

When Islamism Meets Incumbency: The Limits of Islamist Electoral Advantage*

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Abstract

Why do Islamists win when they run in elections as incumbents? Is it Islamist advantage or other factors that make them appealing to the voters? The sources of Islamist advantage such as their organizations, services, images, and being a refuge are well-documented. However, the literature focuses on contexts where Islamists compete under adverse conditions as opposition actors. Through an innovative conjoint experiment in Turkey using candidate videos, we explore the extent of these arguments. Our findings suggest that the universal Islamist advantage, by which Islamists appeal to broader segments of the population, disappears under Islamist incumbency because Islamists can no longer appeal through those sources of Islamist advantage as incumbents. Instead, Islamists may still win thanks to two factors: incumbency advantage and persisting particularistic Islamist advantage because of increasing spatial voting. With these, our findings provide evidence to an often proposed, yet unsubstantiated, claim on the extent of Islamist advantage.

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Introduction

Islamist parties in the Middle East and North Africa recorded significant electoral successes in the last three decades. They marked electoral victories in Algeria, Palestine, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco, among others. As a result, Islamist electoral advantage has drawn increasing attention (Brooke, 2017; Cammett and Luong, 2014; Grewal et al., 2019; Masoud, 2014), but most of this literature focused on environments where Islamists compete in rather unfavorable conditions. Hence, the reasons why and how Islamists win by overcoming the disadvantages that the electoral conditions impose are well documented. Nevertheless, we know less about the electoral fortunes of Islamists when they compete as incumbents.

In this article, we explore the extent of the arguments on Islamist advantage in contexts where Islamists enter electoral competition from a position of relative strength: as incumbents. We aim to understand how citizens in the Muslim-majority countries with Islamist incumbency vote in a competitive electoral context. Do they still favor Islamist candidates because of their Islamist identity or policy positions? How do the potential sources of Islamist electoral advantage affect the electability of candidates? To what extent do people consider factors beyond mere religiosity or Islamism in deciding to choose a candidate in Muslim-majority contexts when Islamism meets incumbency?

Seeking answers to these questions, we conducted a conjoint candidate choice experiment in Turkey where the Islamists have been enjoying incumbency for the last two decades. As the elections are competitive and an Islamist party, the AKP, has been the clear winner in all elections since 2002, Turkey is an appropriate case to understand how Islamist advantage works under an Islamist-dominated political arena. Using an innovative method through candidate speech videos in a factorial conjoint design, we examine the support for candidates without the confounding factor of party identification in order to capture the effect of Islamism independent of the incumbency effect. Based on the results of our survey experiment that was conducted face-to-face right before the 2018 legislative and presidential elections, we reach four conclusions that emphasize the contextual limitations to the Islamist

advantage arguments as well as the need to treat the concept of Islamism in a more nuanced way:

First, even where Islamists win elections, there is not always a universal Islamist advantage. While it is counter-intuitive in a context with Islamist incumbency, we find that this electoral success does not necessarily stem from an Islamist advantage as citizens, on average, do not support candidates just because they are Islamists. Distinguishing from a particularistic Islamist advantage, where Islamists appeal to their own base, our findings indicate that incumbent Islamists lose their universal Islamist advantage, which capture the ability to appeal to a broader base thanks to Islamist ideology.

Second, they lose this ability because the conditions and advantages that come with incumbency negate the effect of factors that otherwise help them to appeal to other voters. Where Islamists are in opposition, they have an advantage over other groups by appealing to the neglected masses through organizational leverage (Wiktorowicz, 2003), social services (Cammett and Issar, 2010), reputation and signaling (Cammett and Luong, 2014; Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani, 2012) or a being a refuge (Grewal et al., 2019). While citizens still care about programmatic policy positions or candidates' reputation, they do not associate these positive credentials with Islamists anymore where Islamists are themselves in power.

Third, Islamists can still win as incumbents, despite losing the universal Islamist advantage. On the one hand, incumbency provides new avenues for the Islamists to attract voters beyond their base, by providing an incumbency advantage. On the other, Islamists can still enjoy a particularistic Islamist advantage by appealing to their own base. In this sense, similar to what the literature on voting behavior in other regions suggests, we find that voters in a competitive context with Islamist incumbency tend to choose candidates who are more proximate to themselves in identity and policy. Therefore, we show that classical theories such as congruence can have more explanatory power to explain voting behavior in this context than regionally-focused explanations such as the Islamist advantage.

Finally, there is value in separating identity and policy aspects of Islamism. While the literature on Islamist advantage has usually neglected to differentiate between these two aspects, we find that, with the loss of universal Islamist advantage, Islamism shapes voter choices via these two separate channels, identity and policy, that do not interact with each other. We therefore contribute to both the Islamist advantage and the broader religion and politics literatures by unpacking religion and exploring its different manifestations on political behavior.

Our findings do not discredit the arguments on Islamist advantage that can explain voting behavior in contexts where Islamists are still in a position of disadvantage. However, they remind us that there are limitations to these arguments along with a lack of empirical evidence in certain contexts.

The Islamist Advantage

Sources of Islamist Advantage

It is widely presumed that Islamist parties have an electoral advantage to generate mass appeal and to attract voters. According to this view, Islamists establish a strong support base and acquire an ability to win elections when they are free, fair, and competitive. Earlier studies attribute this advantage to Muslims having a tendency to vote for these parties to realize what they are ordained to do by their religion (Huntington, 1996; Lewis, 1996). While these earlier essentialist studies' claim that all Muslims by nature support Islamists is far-fetched, Islamists may still appeal to the religious or ideologically similar sections of their societies, namely their own base. This is, in a way, still an advantage for them over other groups, especially where the populations on average tend to be religious and have

Islamist positions. This is the kind of Islamist advantage that we call *Islamists' particularistic advantage*.¹

Several studies also proposed that Islamists do not only appeal to their own bases but also attract voters from a larger segment of their societies. This means that Islamists have, on average, more favorable electoral fortunes than other political groups in their societies by reaching out beyond their base. We call this *Islamists' universal advantage*. According to the literature, Islamists enjoy this universal advantage thanks to various attributes that they have. These attributes can be categorized in four primary sets of explanations.

First, some explain Islamists' appeal with **organizational** attributes. According to this line of argument, Islamists enjoy the infrastructure of religious institutions, particularly mosques, community associations, and study groups. This infrastructure helps Islamists to build larger networks and reach out to new supporters (Wiktorowicz, 2003; Grewal, 2020; Blaydes, 2011; Kandil, 2014). It is also argued that the group-based trust that Islamist organizations generate helps them to overcome cooperation problems and succeed over their rivals (Livny, 2020).

Second, others explain Islamists' success in their ability of providing **services**. Importantly, Islamists undertake activities where the states are unable to cover for all citizens by providing social welfare through hospitals, charities, and schools (Cammett and Issar, 2010; Brooke, 2017; Bayat, 2002). Doing that, Islamists actually win the hearts and minds of the neglected segments of the population.

Third, for some, Islamists attract citizens through the **images** they correctly or incorrectly generate. Thanks to the organizational attributes, services, and other activities, Islamists develop a reputation that they are capable of good governance (Cammett and Lung, 2014; Brooke, 2017) and competent and serious political actors (Shehata and Stacher, 2006). Because of their religious characteristics, they are perceived as trustworthy, pure, honest and incorruptible (Brown, 2012; Tessler, 2015). They are also occasionally seen as

¹This kind of a particularistic advantage is nothing special to Islamists. Other political movements, whether they are ideological, ethnic, religious, or class-based, can have a natural appeal for their own base.

victims due to regime repression which help them to receive sympathy (Guiler, 2020). For others, Islamists are perceived as the agents of economic policies on behalf of the poor such as redistribution (Pepinsky, Liddle, and Mujani, 2012; Masoud, 2014) and appeal to a large section of their societies.

