and the vote shares of insurgent-associated political parties in the aftermath of the violence.

4.2 Method and data

I employ a multi-method strategy, where I combine various regression analysis with a within case qualitative analysis. The within case helps me to test whether hypothesized causal paths that are expected to produce the statistical association between variables are present (Lyall, 2014; Seawright, 2016a). The variables used in the quantitative analysis are the vote share of HDP in the regular election in July and the snap election in November.

[17] For the sake of simplicity, I assume civilians to blame one side more than the other.

[18] However, it must be noted that it is unlikely for insurgent to stage suicide attacks in the areas of high support for insurgent cause especially in urban settings, given that suicide attacks are likely to kill civilians indiscriminately and may alienate the support base of the insurgents. I thank Mert Hoca for pointing this out.

My main independent variable of interest is intensity of violence, for which I use total number of fatalities, a frequent operationalization for conflict intensity in the literature (Kibris, 2011, 2014; Kibris & Kibris, 2020; Tezcür, 2015a, 2016). For combatant fatalities, I use The Turkish State–PKK Conflict Event Database (TPCONED) (Kibris, 2021) which has spatially coded data for insurgent and security force fatalities at the district level. To create a data-set on civilian fatalities, I use Human Right Association's (İnsan Hakları Derneği, İHD) 2015 report (İHD, 2016). TPCONED relies on the same data-set for PKK causalities, this helps me prevent double-counting in cases when the distinction between civilians and PKK militants become blurry. I calculate total number of fatalities in between two elections by combining these data-sets. The combined data-set has 295 combatant and 80 civilian causalities in between two elections. The variables that are expected to impact voting behavior are the percentage of the Kurdish population and socio-economic conditions at the district level, which I have explained in the previous chapter.

For qualitative evidence, I have systematically perused news articles from various sources such as Bianet, T24, Milliyet, Hürriyet, BBC Turkish, Al-Monitor through going over the entire list of news articles that were published in between two elections. I also systematically read reports written by human rights organizations and political parties. Moreover, I have watched videos of clashes between security forces and PKK militants and interviews with Kurdish voters through keyword searches.

4.2 Results

Figure 12 visualizes HDP vote share in June (x axis), November Election (y axis) and number of fatalities (size of the points). HDP's vote share decreased in 146 of

the districts (below the line) and increased in 5 of the districts (above the line). Moreover, high number of fatalities are clustered in the upper right of the graph, indicating that violence was mostly experienced in Kurdish national movement's strongholds. The summary statistics for the variables are given in Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Pctl(25)	Pctl(75)	Max
Elevation	151	1,200	469	351	829	1,586	2,359
Kurdish Population	151	57.210	19.021	16.055	44.321	71.401	84.491
Socio-economy	151	-0.965	0.568	-1.741	-1.362	-0.706	1.206
Total Fatalities	151	2.483	5.812	0	0	2	45
HDP vote in June	151	59.465	25.530	1.695	41.083	80.695	97.379
HDP vote in November	151	51.806	26.985	0.496	28.971	73.680	95.834
Fatalities per 10.000	151	1.029	2.686	0.000	0.000	0.524	20.305
Number of voters	151	39,560	49,039	1,473	11,303	48,560	293,516

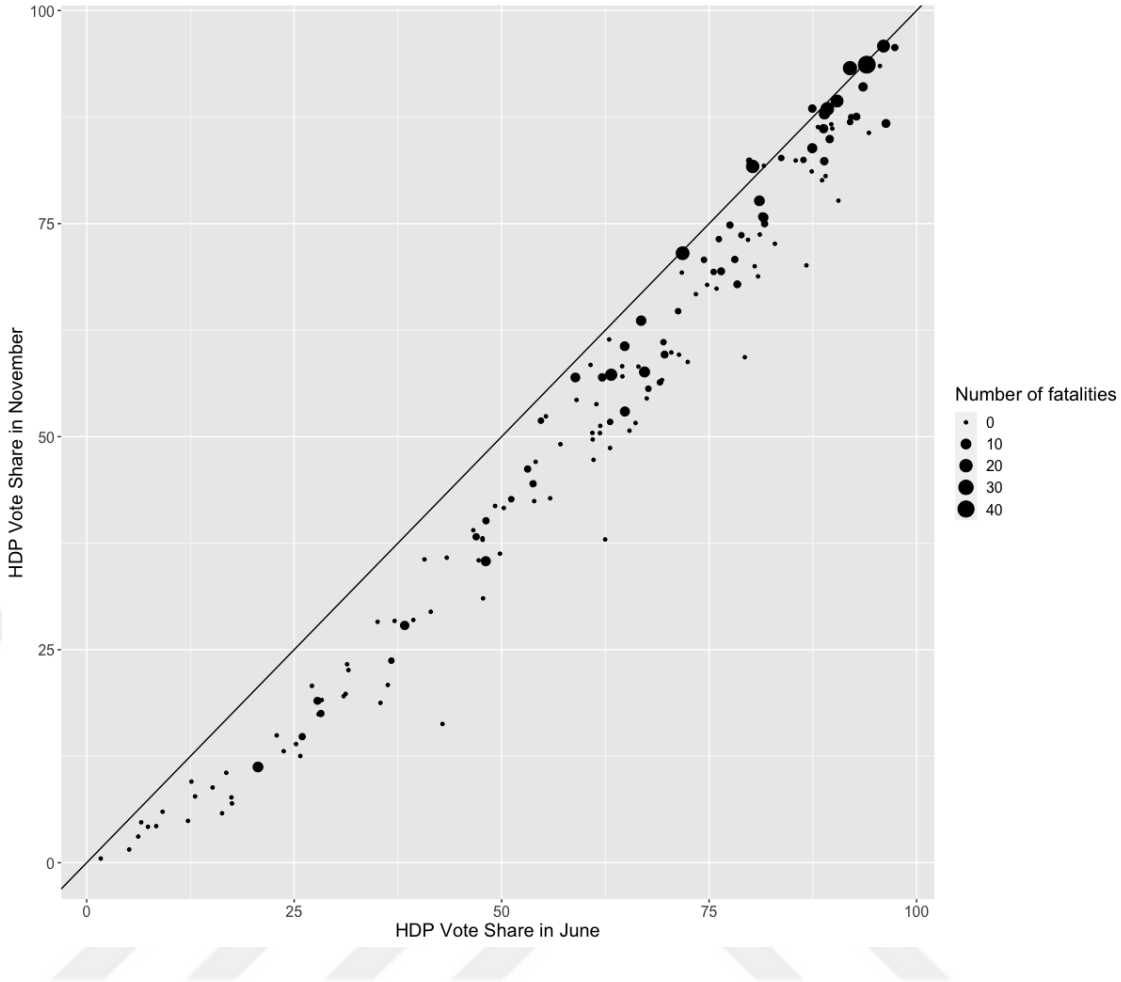


Figure 12. HDP vote share in June and November elections, and number of fatalities

To test the first hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the support for insurgent associated political parties and intensity of the conflict I run a negative binominal regression, which is suitable for overdispersed dependent count data (Figure 13). As the dependent variable I use both the number of fatalities and fatalities per 10.000 voters in a district. I also control for percentage of the Kurdish population, socio-economy and the elevation of the district given the guerilla nature of the PKK insurgency. As expected the coefficients for HDP vote-share in both models are positive and significant with p values close to zero (0.0000284 and 0.000119) (Table 9).

