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INTER-PARTY VOTE MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY:
THE SOURCES OF AKP VOTES IN 2007

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Abstract

Using data drawn from a nationwide voter-tendencies survey conducted shortly before the July 2007 parliamentary election in Turkey, inter-party vote movements during the 2002-2007 period are investigated with the Justice and Development Party (AKP) as the focal point. A descriptive analysis relying on two and four-way partitions of the dataset reveals that, in comparison to the relatively small group of 'deserters' from the party, the 'newcomers' to the AKP are younger, mostly female, more satisfied with the performance of the economy, and more likely to be pro-EU membership. The data also shows that AKP supporters are less educated and less concerned with the threats to secularism than the rest of the voters. The key finding of the econometric work is that economic evaluations—especially retrospective ones—have a strong association with the party choice in the 2007 elections.

ملخص

باستخدام بيانات مستمدة من توجهات الناخبين على الصعيد الوطني في استقصاء أجري قبيل الانتخابات النيابية التركية في يوليو 2007، تبين ان هناك تحركات رئيسيه في إتجاهات الناخبين داخل حزب العدالة والتنمية كنقطة محورية. ويشير تحليل وصفي يقوم على تقسيم البيانات بواسطة طريقة ثنائية ورباعية إلى انه مقارنة بالأعداد الصغيرة نسبيا من الأشخاص الذين تركوا حزب العدالة والتنمية، فإن الوافدين الجدد إلى الحزب هم من صغار السن، وبهم نسبة اكبر من الإناث، راضون عن أداء الاقتصاد ويؤيدون الانضمام إلى الإتحاد الأوروبي. وتشير البيانات أيضا إلى أن مؤيدي حزب العدالة والتنمية هم من الفئات الأقل حظا من التعليم والأقل اهتماما بالأخطار التي تواجه النظام العلماني بالمقارنة ببقية الناخبين. وتكشف النتيجة الأساسية لأعمال الاقتصاد القياسي عن أن التقييمات الإقتصادية- خصوصا الأسترجاعية منها- لها علاقة وثيقة في اختيار الحزب في انتخابات 2007.

1. Introduction

In the July 22, 2007 Turkish parliamentary election, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) increased its vote share to 46.6 percent from 34.3 percent in the previous parliamentary election held on November 3, 2002. In doing so, it became the first party since 1954 to raise its vote share after ruling a full legislative term. The party's vote share was also the highest a party with Islamist roots has ever captured in Turkey, and the highest any party has achieved since 1965. The party's success was widespread. It increased its vote share in all of the 81 provinces. What made this success even more remarkable was the fact that it came after the vote shares of many other parties seemed to have hit rock bottom in 2002. In that year, the aggregate vote share of the three incumbent parties—the Democratic Left Party (DSP), the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP)—had dropped to 14.7 percent from 53.4 percent in 1999. In addition, the dissolution of the main opposition Virtue Party (FP) by the Turkish Constitutional Court in 2001 forced 15.4 percent of the electorate, which voted for this party in 1999, to make another choice in 2002. The AKP, which emerged from the banned FP, only 15 months before the election, had captured the lion's share of the votes lost by the parties mentioned.

Based on past experience of Turkish politics, it would have made more sense to anticipate that, in 2007, at least some of these votes would return to the parties from which they originated, but in fact what occurred was the exact opposite. Although MHP, one of the former incumbent parties, was able to raise its vote share from 8.4 percent to 14.3 percent between 2002 and 2007, it does not appear that this came at the expense of AKP. Of the two parties which shared the spoils of the 2002 election with AKP, the Young Party (GP) saw its proportion of the vote decline from 7.3 to 3.0 percent. That of the Republican People's Party (CHP) rose by 1.5 percentage points, or only about as much as the 2002 vote share of DSP, which entered the 2007 election under the banner of CHP. Votes of the True Path Party (DYP), now named the Democrat Party (DP), declined from 9.5 to 5.4 percent while ANAP did not participate in the election. The candidates of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) who entered the 2007 election as independents to avoid the nationwide ten-percent threshold for representation in the parliament, received 3.8 percent of the vote whereas the vote share of the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP), the predecessor of DTP, was 6.2 percent in 2002. The vote share of the Felicity Party (SP), the other party to emerge from the ashes of the banned FP, but which towed its anti-Western, anti-EU and pro-Islamist line instead of disavowing them like AKP, virtually remained constant at about 2.5 percent. The aggregate vote shares of the remaining parties decreased to 2.2 from 5.1 percent.