Finally, for others, Islamists appeal to the voters because Islam can be a **refuge** for people. Historical developments such as the failure of secular nationalist regimes and their populist economic policies (Sadowski, 2006), the Arab defeat in the 1967 war with Israel (Kepel, 2003), urbanization and Western influence (Roy, 1994), and economic hardships created psychological strains. As a result, people turn to religion and Islamist politics as a solace to attain divine rewards in the face of worldly failures (Grewal et al., 2019).

Islamist Advantage in Power?

Most studies examining these sources of Islamist advantage naturally focus on less competitive authoritarian contexts where Islamists had rather limited space and resources to operate. This contextual angle of the literature is repeatedly reminded to us by the scholars who work on Islamists' successes. In discussing the temporal durability of Islamists' reputation in post-authoritarian contexts, (Cammatt and Luong, 2014) state that it is “... *contingent on the performance of the previous regime and the political competition they face in the electoral arena.*” Similarly, (Masoud, 2014) argues that the advantage “*is likely to be temporally bounded, limited principally to so-called founding elections ... when the party system is less a “system” than a highly fluid menagerie of organizations.*” Supporting these expectations, (Kurzman and Naqvi, 2010) find that Islamists perform worse on average as competitiveness of the system increases.

While there are such expectations about Islamist advantage being context-bound, these expectations have not been systematically examined in contexts where Islamists are no longer in opposition under authoritarianism.² In contexts where Islamists are disadvantaged within

²Clearly, there are not many cases where Islamists are not in opposition. In some more competitive contexts where Islamists compete, there are significant recent success stories, such as the AKP's successive

a limited political space, they can attract the frustrated masses more than their rivals, thanks to their organizational features, services, images, and the promise of refuge. From their underdog status in comparison to incumbent regimes and some other opposition groups, Islamists sometimes claimed to become the “voice of the voiceless masses” (Hürriyet, 1997). Potentially this overachievement from a position of weakness helps a larger segment of citizens to relate with Islamists better; hence helping them to appeal to people beyond their own base.

However, these conditions significantly change for Islamists when they are incumbents in a competitive environment, as they are no longer underdogs. While this change may take place over time, in this new context, Islamists possess the resources and the organizational prowess of the state. Hence people may not be able to relate with the Islamists as much. Islamist actors may still win and appeal beyond their own base as incumbents; however, albeit counter-intuitively, they do it not only because of their Islamist credentials but also thanks to now being the agents of the state. This leads us to expect that citizens do not vote for Islamists, just because they are Islamists.

***H1 – No Universal Islamist Advantage:** When Islamists are also incumbents, they lose their universal Islamist advantage to appeal beyond their base.*

But what is about incumbency that changes the fortunes of Islamists? Why do they lose their ability to appeal beyond their base? The answer actually lies in the sources of Islamist advantage that were documented in the literature. While those factors provide a premium for Islamists in opposition over the rivals, when they are in power, they are no longer the features that are attributed to Islamists. In this new environment, Islamists are no more the civil agents who distribute social services or the activists who show efficacy through their organizational features. Now, even when Islamists carry out similar activities, they do it through the resources and organizational capacity of state institutions. So, in

electoral victories in Turkey and Ennahda’s persistence at the top of the electoral race while other parties have been disappearing in Tunisia.

people's minds, they are no longer the benevolent and hard-working non-state agents caring for the people but the state agents fulfilling their responsibility.

Furthermore, Islamists lose their reputational advantage and ability of being a refuge. When in opposition, they are compared to non-Islamist incumbents and emerge as a better option for the frustrated masses. They are also relatively free of blame attribution since they have little responsibility and are perceived through good attributes. When masses need solace, Islamists are the good alternatives to the incumbents for being a refuge. However, when Islamists are in power as incumbents, they are the target of blame if things go sour. Hence, they are no longer the alternative to turn to; rather, the ones to blame and turn away from.

In short, Islamists, while enjoying the new benefits derived from being incumbents, no longer earn a premium by the attributes that provided them their advantage. Therefore, we expect that the attributes that potentially benefit Islamists do not create any extra positive impact for their electability than for others.

***H2 – No Premium from Sources of Islamist Advantage:** When Islamists are also incumbents, they do not enjoy any premium from organizational attributes, services, images or being a refuge different than others.*

Islamists Return to their Base

If incumbency in a competitive environment negates the advantage of being an Islamist, what are the electoral fortunes of Islamists under incumbency? We argue that incumbent Islamists attract votes in two ways: First, they benefit from an incumbency advantage and reach to a broader voter base. Second, they can still appeal to their own base successfully and enjoy a particularistic Islamist advantage in elections. Accordingly, Islamist ideology can still play –albeit a different– role under incumbency, despite the loss of the universal Islamist advantage.

Incumbents have a well-documented advantage in elections. While most of the literature developed on individual candidates in the US context under a single member district system (Erikson, 1971; Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart, 2000; Hirano and Snyder, 2009), several studies found evidence for incumbency advantage for parties in proportional representation systems as well (Hainmueller and Kern, 2008; Moral, Ozen, and Tokdemir, 2015; Dahlgaard, 2016).³ According to these arguments, incumbents have access to more resources, have name recognition, tend to be more qualified than the challengers and, therefore, derive an advantage.

Beyond these, during election times, incumbents can benefit from their economic and political performance in office. For example, per what is called the incumbent-oriented voting, economic improvements in the national level can increase the vote for the incumbents (Kiewiet, 1983; Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2013), mainly from the segments of the population who think their economic fortunes have improved under the incumbent government. Therefore, incumbent Islamists can benefit from their role as incumbents and receive support from the portions of the electorate that may not necessarily be their own base.

H3a – Islamists’ Incumbency Advantage: *When Islamists are also incumbents, they attract support from voters beyond their base who are content with their performance as incumbents.*

Beyond the general incumbency advantage, Islamists can still target their own voter base. In order to explore the extent of Islamists’ appeal under incumbency, the voters’ preferences should also be brought into account. Beyond its presented benefits, incumbency over time also provides information, clarifies uncertainties, and decreases electoral volatility. Therefore, in a competitive context where Islamists have been incumbents for some time, Islamists’ performance is well-known, the ideological positions in the party system are rather clarified and the parties in opposition are less fluid. We can find the key to understanding

³There are also other studies reporting an incumbency disadvantage in proportional systems (Klašnja and Titunik, 2017; Ariga, 2015). Therefore, incumbency advantage tend to be less certain and more contingent on several institutional factors in these systems (Moral, Ozen, and Tokdemir, 2015).

voting behavior in such a context by going back to basics. Accordingly, the congruence between candidates and voters emerges as a significant factor that defines the vote choice of the citizens. People do not vote candidates for a specific identity or ideology on average more than others, but they do so only when they find the candidate closer to themselves.

Congruence between candidates and voters is clearly not a novel argument. The origins of this argument can be found in the spatial explanations of voting behavior (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). According to this model, the key to vote choice is the distance between the voter and the candidate. The closer the gap between the voter and the candidate, the more likely for the former to vote for the latter in an election.

These spatial voting arguments stem from more established democracies where ideological positions are clearer. In developing settings where voters' choices and the differences among candidates are not very clear (Lupu, 2015), it is more difficult for spatial voting to take place. However, a long-term incumbency helps to clarify the boundaries of parties and candidates on issues and ideology. This is particularly true for Islamists who are at the forefront in the political arena.

Based on these, we argue that the voting behavior of citizens in competitive contexts with Islamist incumbency follow these spatial arguments in the traditional literature.⁴ Following a long-term incumbency of Islamists, the platform of Islamist parties and candidates become quite distinct than others. Just like in other regions, this creates spatial distance across platforms in competitive contexts. Such differences in platforms allow citizens to better distinguish between alternatives. As a result, citizens tend to support candidates who are more proximate to themselves.