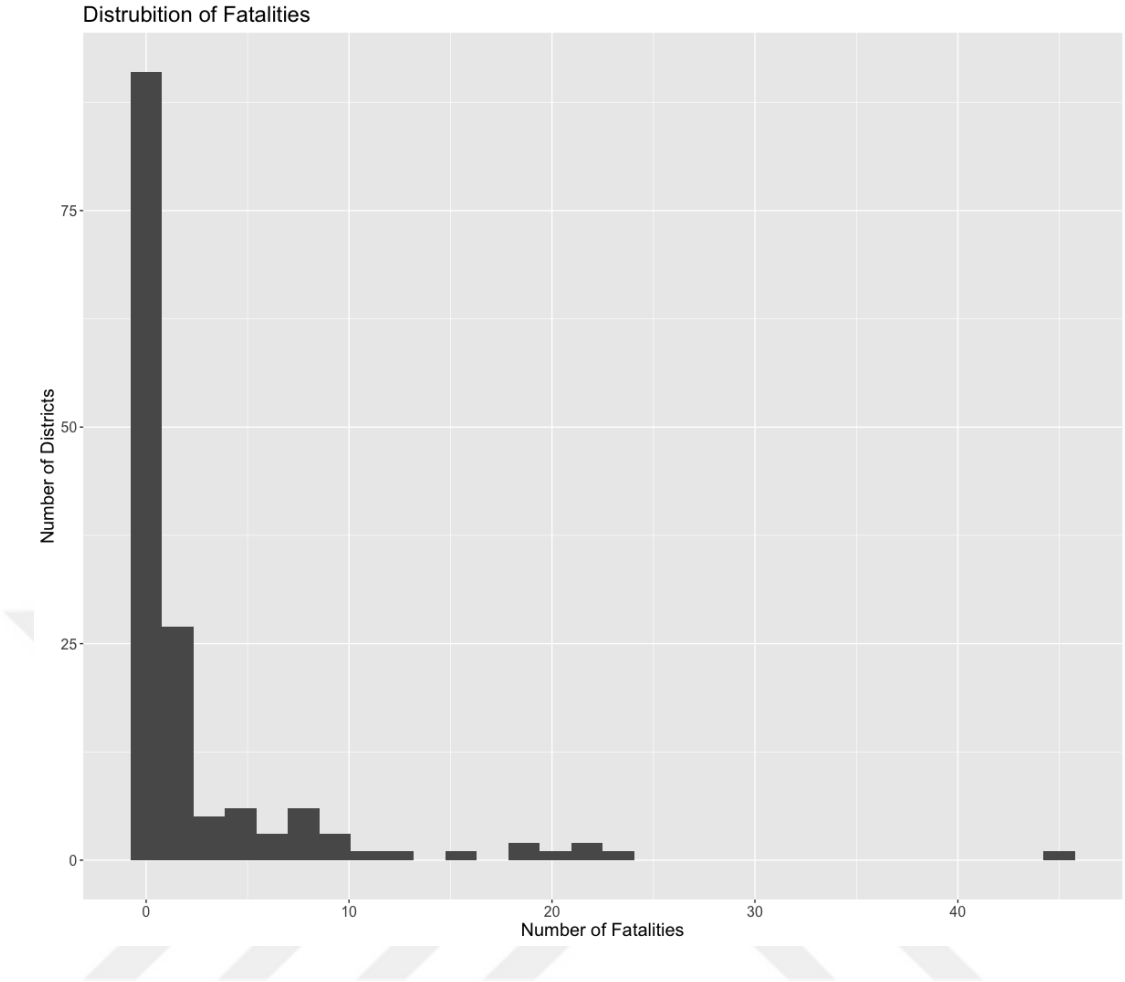


Figure 13. Distribution of the fatalities

To interpret regression coefficients, I calculate incidence rate ratios of HDP vote share in both of the models, which are 1.0375526 and 1.0357203 respectively. This means that for every unit increase in HDP vote share there is around 3.8 and 3.6 percentage increase in number of fatalities and number of fatalities per 10.000 voters respectively. The predicted number of fatalities by the HDP vote share with a 0.95 confidence interval is given in Figure 14. To test the second hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between violence and vote share of insurgent associated political party in the aftermath of violence, I conduct a regression analysis with two different dependent variables. In the first regression, I use HDP vote share in November Election as the dependent variable (Table 10).

Table 9. Results for the Dependent Variable Fatalities

	Dependent variable:	
	Total Fatalities	Per 10.000 Voter
	(1)	(2)
HDP vote share in June	0.037***	0.035***
	(0.009)	(0.009)
Kurdish population	-0.007	-0.013
	(0.011)	(0.011)
Socio-economy	0.072	-0.205
	(0.359)	(0.349)
Elevation (log)	0.069	0.190
	(0.431)	(0.436)
Number of voters (log)	0.371*	
	(0.205)	
Constant	-5.454	-3.081
	(4.188)	(3.147)
Observations	151	151
Log Likelihood	-249.404	-180.000
theta	0.267*** (0.049)	0.280*** (0.057)
Akaike Inf. Crit.	510.809	369.999
Note:	*p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01	

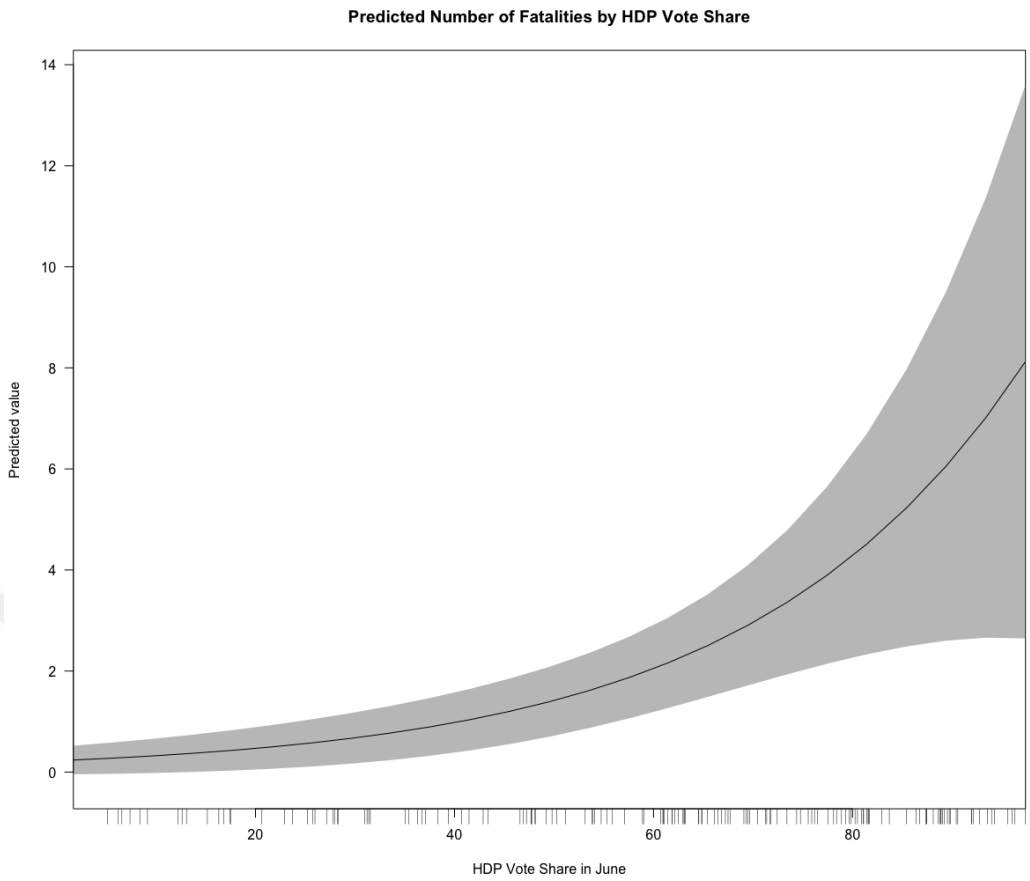


Figure 14. Predicted number of fatalities by the HDP vote share

In the second one, I use the difference between HDP vote share in November and HDP vote share in June as the dependent variable (Table 11). I specify three models with different independent variable of interest, namely, total number of fatalities, number of fatalities per 10.000 voters and a binary violence variable, where every district that experienced at least one fatality is coded as "1" and "0" otherwise.

Coefficients of all three specifications of violence for both specification of the dependent variable are positive and significant with values close to zero. In the model with HDP vote share in November as the dependent variable (Table 10), p values for total number of fatalities, fatalities per thousand voters and binary variable of violence are as follows: 0.0000538, 0.000783 and 0.00192.