In short, between 2002 and 2007, the AKP captured 12.3 of the 18.6 percentage points shed by the other parties. It is not clear however, exactly which of the other parties' supporters and which specific socio-economic and ideological segments of them, the AKP appealed to in particular. There are very few quantitative studies focusing on this aspect of the 2007 election outcomes. Some of these are limited to a descriptive examination of survey results (Konda, 2007a). Others make use of province level election results to uncover the association between parties' vote shares in 2002 and 2007 using correlation analysis (Tosun, 2007) or geographical patterns (Veri, 2007) ¹.

In the present study, we intend to determine the sources of the AKP votes in 2007 using micro data which will enable us to consider voter characteristics in detail. For this purpose,

¹ The remaining quantitative studies dealing with the 2007 election investigate mostly the role played by political inertia, economic considerations, and socio-economic, demographic and ideological characteristics of the voters, in general, in casting their ballots for the AKP in 2007. Çarkoğlu (2008) and Kalaycıoğlu (2008) do this by applying regression analysis to the 2007 Turkish Election Survey, whereas Genar (2007), Konda (2007b), and Esmer (2007) rely on descriptive statistics.

we will utilize data drawn from a survey conducted by research company KONDA three weeks prior to the 22 July election. Our aim is to identify not only the parties from which the AKP voters have originated, but also the segments of those parties' voter bases the AKP was able to attract in particular.

In the next section, we present descriptive statistics pertaining to our data and discuss the insights they provide. In Section 3, we present the results of the logit regressions which express a voter's tendency to vote for AKP in 2007 as a function of his/her party preference in 2002, socio-demographic and ideological characteristics, and views on the previous and expected performance of the economy. Finally, to determine which segments of the voter bases of other parties the AKP has attracted, we estimate a more comprehensive model in which the interactions between the voter's 2002 party choice and his/her other characteristics are included as explanatory variables. Since this methodology was also adopted by Başlevent and Akarca (2009) to examine the vote movements between 1999 and 2002, the present study should be viewed as an attempt to provide an updated account on the same issue.

2. The Data and Descriptive Statistics

The data on which we base our study is drawn from a survey conducted by research company KONDA under the direction of Tarhan Erdem three weeks prior to the 22 July election. This dataset contains information about the party choices of the survey participants in the 2002 and 2007 elections, in addition to their socio-demographic characteristics, ideological tendencies, and views on the economy. The Konda survey, which is quite famous for its accurate prediction of the election outcome, contains 3,591 observations from 34 of the 81 provinces in Turkey. The sample was obtained by a multi-stage stratified sampling method based on the 2000 General Census and the 2002 General Election results. The rigorous sampling process involved the stratification and grouping of neighborhoods and villages (which are the primary sampling units in urban and rural areas, respectively) according to province, statistical region (of which there are 12), educational attainment level, employment data, census data, and election results. The neighborhoods and villages in the sample were selected randomly based on population size. We eliminated from our sample 353 observations pertaining to those who were too young to vote in 2002, 511 observations involving undecided respondents, and 229 "no answer" cases; reducing our sample size to 2,498. The breakdown of this sample according to the parties the respondents claim to have voted for in the 2002 election, and the proportion of the votes the AKP received in 2007 from each group, is presented in Table 1.

Among those respondents who cast their ballot in 2002 and revealed their choice, AKP's 2002 vote share is 47.7 percent. Since this is considerably higher than 34.3 percent (the party's actual vote share), it is obvious that some of the respondents were not truthful about their preferences in the 2002 election. Two factors may account for this. First, some individuals who are sympathetic to the AKP but voted for its close substitutes may have switched sides after witnessing its success, and the elimination of the parties they voted for from the political scene.² Secondly, some respondents may have mistakenly reported their party choice in the 2004 local administrations election rather than in the 2002 parliamentary election, as their vote in the previous election. The AKP's 41.7 percent vote share in the 2004 election was substantially higher than in 2002. On the other hand, the survey does a very good job of predicting the outcome of the 2007 elections. The AKP's 2007 sample share of 47.9 percent among valid votes is pretty close to the 46.6 percent vote share the party has won in the 2007 election.

² The realignment which occurred after the 2002 elections was also put forth by Başlevent and Akarca (2009) who studied a data set drawn from a survey conducted two months after that election.