The effect of congruence between the voters and candidates should be reflected both in terms of proximity in Islamist attributes and other policy positions. This has two implications: First, Islamism, while losing its universal advantage, can still be a salient factor

⁴The studies that explain voting through spatial distance and congruence in the Muslim-majority countries are rather few in number (Çarkoğlu and Hinich, 2006; Shalaby and Aydogan, 2020). Supporting our logic, (Çarkoğlu, Krouwel, and Yıldırım, 2019) find that more congruence emerge in countries with longer periods of competitiveness and more settled cleavages.

to appeal to the Islamist base. As a result, Islamists return to their base by appealing to them and still enjoy a particularistic advantage, which can be a substantial advantage where electoral bases are mostly Islamist. Second, citizens support groups and candidates who share similar positions in different policy areas, for the sake of the impact or appeal of the policies, regardless of their association with a specific ideology like Islamism. In other words, redistributive, reformist or social policies can still appeal to people who care about those issues, but not necessarily linking these policies to Islamists.

***H3b – Congruence and Islamists’ Particularistic Advantage:** When Islamists are also incumbents, citizens vote for candidates that are proximate to themselves in identity and policy. This means that Islamists can still appeal their own base and enjoy particularistic advantage.*

Then, how exactly do different Islamist traits operate under particularistic advantage in case of the loss of a universal Islamist advantage? Scholars of religion underline the differences between private and public/political aspects of religiosity (Casanova, 1992; Cochran, 2015). The former refers to the individual aspect of observing religion, such as belief, worshipping in the private sphere, spirituality or wearing religious garment. The latter, on the other hand, is linked to the social and political goals that stem from religion. In a Muslim-majority setting, public/political religiosity refers to religious tendencies as well as the social and political goals that are related with an Islamic society or law.

Following this distinction, we claim that there are two potential channels by which Islamists can appeal to voters similar to themselves: First, both voters and candidates can prioritize identity as a reflection of private religiosity. Therefore, religious voters support Islamists just because they are religious individuals in their daily lives and espouse Islamism as an identity. Second, their base can support Islamists because of their policy positions. The candidates who pursue an Islamist agenda attract the voters who care about public and political reflection of religion. In most cases, the two may go hand in hand and citizens may support Islamists because of both of their Islamist identity and Islamist policies. However,

this may not always be the case and unpacking these two channels of Islamists' appeal gives a leverage to understand how political support actually operates.⁵

In a context where there is a universal Islamist advantage, we would expect a connection between Islamist identity and policy because of a perceived overlap between these two dimensions. In such a case, a religious citizen would support a candidate with an Islamist policy and a citizen who shares an Islamist policy would support a candidate with an Islamist identity, regardless of a specific congruence in identity or policy.

However, losing the universal advantage can also lead to the divorce of these two channels in the eyes of the voters. As they are not voting for Islamists for their organizations, activities or reputation anymore, the specific features of Islamists become more important for voters who look for similar candidates to vote. As a result, candidates can only attract more votes from citizens who share similar Islamist attributes. Based on the distinction between Islamist identity and Islamist policy, we argue that they matter only for citizens who share a similar identity or a policy, separately.

H4 – Channels of Islamist Advantage: *When Islamists are also incumbents, citizens vote for candidates whom they find proximate to themselves in Islamist identity and Islamist policy separately.*

In the next sections, we present our case selection, our research design to test these hypotheses and discuss our findings in detail.

⁵Even though it sounds unintuitive, it is possible to have a discord between identity and policy. Indeed, in the context of Turkey where we test the hypotheses, such discord exists. For example, despite its perceived Islamist identity, the AKP did not pursue Islamist policies strongly in its first two terms in government (2002-2011). An example of pursuing Islamist policies without a clear Islamist identity is the MHP after 2016. A nationalist party that once supported the headscarf ban in the late 1990s, the MHP supported several Islamist policies after becoming a coalition ally with the AKP following 2016.

Research Design

Why Test Islamist Advantage in Turkey?

Even though most Islamist experiments have been in opposition in Muslim-majority countries, the situation for the Turkish Islamists is rather different, which makes it a good case to test and understand the extent of Islamist advantage under incumbency. Firstly, as discussed above, studies on Islamist advantage mostly depend on countries with fewer electoral successes by Islamists. Turkey, however, is a country where there has been a clear Islamist electoral dominance, as parties with Islamist credentials having won the plurality in all elections except two since 1995. Not only the electoral dominance of the Islamists but also their position as incumbents makes the context more salient. As the Islamist AKP government has strengthened its position since the 2010s, now as incumbents for a long time, the Islamists have a control over state resources, enjoy the organizational power of the state, and have the ability to penetrate to the society not just through grassroots organizations but also through national media (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016).

Secondly, unlike most cases in which Islamist advantage is explored, elections in Turkey—despite the recent regressions in the quality of democracy—remained competitive. From this perspective, the Turkish case diverges from most other cases where Islamists had to compete not only from a position of weakness but also in a context with non-competitive and oftentimes fraudulent elections.

Finally, the rich literature on voting behavior in Turkey overlaps with the arguments of the broader literature on Islamist advantage. A substantive number of studies proposed explanations for Islamists' success based on factors such as organizational capability and mobilization (Eligür, 2010), programmatic policies and social service provision (Marschall, Aydogan, and Bulut, 2016; White, 2002) as well as economic, political, and social policy performance (Baslevant, Kirmanoglu, and Senatalar, 2009; Gidengil and Karakoç, 2016), the images and reputation (Sayari, 1996) and their appeal to the periphery of the society

(Mardin, 1973), representing more conservative, religious, and ethnic groups (Çarkoğlu, 2012; Hazama, 2003; Kalaycioğlu, 1994).

In short, higher levels of competitiveness in elections and, more importantly, incumbency status of Islamists in Turkey presents a context to test how much the arguments on Islamist advantage can travel to different contexts. By testing the arguments on Islamist advantage, we can explore whether Islamism has a standalone effect on electability beyond incumbency advantage when the conditions are different than usual.

Experimental Design

We test our hypotheses on Islamist advantage using an original survey conducted right before the 2018 legislative and presidential elections in Turkey. We designed a factorial conjoint experiment, where we randomly manipulated 6 different characteristics of a hypothetical candidate in order to isolate possible confounders such as party affiliation, ethnicity or any other characteristic that may be influential in candidate evaluations and vote choice. In the middle of the survey, each respondent was shown a single video lasting 75-80 seconds, after which she answered questions about the candidate. At the beginning of the video, a hypothetical candidate played by an actor is introduced by a voice-over which provides information about his occupation (grocer or mechanical engineer) and experience in politics (1 year or 15 years). Next, the candidate gives a short election speech announcing his stance on two issues, one regarding an Islamist policy position (women’s primary duty), and another regarding an aspect of the welfare state (state’s responsibility to care for the elderly). We chose the former policy position since it is more likely for Islamists than others to put forward⁶ and the latter because it is orthogonal to Islamist attitudes.

⁶The candidate with the Islamist policy position in the experiment proposes that women stay at home rather than join the workforce. Islamist parties in Turkey do not explicitly propose such policies in their party platforms. However, Islamists’ perspectives on gender is still a salient discussion elsewhere (Moghadam, 2014). Furthermore, several Islamists in Turkey used a similar discourse on women’s participation on labor force, even though not as a policy proposal (Hürriyet, 2009; T24, 2015). Surely, not all Islamists have such a discourse and some of them even disagree with it. However, since this is a salient issue that can distinguish an Islamist candidate from others, we chose this policy position.