Table 10. Results for the Dependent variable HDP Vote Share in November

	HDP vote share in November		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Total fatalities	0.270***		
	(0.065)		
Fatalities per 10.000 voters		0.473***	
		(0.138)	
Binary Violence			2.677***
			(0.847)
HDP vote share in June	1.041***	1.041***	1.039***
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Kurdish population	-0.003	0.002	-0.003
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Socio-economy	1.489**	1.052	1.275*
	(0.724)	(0.654)	(0.747)
Elevation (log)	-2.788***	-2.533***	-2.753***
	(0.888)	(0.862)	(0.911)
Number of voters (log)	-0.823**		-0.885**
	(0.408)		(0.421)
Constant	18.637**	8.029	18.495**
	(8.538)	(6.186)	(8.740)
Observations	151	151	151
R^2	0.975	0.974	0.974
Adjusted R^2	0.974	0.973	0.973
Residual Std. Error	4.333 (df = 144)	4.433 (df = 145)	4.435 (df = 144)
F Statistic	945.674*** (df = 6; 144)	1,082.483*** (df = 5; 145)	901.534*** (df = 6; 144)
Note:	*p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01		

Table 11. Results for the Dependent Variable Change in the HDP vote share

	Dependent variable:		
	Change in HDP vote share		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Total fatalities	0.309***		
	(0.064)		
Fatalities per 10.000 voters		0.541***	
		(0.137)	
Binary violence			3.306***
			(0.805)
Kurdish population	0.019	0.028	0.017
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Socio-economy	1.094	0.833	0.857
	(0.716)	(0.658)	(0.731)
Elevation (log)	-2.177**	-2.059**	-2.167**
	(0.863)	(0.853)	(0.881)
Number of voters (log)	-0.633		-0.744*
	(0.406)		(0.421)
Constant	13.148	5.393	13.542
	(8.349)	(6.188)	(8.536)
Observations	151	151	151
R^2	0.197	0.153	0.164
Adjusted R^2	0.169	0.130	0.136
Residual Std. Error	4.402 (df = 145)	4.506 (df = 146)	4.490 (df = 145)
F Statistic	7.121*** (df = 5; 145)	6.585*** (df = 4; 146)	5.709*** (df = 5; 145)
Note:	*p<0.1,**p<0.5,***p<0.01		

In the model with change in the vote share of HDP as dependent variable (Table 11), p values for total number of fatalities, fatalities per thousand voters and binary variable of violence are as follows: 0.00000323, 0.000127, 0.0000663. Notice that

the second model assumes a change in the vote share from 90% to 80% to be the same with a change from 20% to 10% and the inclusion of HDP vote share in June as a control variable to the second model to saturate this effect gives exactly the same results with the first model. For this reason and given the huge differences in number of voters across different districts, I believe the model with HDP vote share in November election as the dependent variable and the fatalities per 10.000 voters as the independent variable is the most accurate specification for my purposes. Accordingly, everything else being equal, each additional fatality per 10.000 voters means a 0.473 point increase in HDP vote-share. The predicted HDP vote share by fatalities per 10.000 vote share with a 0.95 confidence interval is given in Figure 15. These results confirm my second hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between level of violence and vote share of insurgent associated political party in the aftermath of the elections.[19]

It is also important to note that measuring conflict intensity at the district level with number is fatalities is also imperfect to measure the level of civilian victimization. For instance, in the data-set, two of the districts with highest number of fatalities are Yüksekova district in Hakkari with 45 fatalities, 4 of which are civilians and Cizre district in Şırnak with 24 fatalities, 22 of which are civilians according to the Human Rights Association. In Cizre, vast majority of the fatalities were a result of urban warfare during the 8 day long curfew. However, in Yüksekova which experienced a 2,5 day curfew, most of the fatalities occurred in the mountainous rural areas. For example a road-side bomb in a rural area detonated by the PKK killed 16 soldiers in a single attack in Yüksekova.

[19] Modeling civilian and combat fatalities do not result in significant changes other than resulting in lower but still significant p values.

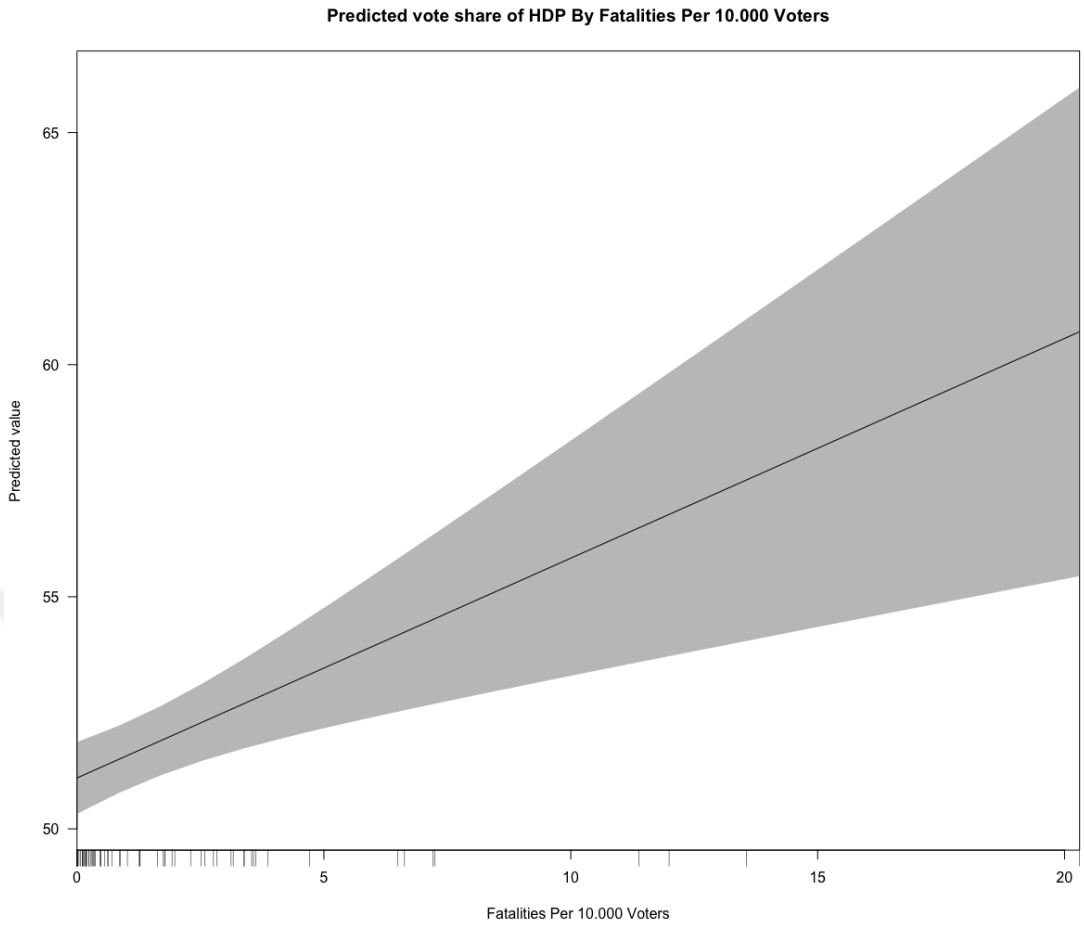


Figure 15. Predicted vote share of the HDP by fatalities per 10.000 voters

In the following section, I briefly present qualitative data. In selecting the case study, I have used the so-called "extreme case strategy", which is particularly useful when demonstrating the existence of a causal pathway since the independent variable of interest in the extreme case is expected to have a high impact on the dependent variable (Seawright, 2016a). That is the Cizre district in Şırnak province with a long history of state and insurgent violence, which has traditionally been one of the stronghold of the Kurdish national movement. In between June and November elections, Cizre experienced an 8,5 day curfew and heavy clashes in the urban areas that resulted in high levels of civilian victimization. It was also one of the few districts where the HDP was able to increase its vote share in between two elections.

4.3 The case of Cizre

Cizre is a town located in Şırnak province in Southeastern Turkey, on the Turkey-Syria border, neighboring Hakkari and Siirt provinces, an area called Botan by the PKK. Since the beginning of the PKK insurgency, Botan area has been one of the strongholds of the PKK as the mountain range created favorable conditions for insurgent activity, where insurgents were able to visit villages relatively unconstrained and recruited members through a wide range of activities.

As O' Connor (2014, chapter 4) explains Cizre was also one of the first urban centers that underwent a radical change as a result of the conflict between PKK and the state. As early as 1987, Cizre experienced an inflow of immigrants who had organic ties with the insurgents as their villages were one of the first locations of PKK activity and mobilization. Those immigrants introduced their personal experience of the conflict and the PKK to urban residents, "who would have remained otherwise less informed" (O'Connor, 2014, p. 202). However, PKK was more constrained in the urban centers given the state's upper hand, but it utilized symbolic events such as Newroz, the celebration of the spring equinox, and the funerals of insurgents to enhance its support base. These events became important sides of contention with the state, where younger Kurds experienced political socialization. Moreover, the state's violent repression of street mobilization during Newroz celebrations and the funerals of insurgents created a new pool of recruits and sympathizers for the PKK.

According to the former head of the Turkish army Doğan Güreş, (Cemal, 2015 chapter 4; see İmset, 1992; Marcus, 2007 for a history of PKK and its systems of governance) in the early '90s, the PKK was the dominant force on the ground in the villages and rural parts of Cizre. Typical to contested areas in civil wars, there

was dual sovereignty where the security forces were able to patrol only the main streets in the city center and at night they would leave the streets to the PKK. The PKK was also able to collect taxes, built committees in neighborhoods, created courts, introduced compulsory military service, was able to mobilize and force the civilians to shut down their shops. In short, it substituted the state in many aspects. In 1992, the town witnessed one of the deadliest protests of Turkish history where hundreds of people were killed and injured after PKK called mass participation for the Newroz celebrations and the security forces intervened and repressed the protests.