Although there is virtually no difference in the 2002 and 2007 sample vote shares of the AKP, this does not turn out to be as crippling for our vote movements analysis as it first appears. An inspection of the patterns in Table 1 reveals that there are plenty of vote movements in the data to be investigated. First of all, 16 percent of 2002 AKP voters seem to have changed sides in 2007 while 84 percent of them remained loyal to their party (column 3). The continuing supporters made up slightly more than three-fourths of the party's 2007 voters (column 4). As the AKP was able to capture about 18 percent of the voters who voted for other parties in 2002 (column 3), these newcomers constituted almost a quarter of the party's 2007 votes (column 4). The AKP appears to have captured a little more than a fifth of the 2002 voters of the center-right ANAP, DYP and GP, about 15 percent of the Turkish-nationalist MHP, the Kurdish-nationalist DEHAP and the center-left DSP. However, its gain from the main opposition party, the center-left CHP, was only 2 percent. On the flip side, the MHP received more than one-third of the 2002 voters who left the AKP in 2007 (column 5).

The sample means of various explanatory variables to be considered in the econometric work are given in Table 2, with variable definitions provided in the notes to that table. To gain some insights about the differences between those who voted for the AKP in 2007 and those who did not, and between those who are the party's "continuing supporters," "newcomers," "deserters," and "non-supporters," the variable means are also given separately for various subsamples. We should note that the "newcomers" and the "deserters", the two groups of greatest interest with regard to vote movements, together make up 17.5 percent of the working sample, a sizable proportion on which reliable conclusions can be based.

According to the figures in Table 2, those who voted for AKP are mostly female, younger, less educated, and poorer than the rest of the sample. They do not perceive the threat to secularism as seriously as others, and they are more likely to be pro-EU. They also believe that the economy thrived under the AKP administration both for their families and for the nation, and that it will continue to do so.³ With respect to the four-way partition of the sample, compared to those who have been supporting the party since 2002, the newcomers in 2007 appear to be mostly female, younger, more educated, richer, slightly less optimistic about the economy and about as enthusiastic about EU membership and as unconcerned about acts against secularism. Deserters, on the other hand, are mostly male, older, poorer, less pro-EU, and less optimistic about the state of the economy than the newcomers and continuing supporters. The deserters are also more educated than the continuing supporters, but less educated than the newcomers. However, the three groups seem to be equally unconcerned about the threats to the secular nature of the state. On the whole, economic evaluations and views about EU membership appear to be the most important factors in distinguishing those who did and did not support the AKP in 2002 and/or 2007.

3. Regression Results

Although the findings presented in the previous section give a pretty good idea about the distinguishing features of AKP supporters (new and continuing), and non-supporters (new

³ In the economic voting literature, a voter's evaluation of the economy's past performance is referred to as "retrospective", and its expected future performance, as "prospective." When the assessments are made with regard to the voter's family, it is referred to as 'pocketbook' (or 'ego-tropic'), and when it is made with regard to the entire nation, as 'socio-tropic.' Our Economy variable is a composite one, obtained by averaging 'retrospective socio-tropic', 'retrospective pocketbook', 'prospective socio-tropic,' and 'prospective pocketbook' evaluations. The "retrospective" variable averages the first two of these and the "prospective" variable the third and the fourth of them. The "socio-tropic" variable, on the other hand, averages the first and the third, and the "pocketbook" variable, the second and the fourth types of evaluations. These variables are defined such that larger values correspond to more positive evaluations. Studies which use such variables are surveyed in Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2000). Başlevent, et al (2005) is an example of an empirical study utilizing these concepts in the Turkish context.

and continuing), one needs to establish the statistical significance of these and measure their influence on the likelihood of a voter casting his/her ballot for the AKP in a framework where all other factors are controlled for. In addition, it would also be useful to determine which parties' former voters were more likely to switch to the AKP and which segments of those parties' voter bases the AKP has appealed to in particular. Our aim in this section is to accomplish these tasks.

Our methodology involves explaining the tendency of a voter to vote for the AKP in 2007 using his/her party choice in the 2002 election, his/her demographic and socio-economic characteristics, ideological leanings, and evaluation of the economy. To do this, we fitted logit regressions to the survey data described in the previous section. To determine which segments of other parties the AKP has attracted, we have also considered, as explanatory variables, the interactions between the political party choices in 2002 and the remaining variables. In fitting our equations, we have employed an estimation option available in the software package STATA to compute robust standard errors, treating the data as a collection of clusters. Observations within the clusters – which, in our case are the provinces - are allowed to be dependent while observations from different clusters are assumed to be independent. For more detail on this procedure, the reader can refer to Rogers (1993).