Figure 1: Example Screenshots from the Videos



Example 1: Islamist version



Example 2: Non-Islamist version

We also randomly manipulated the identity and the age of the candidate across videos. To manipulate age, we used two different actors, one younger and one older. We manipulated identity of the candidate using multiple factors, which come as a bundle across the treatment and control conditions. The Islamist candidate does not wear a tie, is named “Muhammet Çakır”, begins his speech with the words “Selamun Aleyküm” (a more religious way of greeting people in Turkey) and says “Allah’ın izniyle” (God willing) in his speech. All these ways of signaling religiosity and Islamism among politicians in Turkey.⁷ On the other hand, the non-Islamist candidate wears a tie, is named “Cem Çakır”, begins his speech with the word “Merhaba” (hello) instead of “Selamun Aleyküm” and says “Umarım” (I hope so) instead of “Allah’ın izniyle” (God willing). Hence, the candidate in the nonreligious version sends no signal associated with Islamism.

Every other factor, such as the background or the parts of the speech that are not manipulated, is constant across different videos for the purpose of complete isolation of the treatment effects. Figure 1 presents example screenshots from the videos to demonstrate the visual consistency and the difference (the tie) across different videos.

Employing a factorial conjoint design where we manipulate 6 characteristics, each of which have 2 factors, we end up with $2^6 = 64$ different videos. Table 1 summarizes the

⁷In other Muslim-majority contexts, the greeting phrase “Salaam alaykum” may not necessarily signal religiosity or Islamism. However, in Turkey, where secularism is stronger and the average level of religiosity is lower, use of this phrase by a political candidate in electoral speech is a potential indication for the candidate’s Islamist credentials.

Table 1: Treatment and Control Groups

| Attributes | Levels |
|------------------------|---|
| Islamist Identity | Control: Non-Islamist (0) Treatment: Islamist (1) |
| Islamist Policy | Control: Women can work (0) Treatment: Women should stay home (1) |
| Welfare Policy | Control: Family should take care of elderly (0) Treatment: State should take care of elderly (1) |
| Age | Control: Young (Young actor) (0) Treatment: Old (Old actor) (1) |
| Political Experience | Control: Low / 1 year (0) Treatment: High / 15 years (1) |
| Occupation / Education | Control: Grocer / Less Education (0) Treatment: Engineer / More Education (1) |

randomly manipulated attributes and their levels. By having two attributes of Islamist identity and policy, we are able to signal that the candidate is an Islamist one, through two different treatments. Moreover, as we are interested in seeing the impact of channels of Islamist advantage, this design allows us to test each channel independently. Welfare policy treatment shows us whether a programmatic policy position has an impact on vote choice and whether the voters associate that policy with Islamists or not. The other three attributes, namely age, experience and occupation/education aim to increase the external validity of the results and provide authenticity to the candidate videos.

As seen, we do not present any information about the candidate’s party identification. This may seem a controversial decision as party identification plays an important role in vote choices in Turkey, given the electoral system and rather large electoral districts. However, we decided to leave out a direct mention of the candidate party due to the sensitivity of the issue. Showing a video of a candidate with a party affiliation could have been interpreted as party propaganda, especially during the election season when the fieldwork was conducted, and jeopardized the fieldwork considering the high levels of polarization across party lines in Turkey.

One concern regarding the Islamism treatments and the lack of party identification can be that when a respondent sees an Islamist candidate, she can automatically consider this as a candidate of a specific party, particularly the incumbent AKP. In order to address these concerns, we asked the respondents which party they thought the candidate in the video was from. There is no statistically significant identification of certain traits with certain parties. We further explain and illustrate these checks on party identification with our findings in Appendix Section D.

A conjoint experiment is especially appropriate for our purposes since it allows us to randomly manipulate multiple characteristics of the candidate in a single shot. Random manipulation of the respondent characteristics eliminates concerns of omitted variable or reverse causality biases that may exist in observational studies of candidate choice. At the same time, random manipulation of multiple characteristics increases external validity, and this gives conjoint an advantage over other types of survey-based experimental methods (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto, 2015). Finally, we believe that we are able to mitigate the concerns regarding social desirability bias since the respondent does not need to fear that others will think she evaluates a candidate in a certain way due to the candidate’s Islamism or non-Islamism.

Our experimental design is not a “forced-choice” conjoint where respondents are presented more than one (usually two) candidate profiles, and is asked to choose one. Rather, we opted for what is called a ‘factorial’ design, where we manipulate multiple characteristics, but present the respondent only a single candidate profile. We chose to use candidate speech videos and not to use a forced-choice design because we wanted our experiment to be as realistic as possible during the election season.

Survey and the Variables

The dependent variable, vote choice, asks how likely the respondent is to vote for the candidate she saw in the video. This variable ranges from 0 to 9 (least to most likely to vote) and

we run OLS regressions to evaluate our hypotheses. We control for several individual-level covariates in all models such as the respondent’s age, education level, a Kurdish ethnicity dummy, respondent’s self-declared religiosity, gender, and her policy positions on two issues that tap along two policy treatments, Islamist policy and welfare policy.

We use several indicators in our models that correspond to the sources of Islamist advantage. In order to measure the strength of Islamist organizations we use number of mosques per capita and number of Qur’anic courses students per capita. Mosques and Qur’anic courses, the courses that children attend from a young age for religious education purposes, are institutions where Islamists can organize and build networks per the literature. For services, we benefit from the welfare policy treatment in the experiment. We measure candidate reputation with three variables; how trustworthy, knowledgeable, and corrupt (reversed) the respondent finds the candidate in the video. Finally, to measure the level of material deprivation of the individual we use the type of the building the individual resides in, as coded by the enumerator, whether it could be classified as a shack, an average building or a luxurious building. When there is more than one indicator to test a hypothesis, we only refer to the first one in the main text and present the analyses with other indicators in Appendix Section C.1.

Our data come from an original, nationally representative face-to-face survey in Turkey. The fieldwork for the survey was conducted between May 10 and June 11, 2018, right before the June 24 parliamentary and presidential elections. The dataset contains a total of 834 observations. Table A.15 in Appendix Section E reports the descriptive statistics of each of the treatments and the main individual-level covariates used in the analysis. The balance checks for each of the six treatments in the same section reveal that randomization was successful. Before the evaluation of the hypotheses in the next section, Table 2 provides a summary of all four hypotheses and the operationalization of the variables.

Table 2: Summary of Hypotheses and Variables

| Hypothesis | Concepts | Main Variables |
|--|---|--|
| H1 – No Universal Islamist Advantage | Islamism as identity | Islamist identity treatment |
| | Islamism as policy | Islamist policy treatment |
| H2 – No Premium from Sources of Islamist Advantage | Organizations | Islamist treatments * Mosques per capita in province |
| | Services | Islamist treatments * Welfare policy treatment |
| | Images | Islamist treatments * Candidate trustworthiness |
| | Refuge | Islamist treatments * Type of building |
| H3 – Congruence and Islamists’ Particularistic Advantage | Incumbency Advantage | Islamist Treatment * Perceived Candidate Party * Economic Satisfaction |
| | Congruence in Islamist identity | Islamist identity treatment * Respondent religiosity |
| | Congruence in Islamist policy | Islamist policy treatment * Respondent Islamist policy position |
| H4 – Channels of Islamist Advantage | Separate channels of Islamist advantage | Islamist identity treatment * |
| | | Islamist policy treatment |
| | | Islamist identity treatment * Respondent Islamist policy position |
| | | Islamist policy treatment * Respondent religiosity |