Indeed, in his book Murat Karayılan speaks highly of people of Cizre, and praises them for their resistance, and for not breaking their ties with the PKK despite heavy state repression (Karayılan, 2014, pp. 143–144). More interestingly, he argues that PKK guerillas neither initiated nor were aware of the "Cizre uprising" and goes as far as to blame the guerilla forces and commanders on the ground for not grasping tactical orientation and style the "Leadership"[20]. According to him, if guerillas were to do their part, PKK could have established a liberated zone in the early 90's (Karayılan, 2014, pp. 151–154).

Moreover, in the heydays of the conflict in the '90s, Cizre experienced the high levels of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and human rights violations again typical to contested areas in civil wars. Thus, it is a symbolically important town for both the Kurdish national movement and the state (HDP, 2016, p. 5). With such a background, the HDP received 92% of the votes in Cizre in June 2015 elections. After the Peace Process collapsed and a heavy fighting started, PKK called for the declaration of self-rule zones. Following that the YDG-H urban youth

[20] Önderlik in Turkish, which is used to refer to Abdullah Öcalan in PKK's terminology.

militias associated with the PKK, mostly composed of young people in their late 10's and early 20's, started building barricades, digging trenches and laying mines to the streets in an attempt to prevent security from entering their neighborhoods.

Between 4-12 September, the government declared a curfew to start a counter-insurgency operation mobilizing snipers, military tanks, police panzers, and the military with heavy weaponry. In the following days, all access to the district was blocked, and electricity, water, and communications were cut. The NGOs, lawyers, journalists and members of the parliament were not allowed to get in. According to reports of the independent NGOs, Diyarbakır Bar Association and the HDP, 22 civilians were killed either through the firearms or due not being able to access the health services. According to the district governor of Cizre, 25 security forces were injured and 42 PKK militants were killed during the clashes. Yet, independent observers were not able to confirm this information. In their narratives, locals consistently point out the random violence and raking through by the security forces. Moreover, the witnesses rarely mention the insurgents but they consistently point the security forces as responsible for shootings (see Diyarbakır Barosu 2015; Bozarslan 2015; İHD et al., 2015; HDP 2016).

In several statements, the locals equate the actions and physical appearance of security forces with that of ISIS. One witness says "The Israel state would not do that, Netanyahu would not do that. We were lead captive for 8 days. We could not go out on the balcony. They were constantly attacking us with weapons. There were riot police, tanks, special forces. Those were Erdoğan's ISIS." (İHD et al., 2015, p. 11). Another one states, "Those on the panzers were talking in Arabic. They had beards. They looked like ISIS" (İHD et al., 2015, p. 12). Given that there had been heavy fighting going on between the Kurdish groups and the ISIS in Syria at the time, these

narratives show the level of polarization and the trauma the residents have experienced.

When the curfew was lifted, fifty to hundred thousand people including high-ranking officials and members of the parliament from HDP marched through the streets of Cizre carrying the coffins of those died in the clashes, covered in the colors of Kurdish flag green, yellow and red, chanting "Long Live the Resistance of Cizre" and "Murderer Erdoğan" some carrying PKK flags ("Cizre'de 16 Kişinin Cenazesini Yüz Bine Yakın Kişi Uğurladı," 2015; İmrağ, 2015). Moreover, 34 young people took the hills to join PKK after the curfew (Kocaaslan, 2015). The locals also frequently referred to the insurgents as boys from the neighborhood and did not blame them. In the words of one resident, "Young people defended themselves for nine days. People are not complaining about young people. They defended their own families," a young person adds "They are boys from the neighborhood. They are all our relatives. Our neighbors. There is no stranger" (Kocaaslan, 2015). When asked about what she thinks about the recent events in Cizre, a young woman said: "Erdoğan has destroyed the whole city," another one adds "The people are right in doing these protests. Civilians were killed. They were coming and arresting people" (Terek, 2015). Thus, many saw trenches and barricades not as a cause by rather as a result of the state's campaign of arrests and counter-insurgency operations following the collapse of the Peace Process (Baysal, 2018).

The urban militias in Cizre themselves also tell a similar narrative: "I live here so does my family. Both the youth and the people who are on guard duty are completely local people. When our freedom is not restricted, we do not respond until the last moment anyway. Because we are not the ones who want war. They are the ones who want war" (Girit, 2015). Given the historical context and the importance of

Cizre in the collective memory of the Kurdish national movement, the violence in Cizre was interpreted as yet another episode of state repression. The direct quote from HDP's own report (HDP, 2016) of curfews in Cizre shows that very clearly:

> Cizre was one of the most persecuted and oppressed cities throughout the 90s. The people's memories of Newroz in 1992 are still fresh. Over 100 civilians were killed and hundreds injured in the Newroz celebrations in Cizre. During the 90s, Cizre was remembered by village burnings, forced migrations, murder by unknown assailants and mass graves. People of Cizre were begrudged even from fundamental rights and freedoms. Despite all the pressure and hardship, the people of Cizre never made concessions from the line of resistance neither in those days nor in the last blockade of Cizre. Voicing the demand for freedom and equality from the highest level, the people of Cizre have been able to resist against the policies of denial, destruction and assimilation at all stages of its history. Despite the policy of assimilation carried on by the state for years, Cizre has not been Turkified in any way. The people of Cizre were able to maintain their culturally and politically original and independent stance. This is exactly why they were put on the target board of the government. Just as Cizre was the heart of the rebellion that Mir Bedirhan started in Botan in 1847 during the Ottoman era, it became the symbol of the resistance of the Kurdish people by resisting all-out war policies implemented during the '90s. (p.5)

Together with the quantitative analysis, these statements of the locals and HDP's own report support the plausibility of my arguments and the underlying mechanisms. To recall them, first, I have argued that the clashes between the insurgents and state security forces are likely to take place in localities of high-insurgent support given insurgents' need for civilian support. Second, I have argued that civilians form their ideas about who to blame depending on their identities and prior political orientations. Thus, I have claimed that civilians in localities of violence are more likely to blame the government for violence rather than insurgents compared to civilians in non-violent localities.

Cizre has historically been one of the strongholds of Kurdish national movement and the PKK. In between two elections, it experienced highest levels of

violence[21] and this time in the form of an urban warfare -which was exceptional in post-1999 period of the PKK insurgency. Despite that, Cizre was one of the few areas where HDP was able to increase its vote-share. Moreover, Cizre is a town of close community ties among residents. The statements by locals point out that the locals know the insurgents well and trusted them as they were their neighbors and relatives.

This is also consistent with Staniland's (2010) overall argument that close and resilient community structures can provide a basis for the urban insurgency. In the Suriçi neighborhood in the Sur district of Diyarbakır, which also experienced high levels of violence during the urban warfare, Bakan (2018) has a similar finding. She argues that close community structures, belonging to the space and shared Kurdish identity among residents enabled emergence of the urban insurgency in Sur, the historical center of Diyarbakır, the biggest and most important Kurdish city in Turkey.[22]

The statements of Cizre residents also point that they blamed the government for the violence and even equated security forces with ISIS militants, which arguably indicates the level of polarization people have experienced. Lastly, the mass funeral -which is an important part of the protest repertoire of the Kurdish national movement-and the fact that coffins were covered in red, green and yellow, slogans against the government and framing of the urban warfare as the "Resistance" show that locals closely identified themselves with the Kurdish national movement.

[21] Only Yüksekova was more violent than Cizre in between two elections but unlike Cizre, the fighting in Yüksekova continued to be in the form of guerilla warfare.

[22] Bakan's study focuses more on the second urban warfare that followed November 2015 Elections, in which both Cizre and Sur experienced unprecedented levels of violence. For example in Cizre, the curfew lasted for 79 days. Hundreds of people including civilians were killed, thousands of people had to immigrate and neighborhoods were destroyed. After the full-day curfew was lifted, it took another full year for night-time curfews to be lifted in Cizre. According to Darıcı and Hakyemez (2019, p. 74), the emergence of urban warfare in Cizre can be traced to democratic autonomy and self-defense ideas articulated by PKK's founding leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The political behavior in Cizre is consistent with literature on Kurdish national movement in Turkey and with the broader literature on political identities and violence. Rozenas and Zhukov (2019, p. 13) argue that civilians perceive repression directed not against individuals or families but their communities. Balcells (2012) and Lupu and Peisakhin (2017) have shown past repression and political identities are transferred to the next generations through family ties.

Although I cannot test these two mechanisms in this study, both mechanisms are likely to be found in Cizre. Families who were forcibly displaced from their villages in the 90's by the state constituted core support base of Kurdish national movement not only in Cizre but throughout urban centers. Moreover in Cizre, urban warfare was mainly concentrated in Nur, Cudi, Sur and Yafes neighborhoods where mostly families who were displaced from their villages conflict in 80's and 90's resided.