3.1. Findings from the Basic Models

In order to gauge the relative explanatory powers of the variables representing the 2002 party choices of voters and their various characteristics, we estimated two preliminary regressions (presented in the first two columns of Table 3). In the first regression, the tendency of a voter to cast his/her ballot for the AKP in 2007 is explained only by his/her party choice in the 2002 election. According to coefficient estimates, a support for the AKP in 2002 appears to raise the likelihood of voting for that party again in 2007, but a choice of one of the other parties in 2002 reduces it. In other words, people who have voted for another party in 2002 are less likely to vote for the AKP in 2007 than the 'average' person. Given that the AKP attracted only about 18 percent of the former voters of other parties, as opposed to 47 percent in the full sample, this pattern makes sense. Despite all having negative signs, the relative magnitudes of the coefficients allow us to make comparisons across the parties. A vote for the CHP in 2002 decreases the likelihood most, followed by a vote for the DSP, DEHAP, MHP, DYP and GP, in that order. A vote for the SP in 2002, however, does not influence the likelihood upward or downward.

The second regression links the probability of a voter voting for the AKP in 2007 to his/her gender, age, years of schooling, income, views on the economy and EU membership. All of these factors, except gender and the stand with regard to EU membership, appear to provide significant information about the voter's embrace or rejection of the AKP. Being younger, less educated, poorer, more optimistic about the economy, and less worried about threats to secularism, raises the chances of support for the party. With pseudo R-square values of 0.39 and 0.41, respectively, both equations seem to have a reasonable degree of explanatory power. The logical next step is to consider a specification which combines the two sets of variables.

In the third regression given in Table 3, the likelihood of voting for the AKP in 2007 is expressed as a function of all the variables used in the first two regressions. This increases the pseudo R-square substantially, to 0.59, and renders the estimated coefficient of age variable insignificant, in addition to the gender variable. However, the estimated coefficient of the pro-EU dummy variable becomes significant. The variable related to the 2002 vote for the GP also becomes insignificant but that of the SP turns significant. The addition of the variables in the second regression to the first causes the negative coefficient estimates for ANAP, DYP, DEHAP, and MHP to increase in absolute value, but those of CHP, DSP, and

GP to decrease. The near zero coefficient of SP becomes a larger negative one. This suggests that the socio-economic and ideological characteristics of 2002 voters of different parties have different impacts on the likelihood of voting for the AKP in 2007.

Even though the relative importance of the variables in Table 3 can be assessed through the relative magnitudes of their estimated coefficients, the computation of marginal effects facilitates the interpretation of the models' findings. When interaction terms and multi-categorical variables are absent, these figures are quite easy to obtain through the use of the statistical package. The marginal effects given in the last column of Table 3 are based on the all-inclusive model and refer to the changes in an 'average' voter's probability to vote for AKP, resulting from marginal changes in the explanatory variables in question. More specifically, the marginal effect of an explanatory variable is the change in the probability of voting for the AKP, in response to a one unit increase in the variable, holding the remaining variables constant at their sample means. In the case of binary variables, the marginal effect is defined as the change in the same probability in response to a discrete change of the variable from 0 to 1, again evaluating the remaining variables at their means. In the case of party dummies, we must also take into account that when one of them takes on the value of 1, the others need to equal zero. Therefore, their marginal effects were calculated holding the rest of the party dummies constant at zero.

The magnitudes of the marginal effects are more or less proportionate to the corresponding coefficient estimates, and they also have marginal significance levels (i.e. *p*-values) which are quite similar to those of the coefficients. In the case of party dummies, our model's coefficient estimates translate into sizeable marginal effects. The marginal effect for the CHP dummy implies that the probability of voting for the AKP is 39 percentage points lower for someone who voted for CHP in the previous election compared to someone who did not vote for any of the listed parties. The marginal effects for the remaining opposition parties are also statistically significant, albeit smaller in magnitude. On the other hand, having voted for the AKP in the previous election increases the probability of voting for that party again in 2007 by 36 percentage points. As for the remaining variables, we find that the composite economy variable has the largest effect on the probability of voting for the AKP. A one point increase in the variable corresponds to a probability increase of 33 percentage points. Considering that the average values of this variable differ by 1.7 points between those who did and did not vote for the AKP, we conclude that the economic factor accounts for a substantial portion of the voting decision. The only other variable that has a significant positive marginal effect is the Pro-EU dummy. Being in favor of Turkey's EU membership makes a 7 percentage point difference in the probability of voting for the AKP. On the other hand, each additional year of schooling has a 2 percentage point negative effect, and a one-point move up the income scale has a 5 percentage point negative effect on the same probability. Finally, the secularism dummy has a 7 percentage point negative effect. Even though the gender and age dummies fail to produce statistically significant results, the signs of the marginal effects suggest that the AKP is more popular among women and people younger than 44 years.