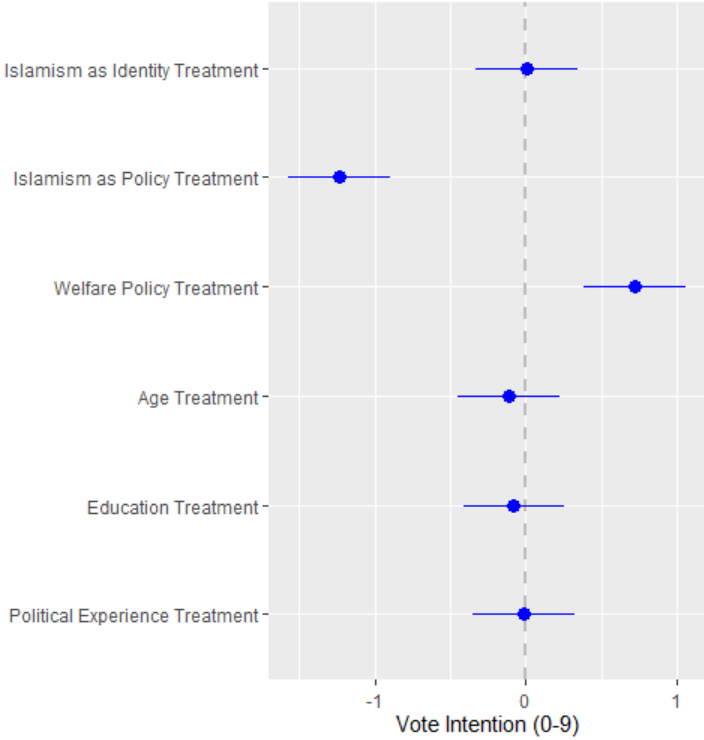
Findings

No Universal Islamist Advantage

We evaluate all hypotheses with models that include covariate adjustment in order to improve the precision of the estimates (Gerber and Green 2012). We first test Hypothesis 1 on the waning effect of Islamist advantage under incumbency. As seen in the Figure 2, we cannot

find any evidence for any universal Islamist advantage in our sample.⁸ The effect of the Islamist identity treatment is estimated to be very close to zero (-0.043) and not significant, while the Islamist policy treatment has a very large negative coefficient (-1.231) that is estimated to be significantly different than 0. These results, together, show that Islamism as neither an identity, nor as a policy position makes a candidate more electable on average. In fact, the Islamist policy treatment brings an overall penalty to the candidate. Among the other treatments, pro-welfare candidates receive a positive premium from the voters (with a coefficient of 0.711) while the effects of the other characteristics (age, education and political experience of the candidates) are not estimated to be different than 0. Overall, confirming Hypothesis 1, we do not find any evidence for a universal Islamist advantage.

Figure 2: Coefficient Plot for Main Treatment Effects



We report the results of the models where we test Hypothesis 2 on the sources of Islamist advantage in the plots showing the estimated treatment effects in Figure 3. If

⁸The regression tables for all the figures are presented in Appendix B.

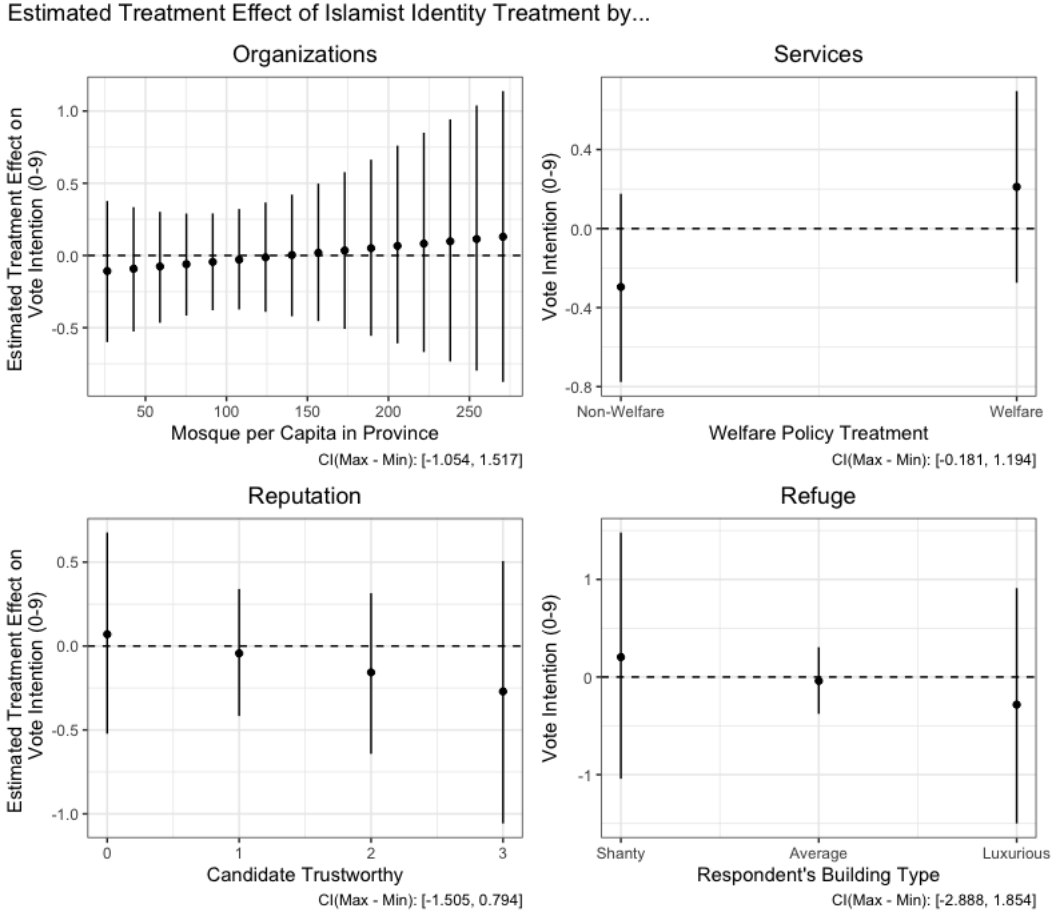
Islamists benefit from organizational attributes, services that they provide and reputation more than non-Islamist candidates in order to reach out to a larger population and if people take refuge in Islamists in times of difficulty, we should see a premium from these features when the candidate is Islamist. In each model, we interact the variable of interest with the Islamist identity treatment. The results also hold when Islamist policy treatment is employed as we present in the Appendix Table A.7.

The top left plot in Figure 3 shows the interaction of the Islamist identity treatment with the number of mosques per 10,000 people in the province that the respondent lives to test whether Islamism brings an advantage where organizational infrastructure is more powerful. We do not see any premium by higher mosque density, as the coefficient of the interaction term is very small (0.001) and not significantly estimated. We also run models with Quranic course students per capita, instead of number of mosques as presented in Appendix Table A.8 which yields similar results.

The top right plot focuses on the service and welfare provision aspect of Islamist advantage. Here, we have a treatment-by-treatment interaction between the Islamist identity and welfare policy treatments. Islamists should attract more votes when they propose welfare policies if they are associated with welfare provision. The coefficient of the interaction effect is not significantly estimated.

In order to test whether there is any Islamist advantage due to Islamists having better reputation, we interacted the Islamist identity treatment with the candidate's level of trustworthiness as evaluated by the respondent as reported in the bottom left plot. While reputation clearly increases the electability of a candidate (see Appendix Table A.2), it does not operate differently for Islamist candidates. This means that Islamist candidates do not enjoy any premium thanks to better perceived credentials. In order to check for other aspects of candidate reputation, we run models with the interactions between the Islamism treatments and how politically knowledgeable and how corrupt the respondent perceived the candidate to be, as reported in Appendix Table A.9 which provide similar results.

Figure 3: Treatment Effects for the Sources of Islamist Advantage



Finally, in order to check whether Islamists are elected as a refuge by materially more deprived individuals, we interact the Islamism treatments with the type of the residence of the respondent. If the refuge argument is true, people living in adverse conditions should be more likely to vote for the Islamist candidates. However, the bottom right plot in Figure 3 does not confirm this expectation, as the coefficient of the interaction term is not significant.