Although not the sole driver, there is also a consensus regarding the impact of state repression, violence and narrative of resistance and in the formation of Kurdish identity in Turkey (See Cuma, 2017; Gunes, 2015; Gurses, 2018; Özcan, 2006; Sarigil & Fazlioglu, 2014; Tezcür, 2009 on Kurdish identity among many others). Related to these points, Tezcür (2016) finds that both higher levels of clashes and higher levels of support for Kurdish nationalist parties is associated with higher recruitment to PKK at the district level. At the individual level he finds that individuals whose family or friends experienced state violence and whose family and friends have previously joined PKK were more likely to join the PKK insurgency, which unlike voting is a high risk action. In short, the narrative put forward in this chapter is also consistent with the theoretical expectations of the literature.

4.4 Alternative hypothesis and discussion

One counter argument to my story can be derived Kalyvas' seminal study (2006), where civilian obedience and behavior is treated as a function of territorial control each party possesses. In one of the few explicit studies on the relationship between territorial control and voting behavior that I am aware of, García-Sánchez (2016) shows that paramilitaries and leftist insurgents were able to influence the voting behavior for their advantage in their areas of control in Colombia. Yet to be able to influence the voting behavior in a certain locality the armed actors need to have full or close to full control (García-Sánchez, 2016, p. 59). However, in the case of Turkey, PKK is considered militarily defeated as it failed to establish liberated zones. Except for few rural outposts, the state has full or close to full control. Thus, this perspective cannot explain the voting behavior in Cizre. If anything, we could have expected the government to try to intimate the voters not to vote for HDP.

In between two elections, violence was the single most dominant issue and the incumbent AKP benefitted from the violent atmosphere, whereas HDP was punished (See Kalaycıoğlu, 2018; Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2019 for individual level survey data analysis; See KONDA, 2015 for an analysis of election results and voter transitions). Despite this fact, I have found a positive relationship between violence and the HDP vote-share in the November Election at the district level. That is to say, the HDP was paradoxically punished much more in non-violent localities than it was punished in violent localities. This raises an important conceptual question: Why did voters that were far away from violence punish HDP for violence even though they were not directly impacted by it? What does punishing a political party or the government for "violence" mean anyway?

Recall that HDP was able to increase its vote share only in 5 districts, which were among its strongholds, whereas its vote share decreased in 146 districts (also see Figure 12 and 16). Moreover, total number of HDP votes decreased even in those five districts, yet other political parties lost more votes than did the HDP. Thus, HDP was able to increase its vote share. Table 12 shows the top 15 districts in terms of percentage change in HDP's vote share, i.e where HDP performed best in November relative to June elections. These 15 districts account for half of total fatalities in the data-set (188 of 375).

Looking at the Figure 16, where the regression line for HDP vote share in June and November is plotted, we see that HDP performed relatively well where it already had a strong base since most of the points in the upper right of the graph are above the line. However, HDP performed worse in localities where it was relatively weaker as the points tend to be under the line especially when HDP vote share in June is below 70% (vertical line). Notice that the points that are bigger in size (number of fatalities per 10.000 voters) tended to be above the blue regression line and clustered on the upper right of graph as expected. That is HDP was able to preserve its core support base.

In his seminal ontology of political violence article (2003) and later in his book Kalyvas (2006) distinguishes between micro foundations of civil war and macro foundations of civil war, where he shows that violence and civilian behavior at the local level rarely follows the macro cleavage of the conflict but is influenced by the local conditions. Related to Kalyvas's point, in the Turkish case voter behavior seem to have been influenced by the macro process of conflict rather than the dynamics of violence at the micro local level. In other words, with the caveat of ecological fallacy, voters seem to have punished the actor they perceived as

responsible for the escalation of conflict or escalation of violence rather than the punishing actors for singular acts of inflicting bodily harm or acts of violence at the local level as HDP was punished in nonviolent localities including the bigger cities of Turkey like Istanbul and Izmir that were thousands kilometers away from violence, which I did not analyze in this chapter.

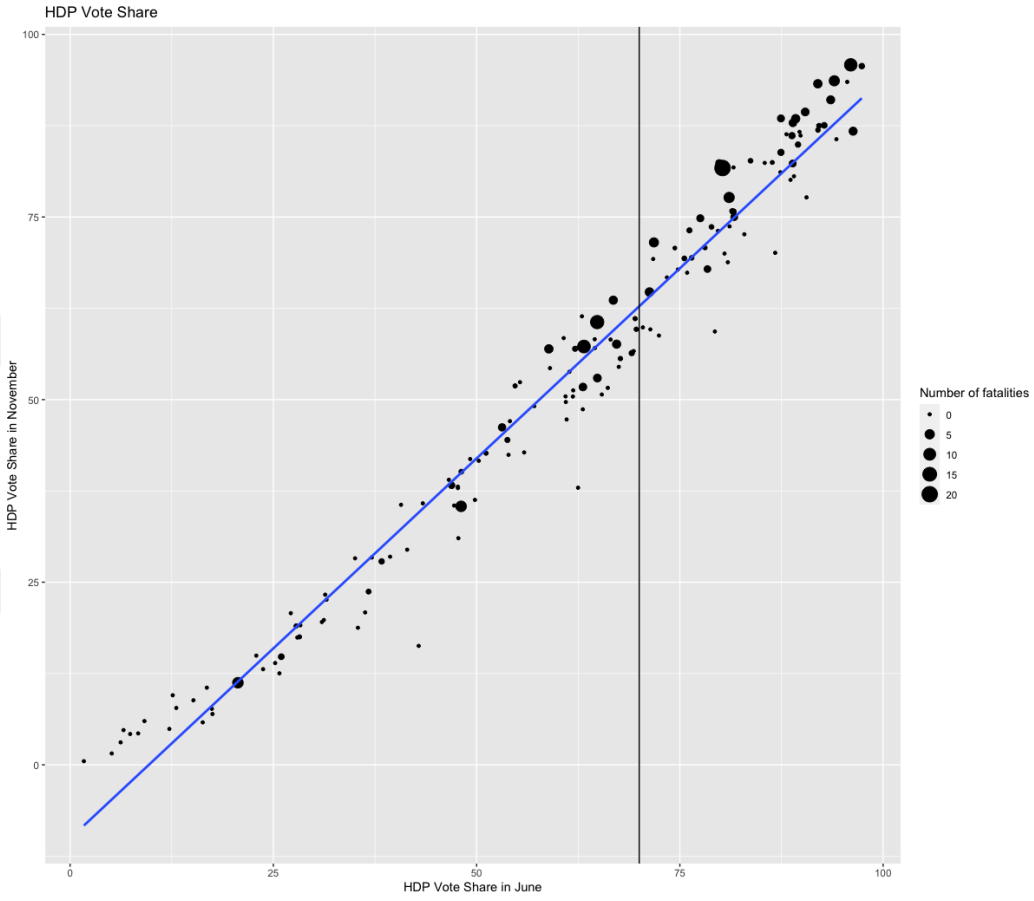


Figure 16. HDP vote share in June and November, and fatalities per 10.000 voters

A similar observation can be made about Birnir and Gohdes's study on the Peruvian civil conflict (2018) where they find that that voters punish the insurgent-associated parties in localities where the insurgents commit violence against civilians, but punish incumbent at the national level for failure to stem violence. In the former the civilian response to violence is a result of direct exposure to singular acts of use of

force, whereas in the later civilian response is a result of the perceived responsible actor for whole of these acts of use of force. One can also conceptualize this as blaming government for escalation or outbreak of violence or failing to provide security or failing to stop outbreak and escalation of violence.

Table 12. Districts that the HDP Performed Well

Province	District	Fatalities	June Vote	November Vote	Change	Percentage Change
Şırnak	Güçlükonak	1	79.8	82.4	2.5	3.2
Şırnak	Beytüşşebap	20	80.2	81.7	1.5	1.8
Şırnak	Cizre	24	92	93.2	1.3	1.4
Şırnak	Uludere	4	87.4	88.5	1.1	1.2
Hakkari	Çukurca	0	81.6	81.8	0.2	0.2
Diyarbakır	Lice	18	96	95.8	-0.2	-0.2
Hakkari	Yüksekova	45	94	93.7	-0.3	-0.4
Şırnak	Merkez	22	71.8	71.5	-0.3	-0.4
Şırnak	Silopi	21	89.2	88.5	-0.8	-0.9
Diyarbakır	Silvan	12	88.9	87.9	-1	-1.1
Mardin	Nusaybin	18	90.4	89.4	-1	-1.1
Şırnak	İdil	1	83.7	82.7	-1	-1.2
Van	Başkale	2	97.4	95.7	-1.7	-1.8
Mardin	Derik	0	88.1	86.3	-1.8	-2
Diyarbakır	Kocaköy	0	95.6	93.5	-2.1	-2.2

Notice that escalation of violence or failing to provide security are concepts that are intangible in the sense that it is not directly observable but depends on one's perception of who the responsible side is. In the Turkish case, voters punished HDP

for the escalation of violence and rewarded the AKP government which they perceived as more competent in dealing with violence (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2019).