Given the key role played by the overall economy variable in the model, a more detailed look into the economic aspect of the voting decision is in order. To gain more insight in this regard, we also experimented with models in which the composite economy variable is replaced with its various subcomponents.⁴ In one specification, retrospective and prospective economic evaluations are considered, while in another socio-tropic and pocketbook evaluations are included. Our finding is that retrospective evaluations are much better predictors of the tendency to vote for the AKP than prospective ones. While the marginal

⁴ These results are available from the authors upon request.

effect of the former is +28 percent, the latter's impact is only +4 percent. The socio-tropic and pocketbook evaluations yield estimated marginal effects closer in value: +23 and +11 percent, respectively.

We also estimated a model which included all four variants of economic voting: the retrospective pocketbook, prospective pocketbook, retrospective socio-tropic and prospective socio-tropic. Despite the high degree of correlation between and the relatively small variation within them (which are reasons why we have chosen not to focus on this specification), the estimated coefficients of these variables turned out to be statistically significant, with the exception of prospective pocketbook evaluations. While the marginal effects of both retrospective (socio-tropic and pocketbook) variables were estimated to be around 27 percent those of the prospective socio-tropic variable had a marginal effect of only 13 percent.

3.2. Findings from the Model with Interaction Terms

In the final step of our empirical work, we estimated a more comprehensive model which allows the impact of an explanatory variable to vary by the party voted for in 2002. This model includes party dummies and their interactions with the remaining variables, and can be looked upon as an 'unrestricted' version of the earlier specification where each socio-economic, demographic and ideological variable is replaced by 10 interaction terms. Along with the nine parties, the rest of the sample is treated as a separate affiliation which in turn implies that instead of a single slope parameter 10 different slopes are estimated. Depending on which interaction terms are statistically significant, the model's estimates reveal which segments of the parties' voter bases were attracted to the AKP in particular. Note that the interaction terms involving the secularism dummy are excluded from the model due to two reasons. First, for three out of the 10 groups, namely among the former CHP, DEHAP, and GP voters, there are no respondents in the sample for whom SECULARISM=1 and AKP07=1, implying that the related terms would have to be dropped from the model. Secondly, the interaction terms for the remaining groups turned out to be statistically insignificant.

The estimates from the unrestricted model, reported in Table 4 reveal that economic evaluations are the best predictors of voters' tendency to vote for the AKP. All of the interaction terms involving the Economy variable are positive and significant, except for one (which appears to be due to the small number of observations), implying that good economic performance under the party's rule and its promise of a strong economy provides a near universal appeal for the AKP. Interestingly, the largest coefficient is on the term involving the CHP dummy. Since no other interaction term involving this party is significant, we can conclude that the AKP was able to attract voters from its biggest rival only for economic reasons.⁵ Education turns out to be an important factor as well, with six out of 10 interaction terms being statistically significant. The negative signs of the coefficients of these variables imply that the AKP appealed particularly to the less educated voters of most parties, including its own.

⁵ When the economy variable is split into its retrospective and prospective components, we find that nine out of 10 interaction terms involving the retrospective variable are positive and statistically significant (only the coefficient of interaction term involving DEHAP is insignificant) whereas the corresponding number for the prospective variable is only two out of ten (the coefficient of interaction term involving SP is negative and 'rest of sample' is positive). When the socio-tropic and pocketbook components are introduced, we find that eight out of 10 interaction terms involving the socio-tropic variable are statistically significant (the coefficients of interaction terms involving ANAP and DYP are insignificant) as opposed to five for the pocketbook variable (the coefficients of interaction terms involving ANAP, CHP, DSP, GP, and SP are insignificant).

Most of the remaining variables in the model are statistically insignificant, but the few significant ones provide good clues as to what type of voters were most likely to have voted for the AKP in 2007. Gender and a pro-EU stand matter only for those who voted in 2002 for the AKP and SP—the other party with Islamist roots. This finding suggests that the AKP continues to attract voters from the traditional pro-Islamist base by persuading some of the people in that camp to soften their anti-Western views. The income level affects the votes captured by the AKP significantly only from the Kurdish-nationalist DEHAP. In the 2007 election, the AKP performed extremely well in the eastern and south-eastern provinces where DEHAP had received a large proportion of votes in 2002. Our finding shows that the AKP appealed especially to the less-educated and higher-income segment of the latter party's electorate who benefited from the economic progress under the AKP administration and hoped for its continuation.

A comparison of the estimates summarized in Tables 3 and 4 reveals the importance of using interaction terms. For example, relying on the basic model alone, one gets the impression that the income level and EU variables are significant determinants of AKP votes when, in fact, this is the case for an 'average' voter. Only through the model with interaction terms does one observe that income was an important determinant only for those who supported the DEHAP in the previous election, and the stand concerning EU was relevant only for those who supported the AKP or SP in 2002.