To reemphasize, none of the four possible sources of Islamist advantage (organizational strength, services, images, and refuge) as argued in the literature is confirmed with our experiment. With these results we can confirm Hypothesis 2 and say that Islamists do not receive any advantage through these four sources in a context where Islamists have been enjoying incumbency for almost two decades.

Incumbency and Islamists' Particularistic Advantage

After establishing the lack of a universal Islamist advantage under incumbency, we now turn to the channels that help incumbent Islamists win. As proposed in Hypothesis 3, Islamists still win despite the loss of universal Islamist advantage thanks to two factors: incumbency advantage and particularistic Islamist advantage.

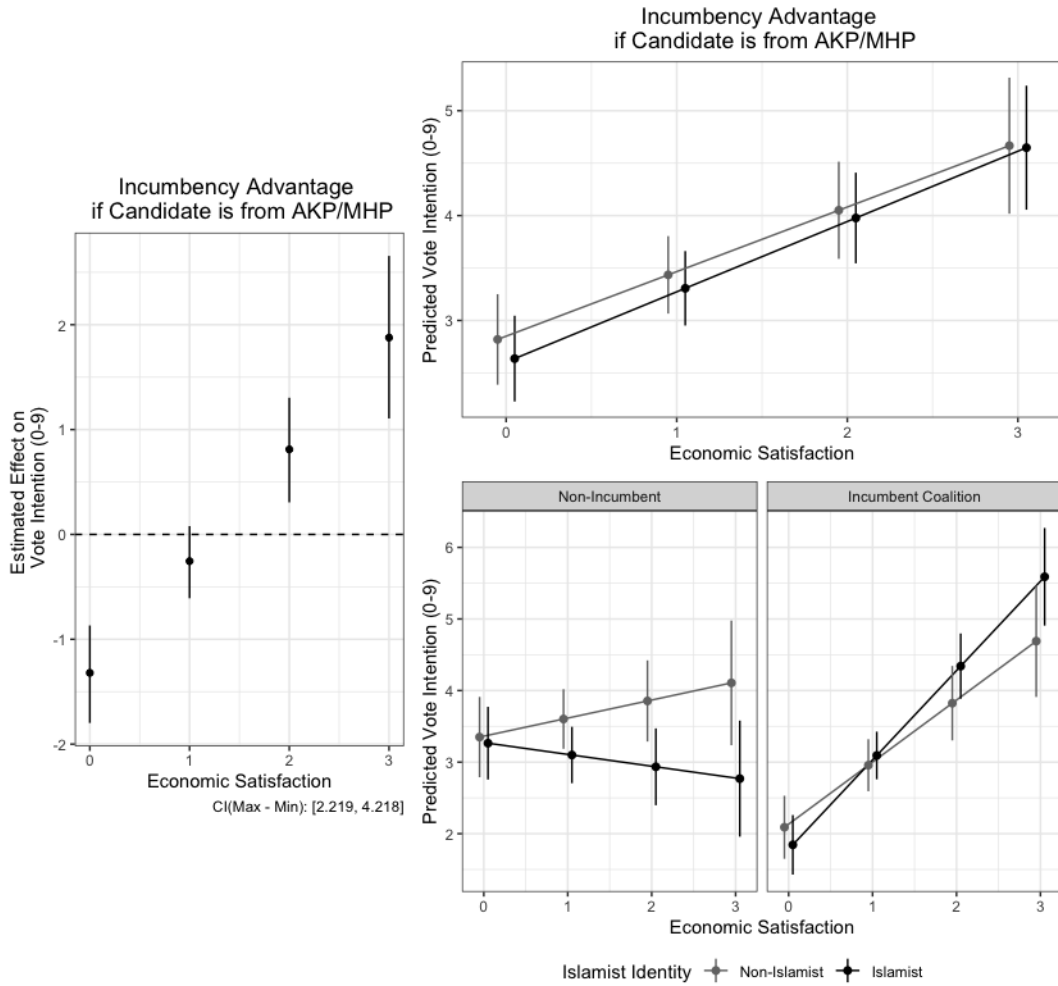
As we do not have party affiliations in our experimental design, we have used a creative way to tap into a potential incumbency effect. After the experimental treatments, the respondents were asked to guess which party that candidate is from. Regardless of receiving any Islamist treatment or not, the respondents who chose either of the AKP and its ally the MHP believe that the candidate is from the incumbent coalition. Hence, when they decide to vote for the candidate in the video, they do it with that mindset. Using interactions with this variable, we explore which respondents are more likely to vote for the incumbents.

The left-hand side plot in Figure 4 tests the incumbency advantage by interacting the incumbent coalition dummy with the respondent's economic evaluations. Per the incumbent-oriented voting argument, if citizens are content with the government's performance, then they are more likely to vote for the incumbent. We find a very strong and positive effect which shows that the respondents who are happy with the incumbent's economic performance tend to vote for candidates perceived as incumbent.⁹

Further, we explore how Islamists benefit from incumbency advantage by comparing the two plots on the right-hand side of Figure 4. On the top-right, we plot the likelihood of vote by respondents' economic satisfaction, that is conditional on the candidate's Islamist identity. As seen, the respondents who are content with the economic situation in the country are more likely to vote for the candidate regardless of the candidate being an Islamist or not. Accordingly, the economic situation in the country, by itself, does not affect the electability of Islamists.

⁹Following (Moral, Ozen, and Tokdemir, 2015)'s finding that incumbency advantage in Turkey is contingent on district magnitude, we run all the models adding district magnitude of respondent's province as an additional control. The results (not reported) remain robust to this additional test.

Figure 4: Incumbency Advantage in Voting

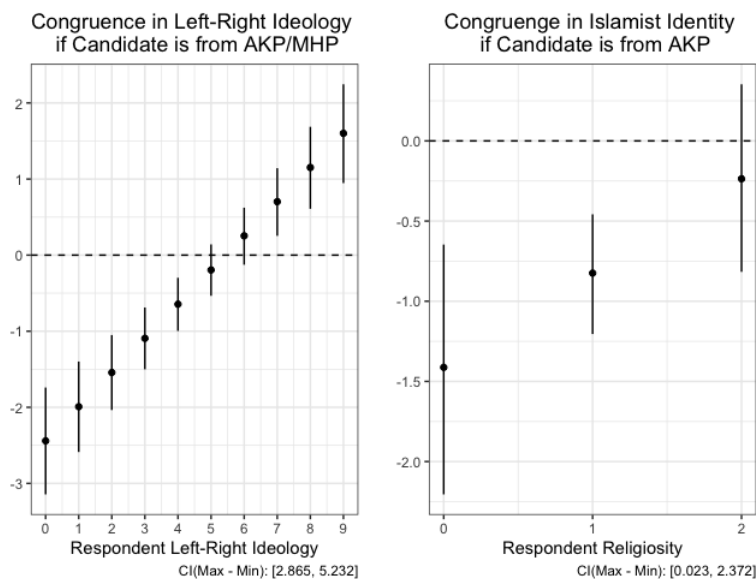


In order to show how incumbency affects this relationship, we include a three-way interaction term between economic satisfaction, candidate Islamist identity, and the candidates' perceived party by the respondent, on the bottom-right of Figure 4. The results show that Islamists do not receive any benefit from respondents' economic satisfaction if they are in opposition. But when the Islamist candidate is perceived to be from the incumbent coalition, he receives a statistically significant premium in being voted for, in comparison to the non-Islamist candidate.

Confirming Hypothesis 3a, these results show that the Islamists can appeal to a large voter base thanks to an incumbency advantage. So, the advantage that Islamists enjoy in this context originates not because they are Islamists but because they are incumbent Islamists.