On the other hand the actual use of violence is observable, thus is tangible in ideal settings. This observation is crucial for the study of voting in behavior since the response to "act of inflicting bodily harm" and response to the "escalation or outbreak of the conflict" are likely to influenced by differences processes are conceptually different. Moreover, punishment of an actor for the escalation of the conflict is more likely when the level of violence passes a certain threshold.

In that sense, escalation of violence requires and is composed of singular acts of use of violence but it is qualitatively different from those. That is, once there, it is likely to impact the voting behavior nation-wide whereas singular acts of violence have a localized impact. Thus, similar to idea of emergency structures in complexity theory, escalation of the conflict (whole) is constituted by and emerges from the interaction of multiple acts of use force (part) but it has different properties than its parts.

Notice that I do not talk about level of violence reaching such a level that a conflict would be considered a civil war but I talk about the level and intensity of violence within a civil war. That is, if level and intensity of violence in a civil war exceeds a certain threshold, it can become qualitatively different than low intensity civil war in relation to voting behavior since violence can become such a salient issue that it can impact voting behavior beyond localities of violence, consistent with my argument in the previous chapter. I have visualized this conceptual issue in Figure 17 (low intensity civil war) and 18 (high intensity civil war).

This issue creates methodological problems for making inferences about the relationship between voting behavior and violence given that an individual who is

impacted by the violence at local level also observes macro-dynamics of the conflict and an individual who is not directly impacted by the violence at the local level also observes the dynamics of the conflict. Thus, it is hard to distinguish whether an individual's voting behavior is driven by the micro-dynamics or the macro dynamics of the conflict.

This chapter is also an implicit critique of one of the main perspectives on micro-studies of civil war, where civilian obedience and behavior is treated as a function of territorial control (S. Kalyvas, 2006). This is not to say that territorial control does not matter. In fact, in the pre-199 period of PKK-Turkey conflict before Abdullah Öcalan's arrest territorial control had substantial implications for the dynamics of violence and voting behavior.

Yet, application of this perspective has limits, especially in electoral regimes and for civil wars that have been going on for longer periods, where the polarization is high and the state has near full-control. Most importantly, this study shows the importance of the context when studying civil wars as concepts and their operationalization may not equally be applicable in every setting. That is direct and intentional killing of civilians is a rare phenomenon in Turkey, which requires us to focus on civilian victimization as collateral damage at least in the post 1999 period, which witnessed limited number of intentional killing of civilians or one needs to differentiate between the impacts of civilian victimization as collateral damage and civilian victimization through selective violence.