Similarly, the basic model suggests that gender and age were unimportant for all voters in making their party choice in 2007, whereas the interaction model reveals that gender was important in the case of voters who preferred the AKP or the SP in 2002, but that age indeed was irrelevant for the entire electorate.

4. Conclusion

The AKP came to power at the end of 2002, only 15 months after its establishment. During the following four years, the growth rate of the economy averaged 7.5 percent per year, ranging between 5.3 and 9.4 percent. Remarkably, this occurred while the inflation rate (growth rate of GDP deflator) declined from a 37.4 percent per year level to 9.3 percent. Capitalizing on such a good economic performance, the party used the phrase “what we accomplished so far is the guarantee of what we will accomplish in the future” as its campaign slogan in the 2007 election. The main campaign theme of its opponents, on the other hand, was that the secular regime would be in severe jeopardy in case of another AKP term. Our findings suggest that in the 2007 election, most voters cast their ballots with the economy on their minds, and they greatly outnumbered those who voted with the intention of protecting the secular regime. This should not come as a surprise as economic voting was found to be a crucial factor in other Turkish elections as well (For evidence from time-series and cross-section data, see for example Akarca and Tansel, 2006, 2007, Akarca, 2009, and Başlevent, Kirmanoğlu and Şenatalar, 2009). Given the dominance of economic evaluations over the remaining factors in explaining the party choice of Turkish voters, our findings can be interpreted as evidence in favor of the ‘rational voter hypothesis’ which argues that citizens will vote for the candidate who is expected to yield the greatest amount of future expected utility.

Estimates from a comprehensive econometric model revealed that, besides those voting economically, the less educated voters of most parties, pro-EU supporters and males of the pro-Islamist SP, and the relatively rich of the pro-Kurdish DEHAP, provided the AKP with yet other sources of new supporters. Of its 2002 supporters, the party was able to especially retain the females, the less-educated, those who are pro-EU, and those who benefited and hope to continue benefiting from the strong economy. The examined descriptive statistics suggested that the newcomers to the party had the same traits, perhaps with the exception of

being slightly better-educated. What distinguished the deserters from the two mentioned groups is that they were mostly male, older, of lower income, had less support for the EU, and did not benefit from the economic boom during AKP's first term in office. In short, it was essentially the economy that determined who stayed with the party, who deserted it, who decided to join it anew, and who continued to stay away from it.

Besides the economic factors, there were many other important factors that were likely to have contributed to the overwhelming support for the AKP. For instance, the party's move to the center over time and its disavowal of its Islamist roots have no doubt dissipated the worries of some voters that the party may adopt an anti-secular stance, thus allowing the party to broaden its support base. Also, the perception of the international community that the ruling party had performed well on many tough issues including EU accession negotiations and the handling of the Iraq war and the issue of Cyprus might have induced a domestic perception of satisfaction with the ruling party independent of party identification and political color.

The outcome of the March 2009 local elections suggests that the economy played an important role in that election as well. However, for the first time, the impact was against the AKP, as the Turkish economy has already begun to feel the effects of the severest global economic crisis since the Great Depression. Analysis of micro data from that election in future work is likely to provide valuable insights as to how the economy ranked among the factors that led to the decline in the vote share of the AKP in 2009.

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Table 1: Vote Movements to and from AKP between 2002 and 2007

	Number of 2002 voters in sample	Share of 2002 voters in sample (%)	Share of 2002 voters who voted for AKP in 2007 (%)	Share among 2007 AKP voters (%)	Share of 2002 AKP voters gained (%)
AKP	1,064	42.6	83.7	77.3	83.7
Rest of sample	1,434	57.4	18.3	22.7	16.3
ANAP	62	2.5	22.6	1.2	-
BBP	6	0.2	33.3	0.2	0.2
CHP	424	17.0	1.9	0.7	3.0
DSP	50	2.0	14.0	0.6	-
DYP	123	4.9	20.3	2.2	2.0
DEHAP	74	3.0	14.9	1.0	0.4
GP	55	2.2	23.6	1.1	1.9
MHP	299	12.0	15.7	4.1	6.4
ODP	9	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
SP	43	1.7	39.5	1.5	0.7
Other	22	0.9	36.4	0.7	0.3
No vote	191	7.7	44.5	7.4	1.4
Blank	45	1.8	28.9	1.1	0.1
No answer	31	1.2	38.7	1.0	-
Total	2,498	100.0	46.2	100.0	100.0

Notes: The figures for ANAP and DSP are missing in the fifth column since these parties did not participate in the 2007 election. Independent candidates are lumped with the “Other” category. “No answer” cases were excluded before computing vote shares.