While Islamists appeal to a broader voter base thanks to the incumbency advantage, they can still get votes from their own base. Exploring that, Figure 5 tests congruence in voting proposed in Hypothesis 3b. We have argued that competitiveness and long-term incumbency of the Islamists clarify party lines better and increase the salience of spatial voting. If so, we expect citizens to vote for candidates who are similar to themselves in ideology. We evaluate the hypothesis by interacting respondents' left-right ideology with incumbent dummy and respondents' religiosity with AKP dummy.¹⁰ The plots in Figure 5 show that respondents are indeed more likely to vote for a candidate when they think that they are from parties that are close to themselves in ideology and identity, confirming the role of congruence in voting behavior.

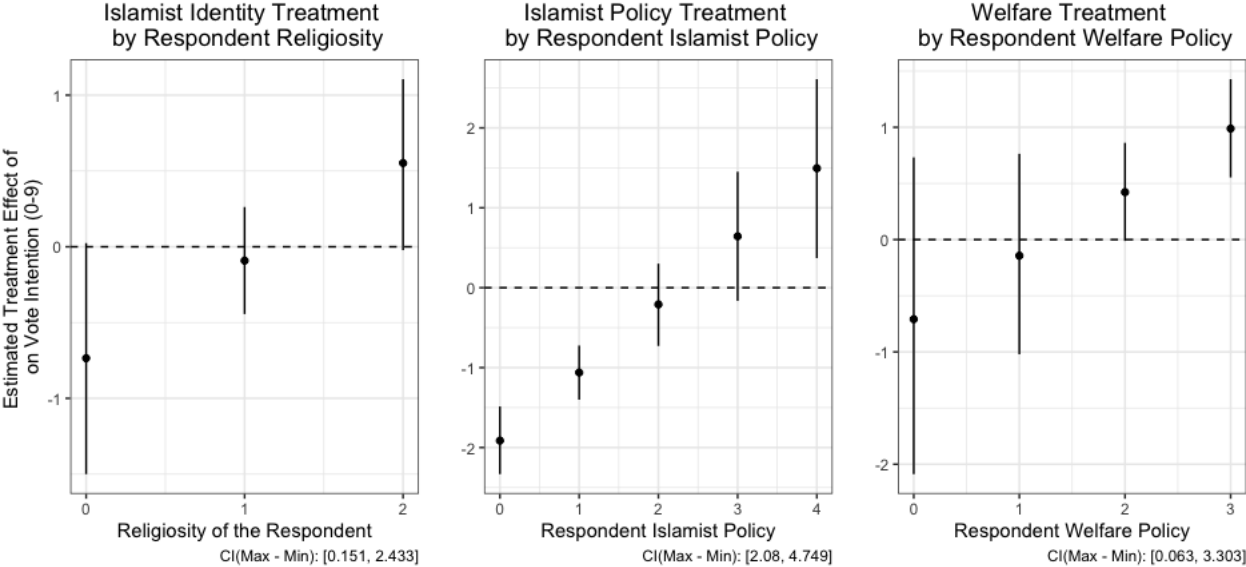
Figure 5: Impact of Congruence on Vote Choice



¹⁰Both incumbent parties, the AKP and the MHP, are right-wing parties. See Appendix Table A.14 for a description of the positions the main parties in Turkey. The result in Figure 5 holds when tested with multiple alternative channels, as we present in Appendix Table A.10, and with AKP dummy as an indicator of incumbency as we report in Appendix Table A.11

We further test the congruence hypothesis in Figure 6, where we interact each of Islamist identity, Islamist policy and welfare policy treatments with the corresponding attributes of the respondents that tap into respondents’ religiosity as well as Islamist policy and welfare policy positions.

Figure 6: Impact of Congruence on Vote Choice (Experiment)



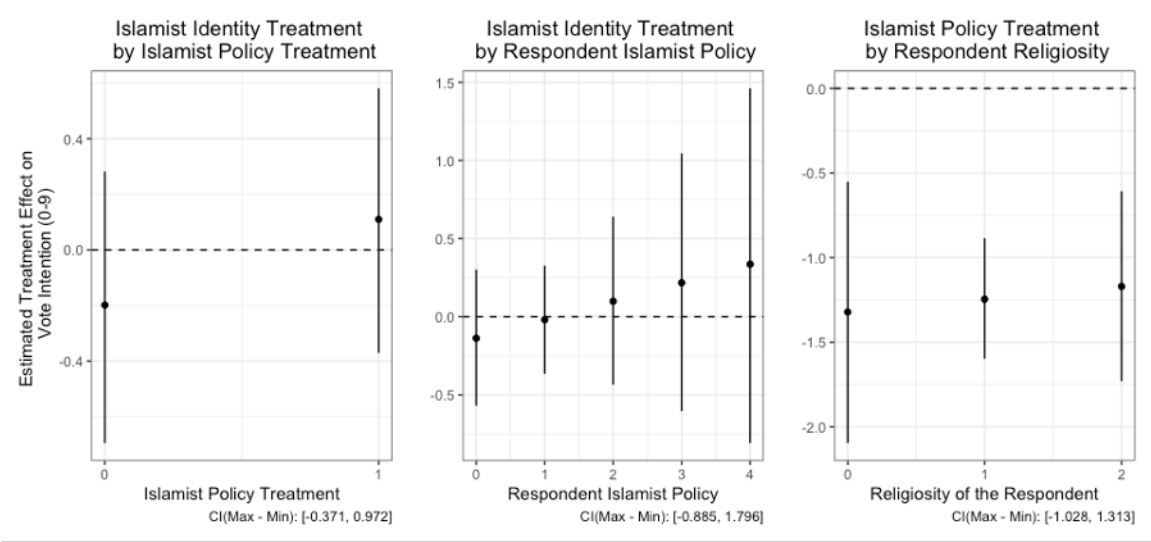
The leftmost plot evaluates the congruence in Islamist identity. The interaction effect between the Islamist identity treatment and the respondent’s level of religiosity is positive, large (0.673), and statistically significant. The plot in the middle illustrates congruence in Islamist policy. The coefficient of this interaction effect too is positive, large (0.852), and significant. On the right-hand side plot, showing congruence in material policy, the coefficient of the interaction effect between welfare policy treatment and respondent welfare policy position is positive, large (0.564) and statistically significant, once again confirming the congruence hypothesis. In all three tests, candidates receive a premium from voters who are similar to themselves and are penalized by the voters who have the opposite position.

These results on incumbency and congruence explain how incumbent Islamists can still win despite the loss of their universal advantage. First, they benefit from being incumbents and appeal potential non-Islamist voters by their services and performance as state agents.

Second, because of the congruence in voting patterns, Islamists can still attract voters from their own base. As likely Islamist citizens vote for Islamist candidates, Islamists can still enjoy a particularistic advantage.

Finally, in Figure 7, we test our last hypothesis on the separate channels of Islamist advantage. In the plot on the left, we add a treatment-by-treatment interaction, between the Islamist identity and policy treatments. The coefficient of the interaction term is positive but not significantly estimated (0.300). In the plot in the middle and on the right, we interact Islamist identity treatment with respondent Islamist policy position and Islamist policy treatment with respondent religiosity. Neither of the interaction coefficients (0.117 and 0.259 respectively) are significant. The results of these three models suggest that there is no cross-channel Islamist advantage. The identity and policy channels of Islamism operate separately and without reinforcing each other. Hypothesis 4 that expects no cross-channel interaction is thus confirmed.

Figure 7: Separate Channels of Islamist Advantage



All in all, we find that there is no universal Islamist advantage in the Turkish context, where a party with Islamist credentials have been in power since 2002. None of the sources of Islamist advantage that the literature (organization, services, reputation or refuge due to material deprivation) suggests bring an Islamist candidate any universal advantage; however,

we find an incumbency advantage and very strong particularistic appeal of the Islamist candidates to voters who are similar to themselves. One crucial aspect of this particularistic appeal, the two different aspects of Islamism—identity and policy—not reinforcing each other but operating through separate channels suggests that there is much value to keep these distinct when operationalizing Islamism.