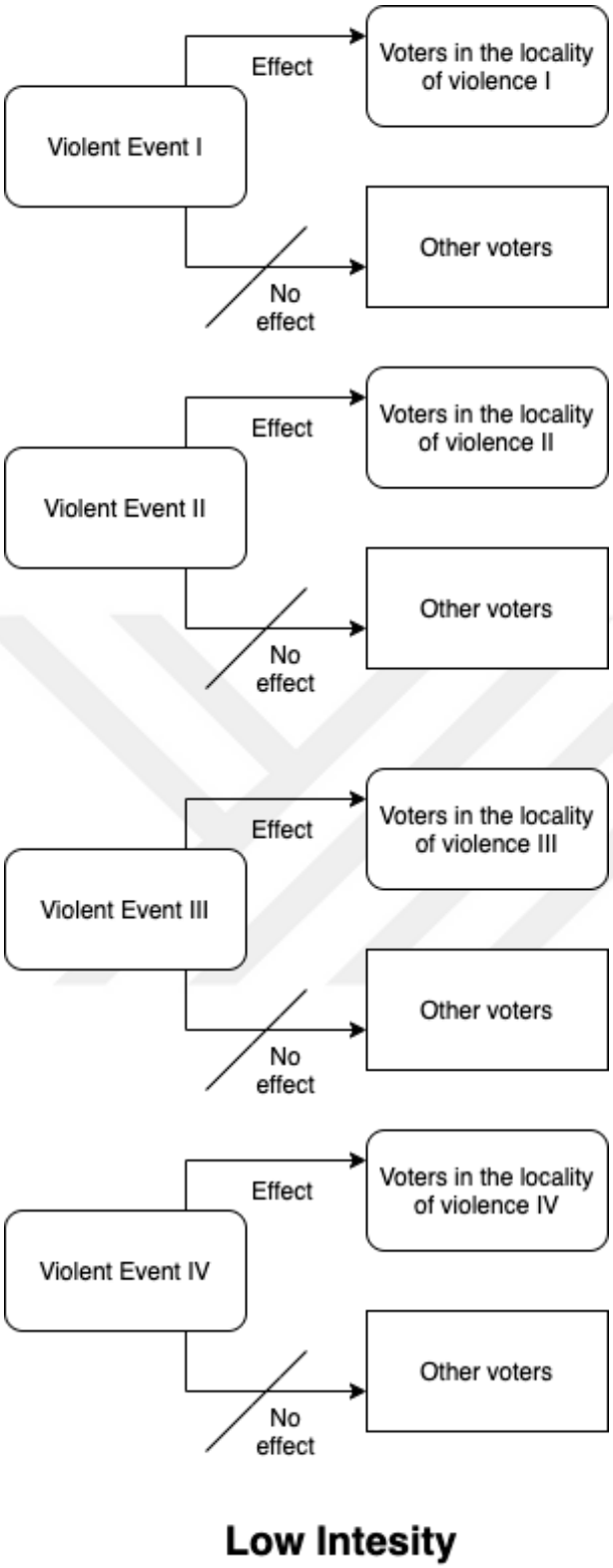


Figure 17. Low intensity civil war

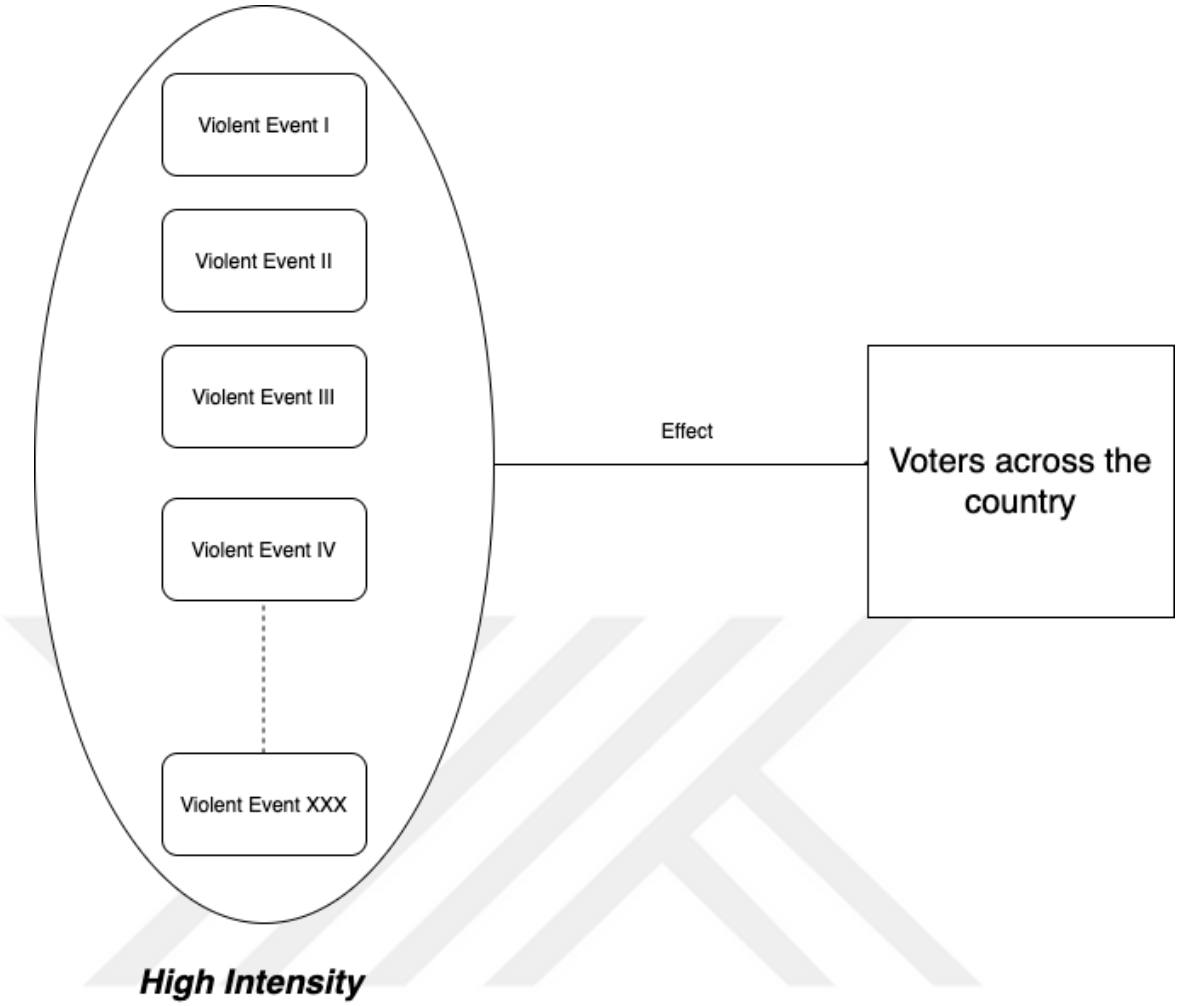


Figure 18. High intensity civil war

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, by analyzing subnational variation in insurgent violence and the subnational variation in vote share of an insurgent associated political party, I have contributed to the literature on voting behavior in civil war. Firstly, I have argued that the killing of civilians is neither the only nor the most frequent form of civilian victimization. Secondly, I have pointed out that the insurgencies are at least dyads, thus one should move beyond one-sided violence of insurgents and take state responses to violence into account. Thirdly, I have argued that civilian responses to

violence are not uniform but contingent on the identity and political orientation of civilians, which impacts how civilians perceive violence and whom they blame.

Building on these ideas and civilian centric nature of irregular warfare, I have argued that clashes between insurgents and the state tend to take place in localities of high insurgent support. Second, I have argued that civilians who reside in non-violent localities are more likely to blame insurgents for violence rather than the government compared to civilians who reside in violent localities. Thus, I have shown that insurgent associated political party is paradoxically punished more in non-violent localities than violent localities. Building on the insights of this study, I have differentiated between violence as the singular act of inflicting bodily harm and violence as the escalation of conflict, both of which can influence voting behavior but are conceptually distinct from each other.

Naturally, this study traces the civilian responses to violence in the form of voting at an aggregate level and is a modest attempt. To have a better understanding of civilian responses to violence one needs more detailed analysis at the individual level through surveys, experiments, interviews or ethnographies.. Thus, I believe future research at the individual level may greatly enhance our understanding of civilian responses to violence when political situation in Turkey is suitable to conduct such research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, using double elections of 2015 in Turkey as a case study, I tried to answer a simple yet important question: how does violence affect voting behavior? To answer this question, I have emphasized the importance of context in studying the relationship between violence/terrorism and voting behavior. For this reason, I have studied voting behavior in double elections of 2015 using two different theoretical lenses covering different parts of Turkey. More specifically, first, I tried to answer, how subnational variation in exposure to terrorism affects the vote share of the incumbent government and the opposition (chapter 3), how subnational variation in insurgent violence affects the vote share of the insurgent associated political party (chapter 4).

To open up, I framed my questions differently relying on slightly different, albeit related literatures given the nature and history of conflict in Turkey. First, PKK's support base is almost exclusively Kurdish and regardless of PKK's targets (security forces or civilian), we can expect its act to be perceived as terrorism among ethnic Turks. Second, vast majority of PKK violence has been spatially clustered in the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey, in most of which Kurds make up the substantial proportion of the population and oftentimes the majority. These provinces were scene to intense clashes in the heydays of the conflict in the 90's and were oftentimes under a state of emergency. Rest of Turkey, however, has been largely exempt from violence where people are exposed to terrorism through funerals of state security forces (Kibris, 2011). In vast majority of these districts, Kurdish national movement also has less than 3% of votes, which creates problems for

statistical analysis. Thus, given the history of violence in the eastern and southeastern provinces of Turkey, the meanings attached to violence, the civilian support for Kurdish National Movement as well as possible implications of clashes[23] in these provinces I have framed my questions separately.

In chapter 3, I have looked at the relationship between security force and civilian funerals and vote share of AKP, MHP, CHP and voter-turnout. I have argued that literature can benefit from paying more attention to context on several grounds, namely; moving beyond left-wing-right-wing dichotomy, paying greater attention to policies and electoral strategies of political parties (Balcells & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; See Criado, 2017), nature of electoral competition and regime type and disaggregation of targets of terrorism (Also see Criado, 2017; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Huff & Kertzer, 2018).

Empirically, I have shown that the literature on voting behavior and terrorism should account for possible diffusion of effects for terrorism. To best of my knowledge this study is the first study to account for possible spatial diffusion effects of terrorism. I have expected to find a statistically significant positive relationship between the AKP vote share and exposure to funerals. Yet I have found no statistically significant relationship between exposure to terrorism and the AKP's vote share despite controlling for possible diffusion effects. Supplementing this with qualitative anecdotal evidence, I have argued that when the level of violence exceeds a certain threshold and when politicians build a campaign around insecurity an instability and drive insecurity among the electorate as an electoral strategy (also see Sahin, 2021), terrorism may impact voting behavior throughout the country, not just who are exposed to it, which explains null finding.

[23] For instance mere presence and deployment of security forces can impact people's daily lives even if there are no clashes

Second, I have expected to find a negative relationship between the MHP vote share and exposure to funerals given that the MHP's vote share decreased in almost every single district of Turkey. Yet, I have found a positive relationship between exposure to security force funerals and the MHP-vote share. Through anecdotal evidence, I have argued that anger that is caused by being exposed to security force funerals may have overcame concerns over security and fear, thus, may have helped the MHP to retain some of its vote share. Third, I expected to find a positive relationship between the CHP vote share and civilian funerals given that the CHP's vote share decreased in some districts and increased in others and given that civilians killed during two left-wing rallies and their funerals were scene to left-wing mobilization, and voters could blame the ISIS attacks on government's foreign policy in relation to the Syrian Civil War.

Yet, I've found a negative relationship between the CHP vote-share and exposure to civilian funerals, which can be explained concerns over security overcoming resentment against government. However, it must also be noted that despite these correlations and possible explanations through anecdotal and qualitative evidence, these results are suggestive rather than concluding. Thus, ideas developed in this chapter should be further studied through a combination of focus groups, surveys and survey experiments and ethnography to move beyond mere correlation and to identify causal mechanisms at play.

In Chapter 4, I analyzed the voting behavior in eastern and southeastern Turkey framing my research question as "how does subnational variation in insurgent violence affect the vote-share of the insurgent-associated political party?" In this chapter, I utilized both qualitative and quantitative evidence with a multi-method research design. To trace the possible mechanisms that can uncover

mechanisms behind statistical correlations, I have focused on the case of Cizre as a within case study analysis.

In this chapter, I have criticized the conceptualization and operationalization of violence as civilian victimization through killing of civilians by insurgents in the related literature (e.g Birnir & Gohdes, 2018; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Heger, 2015). First, I have argued that civilians are victimized beyond being directly targeted by insurgents as collateral damage in fatal or non-fatal ways during the clashes between insurgents and the state. Second and relatedly, I have argued that conflicts are at least dyads and that insurgent violence begets state violence and vice-versa, both of which can victimize civilians. Thus, I have argued that to understand the impacts of violence on behavior of the civilians one should also consider the state's actions beyond one-sided civilian killings by insurgents for which I proposed conflict intensity measured by total number of civilian, security force and militant casualties, as the independent variable of interest.

Empirically, I've show that clashes between insurgents and the state tend to take place in localities of high insurgent support given insurgents' need for civilian support to contest government authority through violence. Second, I've have shown that voters punish insurgent-associated political party for the violence disproportionately across localities. I have argued that the identity and political orientation of civilians influence how they perceive violence and whom they blame for violence (Condra & Shapiro, 2012; Lyall et al., 2013; Sambanis et al., 2012; Silverman, 2019) and since clashes between insurgents and counter-insurgents are likely to take place in localities of high insurgent support, I have argued that civilians who reside in localities of violence are more likely to blame the government for violence rather than the insurgents, compared to civilians who reside in non-violent

localities. Thus, I find a positive relationship between violence and vote-share of the insurgent-associated HDP despite a decrease in its vote share in almost every district in the aftermath of violence. That is to say, the HDP was punished mostly by voters who were not exposed to violence.