Table 2: The Characteristics of AKP Supporters & Non-Supporters: 2 and 4-Way Partitions

	Subsamples: 2-way partition		Subsamples: 4-way partition				Full Sample
	AKP07 = 1	AKP07 = 0	Continuing Supporters AKP02 = 1, AKP07 = 1	Newcomers AKP02 = 0, AKP07 = 1	Deserters AKP02 = 1, AKP07 = 0	Non- Supporters AKP02 = 0, AKP07 = 0	
Share in sample (%)	46.2	53.8	35.7	10.5	6.9	46.9	100.0
<i>Variable:</i>	<i>M e a n :</i>						
GENDER	0.45	0.41	0.45	0.47	0.39	0.42	0.43
AGE 44+	0.36	0.39	0.37	0.31	0.41	0.39	0.38
SCHOOLING	6.34	7.76	6.22	6.78	6.57	7.94	7.11
INCOME	2.44	2.54	2.41	2.54	2.34	2.57	2.50
PRO – EU	0.46	0.35	0.46	0.45	0.27	0.36	0.40
SECULARISM	0.12	0.28	0.12	0.11	0.13	0.30	0.20
ECONOMY	4.24	2.55	4.29	4.09	2.62	2.54	3.33
Retrospective	4.38	2.08	4.43	4.19	2.19	2.06	3.14
Prospective	4.11	3.02	4.15	4.00	3.06	3.01	3.52
Socio-tropic	4.34	2.60	4.39	4.17	2.71	2.58	3.40
Pocketbook	4.15	2.50	4.19	4.02	2.54	2.49	3.26

Notes: GENDER equals one in the case of a female respondent, and zero in the case of a male respondent. AGE44+ equals one in the case of a respondent who is 44 years of age or older, and zero otherwise. SCHOOLING is constructed from the information about the highest level of schooling completed such that it takes on the value of zero for illiterates, 2 for literates with no diploma, 5, 8, 11, and 15 for elementary school, middle school, high school and university graduates, respectively. It is equal to 18 if the respondent has a Master’s Degree or a Ph.D. INCOME takes on values between one and five, depending on the quantile in which the respondent places himself/herself in the income distribution, with 5 representing the highest income group. PRO-EU equals one if the respondent believes that Turkey must join the EU, and zero otherwise. SECULARISM equals one if the respondent picks “Acts against secularism” in response to the survey question “In your opinion, which TWO of the following are the most urgent problems of Turkey?” where “Poverty”, “Corruption”, “Acts against democracy”, “Insufficiency of social security system”, “No Opinion”, and “No Answer” are the remaining choices. Each of the variables relating to voters’ evaluation of the economy takes on values between 1 and 5. These are constructed from responses to the following four survey questions: 1. Did the economic conditions worsen, remain the same or improve, during the past five years, for your family? 2. Did the economic conditions worsen, remain the same or improve, during the past five years, for the nation as a whole? 3. Do you expect the economic conditions to worsen, remain the same, or improve during the next five years, for your family? 4. Do you expect the economic conditions to worsen, remain the same, or improve during the next five years, for the nation as a whole? The three possible responses to each of these questions are assigned 1, 3 and 5 points, respectively. If the points obtained from the above questions are labeled as Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4, respectively, the composite economy variable and its subcomponents are defined as follows: Retrospective = $(Q1 + Q2) \div 2$, Prospective = $(Q3 + Q4) \div 2$, Socio-tropic = $(Q2 + Q4) \div 2$, Pocketbook = $(Q1 + Q3) \div 2$ and finally, ECONOMY = $(Q1 + Q2 + Q3 + Q4) \div 4$. Thus the values of these variables also range from 1 to 5.

Table 3: Logit regressions: The Determinants of the Tendency to Vote for the AKP in 2007

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	Marginal effects for column (3)
AKP02	2.057 (0.000)		1.578 (0.000)	0.357 (0.000)
ANAP02	-0.783 (0.026)		-1.177 (0.009)	-0.238 (0.001)
CHP02	-3.519 (0.000)		-3.143 (0.000)	-0.392 (0.000)
DSP02	-1.387 (0.002)		-0.963 (0.075)	-0.204 (0.037)
DYP02	-0.918 (0.001)		-1.601 (0.000)	-0.294 (0.000)
DEHAP02	-1.285 (0.001)		-2.557 (0.000)	-0.369 (0.000)
GP02	-0.745 (0.055)		-0.660 (0.119)	-0.148 (0.097)
MHP02	-1.231 (0.000)		-1.491 (0.000)	-0.281 (0.000)
SP02	0.003 (0.994)		-0.855 (0.058)	-0.183 (0.033)
GENDER		0.006 (0.960)	0.131 (0.384)	0.030 (0.383)
AGE 44+		-0.271 (0.039)	-0.219 (0.185)	-0.050 (0.181)
SCHOOLING		-0.106 (0.000)	-0.095 (0.000)	-0.022 (0.000)
ECONOMY		1.551 (0.000)	1.457 (0.000)	0.334 (0.000)
INCOME		-0.223 (0.005)	-0.194 (0.050)	-0.045 (0.050)
PRO-EU		0.114 (0.419)	0.298 (0.051)	0.069 (0.052)
SECULARISM		-0.580 (0.001)	-0.320 (0.091)	-0.071 (0.080)
Constant	-0.428 (0.005)	-4.027 (0.000)	-4.029 (0.000)	
Pseudo R-square	0.3878	0.4087	0.5888	

Notes: The number of observations is 2,466. AKP02, ANAP02, CHP02, DSP02, DYP02, DEHAP02, GP02, MHP02 and SP02 are dummy variables that equal one if the respondent voted in 2002 for the party in question, and zero otherwise. All other variables appearing in the table are defined in the notes of Table 2. The numbers given in parentheses, below the coefficient estimates, are the probability values. The marginal effect of an explanatory variable is the change in Prob (AKP07=1) (which has an initial value of 0.357 when computed at the means of the variables) in response to a one unit increase of the explanatory variable, holding the remaining variables constant at their sample means. In the case of binary variables, the marginal effect is the change in Prob (AKP07=1) in response to a discrete change in the variable from 0 to 1. In the case of the party dummies, the marginal effect is the change in Prob (AKP07=1) (from an initial value of 0.422 at the specified values of the variables) in response to a change in the relevant dummy from 0 to 1, holding the other party dummies at zero and the rest of the variables at their sample means.

Table 4: Logit Regression with Interaction Terms: The Determinants of the Tendency to Vote for the AKP in 2007

	Coef.	p-value		Coef.	p-value
AKP02	0.010	0.991			
ANAP02	-1.169	0.705			
CHP02	-8.173	0.001			
DSP02	-2.786	0.567			
DYP02	-2.829	0.298			
DEHAP02	-6.132	0.002			
GP02	-3.633	0.202			
MHP02	-3.625	0.008			
SP02	-2.214	0.382			
Constant	-2.819	0.000			
× GENDER			× ECONOMY		
AKP02	0.389	0.092	AKP02	1.507	0.000
ANAP02	-0.368	0.638	ANAP02	1.227	0.006
CHP02	-0.985	0.278	CHP02	2.593	0.003
DSP02	-0.047	0.977	DSP02	1.486	0.133
DYP02	0.357	0.551	DYP02	1.485	0.001
DEHAP02	0.180	0.851	DEHAP02	1.534	0.000
GP02	-0.514	0.472	GP02	1.978	0.008
MHP02	-0.426	0.377	MHP02	1.549	0.000
SP02	-1.395	0.092	SP02	1.729	0.001
Rest of sample	0.266	0.380	Rest of sample	1.373	0.000
× AGE 44+			× INCOME		
AKP02	-0.245	0.291	AKP02	-0.271	0.101
ANAP02	0.658	0.439	ANAP02	-0.598	0.139
CHP02	-1.316	0.295	CHP02	-0.366	0.629
DSP02	-1.498	0.332	DSP02	1.146	0.397
DYP02	-0.549	0.420	DYP02	-0.140	0.750
DEHAP02	-0.593	0.457	DEHAP02	1.095	0.028
GP02	-1.064	0.472	GP02	0.499	0.438
MHP02	-0.416	0.325	MHP02	0.456	0.156
SP02	-0.231	0.769	SP02	-0.880	0.186
Rest of sample	-0.394	0.324	Rest of sample	-0.506	0.005
× SCHOOLING			× PRO – EU		
AKP02	-0.069	0.064	AKP02	0.509	0.019
ANAP02	-0.058	0.624	ANAP02	0.930	0.216
CHP02	-0.070	0.456	CHP02	0.751	0.437
DSP02	-0.317	0.056	DSP02	-2.457	0.030
DYP02	-0.152	0.073	DYP02	0.603	0.339
DEHAP02	-0.369	0.008	DEHAP02	0.753	0.406
GP02	-0.255	0.155	GP02	-0.575	0.446
MHP02	-0.207	0.015	MHP02	0.134	0.798
SP02	0.034	0.796	SP02	2.330	0.019
Rest of sample	-0.086	0.028	Rest of sample	-0.349	0.243

Notes: Pseudo R-square is equal to 0.607. For definitions of the variables, see notes for Tables 2 and 3.