Recalling Kalyvas (2003) this paradoxical finding raised an important point about the ontology of violence in the study of political behavior in violent context and in order to unpack this issue, I have argued that we should differentiate civilian response to violence as the response to actual use of physical force or to act of infliction of bodily harm from civilian response to violence as response to escalation of the conflict which is constituted by and emerges from the multiple acts of use force but is qualitatively different than them. That is to say HDP was not punished for individual acts of violence in each locality but their collectivity. It seems like voters perceived the PKK, thus the HDP, as responsible for escalation of the conflict rather than the government.

This issue is similar to my argument in chapter 3 with regards to the AKP's vote share. There, I have argued that terrorism and violence became such a salient issue that voters behaved similarly in districts that were and were not exposed to terrorism. In chapter 3, I have used funerals as a proxy for exposure to terrorism, which is obviously different than directly being in the locality of violence. Yet, funerals are still important events as they are politically and emotionally loaded and are likely to impact voting behavior. Nevertheless, both chapter emphasize the central role the macro-level political processes rather than the micro-level dynamics of violence have on voting behavior and relatedly the significance of conflict intensity in influencing violence to have local or global impacts, i.e whether violence

impacts voting behavior only in localities that are exposed to violence or voting behavior throughout the country.

This issue presents us a methodological challenge to understand the impact of violence on voting behavior. Studies that leverage subnational variation in violence and terrorism and subnational variation in voting behavior (Berrebi & Klor, 2008; Birnir & Gohdes, 2018; de la Calle & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Kibris, 2011) implicitly assume violence to effect the voting behavior in the locality of violence but not in others or assume violence to impact voting behavior in localities of violence more than it does in non-violent localities. However, in reality, voters not only observe developments in their own districts but throughout the country. Thus, making inferences about the individual impacts of each act of violence become extremely difficult as one cannot know if voters react to violence that directly impacted them or the broader violent context.

Second and relatedly, both of these chapters emphasized, first, the importance of the context in the study of violence and voting behavior. In the third chapter, I emphasize the nature of electoral competition (competitive authoritarian system of Turkey, where government had superior tools to campaign), electoral strategy of the political parties (AKP's strategy of securitization of the elections), type of target (security forces and civilians), level of violence and policy choices towards terrorism rather than arbitrarily focusing on right-wing-left-wing dichotomy (AKP's policy change from negotiation to full-scale counter-insurgency). In the fourth chapter emphasis is on the nature of warfare, that is how civilians are victimized and at-least dyadic and relational nature of warfare between insurgents and counter-insurgent; as well as the central role of identities and prior political orientation in shaping civilian responses to violence.

The double elections of 2015 took place in an extremely violent and polarized atmosphere, which makes the "macro dynamics of conflict impacted voting behavior" argument of mine fairly obvious. In such a violent context and especially after a Peace Process, one cannot expect violence and terrorism to be not the most salient during the electoral campaign. Thus, further research can try to understand when violence and terrorism become salient issues in the context of on-going civil conflicts, that is what really is the threshold for a conflict to impact the overall voting behavior and how does it interact with contextual dynamics such as the history of conflict, electoral strategies of the political parties, meanings attached to violence and so on.

Related to this point, Criado (2017) found that the attacks closer to elections; civilians and politicians killings rather than security force killings and more deadly attacks to be more salient. Moreover, she found that when conservatives are in government, terror attacks become more salient as they are more likely to emphasize this issue and lastly, she found terror attacks to be more salient among right-wing voters. Further research can try to understand the interplay between these factors and try to unpack the exact mechanisms at the level of individuals.

Yet, another potential problem with such an inquiry may be endogeneity. Criado (2017) rightfully argues that the dynamics of competition between political parties matter as political parties strategically choose to emphasize the issues that are likely to electorally benefit them. However, violence does not erupt in a vacuum without intentions but the escalation of violence itself can oftentimes be an electoral strategy both for governments and armed groups alike.

In the case of 2015 elections, this was fairly obvious as AKP tried to regain its parliamentary majority by attracting Turkish nationalist votes and polarizing

political atmosphere.[24] Thus, further research can try to understand when escalation of violence as an electoral strategy in the context of on-going civil wars works and when it does not. Answering such a question necessarily requires a dialogue between different subfields and areas of research within political science if not an interdisciplinary collaboration. For example, between scholars working on diversionary war theory, populism, ethnic conflict, polarization and repression (See Klein & Tokdemir, 2019 for instance).

What are the potential implications of the findings of this study? Recall that June elections was a unique election in the sense that both HDP and MHP performed much better than they did before and AKP lost its parliamentary majority. However, with the escalation of violence, the results of the November elections looked very much like it did in 2011 General Elections and the Presidential Elections in 2014. In a sense, violence brought the status-quo back and each political party got the support of its core supports, which as any observer in Turkey would point out is very much fixed on societal cleavages. Sadly, this is not surprising as one of the well-known consequences of violence and repression is polarization, which I would even call a law-like finding in the literature.

Turning back to the question I posed above when does escalation of violence as an electoral strategy in the context of on-going civil wars work? I am quite pessimistic and my answer would be it will most likely work as civil wars often times polarize and fix societal and political identities which would be even more pronounced for civil wars that have been going on for longer times, not to mention that civil wars oftentimes emerge after a period of gradual radicalization of

[24] Another puzzling and related issue for the case- is PKK's decision to end the ceasefire and decision to declare self-rule zones when HDP did so well in the June elections (See Aktürk, 2016 for a brief discussion).

militarization of dissent as a result of repression (e.g Della Porta, 2018; Florea, 2017). Thus, creating the "never-ending cycle of violence."

Few words can be said about Turkey. The scholars of civil wars focused on the concept of electoral violence at the expense of studying the interplay between democratic institutions, norms and practices and dynamics of civil war, while the conflict goes on (Steele & Schubiger, 2018). Turkey is a country that has been swinging between democracy and authoritarianism and is now considered as a competitive authoritarian regime, which experienced the democratic breakdown recently (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016; Somer, 2016b). Although this study did not deal with this issue, I believe the regime type of Turkey constrained both the state and the PKK in their exercise of violence given its domestic and international consequences, and possible audience costs given the electoral character of the regime. Therefore, Turkey may be a good case study to advance the research on the role of regime type on the dynamics of violence.

Very related to this point, an important question for the Turkey-PKK conflict is how the democratic-breakdown and authoritarianization impacted the dynamics of conflict. Would the government be able to start such a massive and violent counter-insurgency campaign if Turkey did not experience the democratic breakdown? Did the PKK violence have an impact on the democratic breakdown of Turkey? Did authoritarianization help the PKK, did it make its use of violence less constrained and increased its popularity? What would have happened if the government had a softer counterinsurgency policy, would Kurdish voters blame the PKK more and would the HDP receive less votes? Yet, could the government regain the Turkish nationalist votes if it had a softer counter-insurgency policy?

Moreover, although the Kurdish Issue and terror has deemed as one of the most salient issues in Turkish politics, there have been very few studies on the impact of terrorism and violence on voting behavior, not to mention long term effects of violence. For example, how did the high level of violence or funerals of security forces in the '90s have affected long term political behavior? Did the provinces with a high level of security force causalities develop more of Turkish nationalist identities and orientations in the long run?

These questions remain to be answered and the Turkey-PKK conflict case can greatly contribute to our understanding of the relationship between democratic institutions, authoritarianism, civil war/insurgency, terrorism, violence, political and voting behavior in countries as diverse as India, Colombia, Israel, Nigeria and Peru where democratic institutions and elections in particular operate or have operated in the shadow of violence and civil war.

Lastly, what is perhaps the most important obstacle for the future of democracy and peace in Turkey is that the level of violence since 2015 has spiked as PKK started an urban insurgency campaign after the November 2015 elections and Turkey has intervened in the Syrian Civil War by the deployment of the Turkish army into the Syrian territory at the expense of the PYD, the Syrian Kurdish affiliate of the PKK. Since then around 5500 people died in the conflict.

As Bekir Ağırdır, one of the top pollster in Turkey, oftentimes say in Turkey elections are oftentimes mere “identity counts”, where there is little change in the political parties’ vote shares, which I believe has a lot to the with the long history of violence, terrorism and repression in Turkey. Yet, I think we are yet to see the long term impacts of the urban insurgency and warfare between late 2015 and 2017, which literally wiped up entire districts and resulted in great human suffering. Thus,

it is likely for the ghost of violence to haunt Turkish and Kurdish politics for a long time in the coming years, not to mention the unforeseeable future of immensely complex situation in Syria.

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