In Appendix Section C.2 we discuss the results of further robustness checks and evaluate alternative explanations, none of which change the results. These include removing the individual-level covariates, checking whether the effect of the Islamist policy treatment is conditional on respondent gender, overall level of secularity of our sample, controlling for the district magnitude and electoral competitiveness in all models, and finally using support for sharia as an alternative measure for Islamist policy position.

Conclusion: The Extent of Islamist Advantage under Incumbency

Overall, our findings suggest four different implications both for the broader literature on voting behavior in the Muslim-majority countries and for Turkey: First, while the Islamist advantage arguments may explain voting behavior in several countries, they can be limited by context. By testing these arguments which originated from cases where Islamists are in opposition in case of an Islamist incumbency, we counter-intuitively show that Islamist candidates do not necessarily win in such cases because of their Islamist credentials. In a Muslim-majority context such as Turkey we do not find support for a universal Islamist advantage under incumbency.

Our findings show that Islamists can still receive a premium as incumbents through other measures. While benefiting from a general incumbency advantage, they can also appeal to their own base. In this sense, one key to understanding voting behavior in such Muslim-majority contexts can easily be found in the classical literature on congruence. With its

higher levels of competitiveness and long-term incumbency, Turkey resembles some cases in other regions where spatial arguments originated.

Second, Islamists usually acquire an advantage through different sources; yet, these may be contingent on being in the opposition where state functions weakly. Whereas organizational structure, services, reputation and role as a refuge are proposed as important factors for Islamist advantage in other Muslim-majority contexts, we find no evidence that these factors help Islamists' electoral fortunes under incumbency.

As a more theoretical and regional implication, this finding supports our expectation on the context-specific aspect of Islamist advantage arguments. While organizational structure, welfare provision or reputation are strong suits of Islamists in several Muslim-majority countries (such as Egypt or Lebanon) or in other time periods (as in Turkey during previous decades), they are by-products of weaker state capacity, state's role in welfare provision and being in opposition. Islamists acquire advantage when states perform inadequately in meeting citizens' needs. However, where the state is capable in these aspects and/or Islamists carry out their activities as agents of the state, organizational attributes or social services provision are not always associated with the Islamists.

Third, despite the lack of a universal Islamist advantage, as an extension of the congruence between voters and candidates, we still see a role of the Islamist traits in voting behavior in the form of a particularistic Islamist advantage. Candidates who signal Islamist identity are more likely to receive votes from religious respondents and candidates who adopt an Islamist policy are more likely to receive votes from respondents with Islamist policy positions. Interestingly, the religiosity of the respondent does not affect the treatment effect of Islamist policy and the stance of the respondent on the Islamist policy does not affect the treatment effect of Islamist identity. Together, these results indicate two separate and exclusive channels via which Islamism affects vote choice: identity and policy. These different channels seem not to be interacting with or reinforcing each other.

With this finding, we believe that this study makes an important theoretical contribution to the literature on Islamist advantage and religion and politics. Since existing studies have not made a clear distinction between different channels of Islamist advantage, its mechanisms were unclear. By unpacking these channels, we illustrate that there are different mechanisms through which Islamist advantage operates. Since religion manifests itself in different forms in political life, such through identities and policies, unpacking these manifestations help us to understand how religion may shape political attitudes. In this light, a potential next step in future studies would be to explore who votes for Islamists based on their identity and who based on their policies.

Finally, our findings suggest that voters care about programmatic policy positions regardless of which type of candidate favors it and regardless of a candidate's other characteristics. This is potentially related with competitiveness of the system and stabilized party system due to long-term incumbency.¹¹ In this specific case, voters are more likely to vote for the pro-welfare candidates. Similarly, the policy position that does not favor women's participation in work force does significantly decrease the support for the candidate. This indicates that, people care about programmatic policy positions regardless of the candidate's profile and do not hesitate to reward or punish a candidate even if it is an Islamist policy under Islamist incumbency.

This suggests that in a context like Turkey where the Islamist-secular divide is salient and along which voters are highly polarized, voters evaluate candidates not only based on their Islamism, but also programmatic policy positions. In a highly polarized context as Turkey (Erdoğan and Uyan Semerci, 2018), we would expect programmatic voting especially in areas that are related with the polarized cleavage (Lachat, 2008). The fact that Islamist policy determines the vote choice for the candidate confirms this expectation. Rather unexpectedly, welfare policy, which is orthogonal to the Islamist-secular divide, is a strong predictor of vote choice as well. This shows that voters care about programmatic policy

¹¹See also: (Çarkoğlu, Krouwel, and Yıldırım, 2019)

positions regardless of the Islamist-secular divide and they are able to ignore who the candidate is when they evaluate based on policy. This is a positive sign for the voting behavior that can potentially drive the politicians to service-oriented policies in order to attract votes (Adiguzel, Cansunar, and Corekcioglu, 2019).

These findings question some of the arguments about Islamist advantage and remind us about their contextual limits. Especially in more competitive Muslim-majority contexts under Islamist incumbency, there is value in staying in dialogue with theories originating from other regions while also benefiting from such theories that explain the sui generis dynamics of this politically fervent region.

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Online Appendix

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A Dependent Variable Description

Table A.1: Dependent Variable

| Dependent Variable | Exact Wording (Turkish. English translation in parantheses) | Range |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Likelihood to vote | <i>Varsayalım ki videodaki aday sizin ilinizden milletvekili aday oldu. Ona oy verme olasılığınız 10 üzerinden 1 en düşük, 10 en yüksek olacak şekilde kaç olurdu?</i> (Suppose the candidate in the video were to run for office in your province, what would your probability to vote for him be, 1 being lowest and 10 being highest?) | Interval from 1 (would certainly not vote) to 10 (would certainly vote) |

B Tables for Figures

Table A.2: Regression Models for Figures 2 and 3

| | Dependent Variable: | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.043 (0.172) | -0.137 (0.306) | -0.299 (0.241) | 0.073 (0.303) | 0.204 (0.644) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.231*** (0.171) | -1.231*** (0.171) | -1.236*** (0.171) | -0.323 (0.197) | -1.230*** (0.171) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.711*** (0.172) | 0.717*** (0.173) | 0.441* (0.249) | -0.199 (0.196) | 0.711*** (0.173) |
| Mosques per capita | | 0.001 (0.002) | | | |
| Islamist Identity * Mosques | | 0.001 (0.003) | | | |
| Islamist Identity * Welfare Policy | | | 0.515 (0.343) | | |
| Candidate Trustworthy | | | | 2.006*** (0.151) | |
| Islamist Identity * Cand. Trustw. | | | | -0.114 (0.196) | |
| Type of Residence | | | | | 0.136 (0.477) |
| Islamist Identity * Residence | | | | | -0.242 (0.608) |
| Constant | 3.867*** (0.692) | 3.794*** (0.713) | 3.972*** (0.695) | 0.797 (0.772) | 3.736*** (0.862) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 791 | 791 | 791 | 355 | 791 |
| R ² | 0.121 | 0.122 | 0.123 | 0.574 | 0.121 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.106 | 0.105 | 0.108 | 0.555 | 0.104 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.3: Regression Models for Figure 4

| | Dependent Variable: | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.159 (0.174) | -0.183 (0.231) | -0.085 (0.370) |
| Economic Satisfaction | -0.080 (0.138) | 0.616*** (0.129) | 0.252 (0.194) |
| Candidate Incumbent | -1.324*** (0.242) | -0.367** (0.178) | -1.260*** (0.343) |
| Economic Satisfaction * Candidate Incumbent | 1.068*** (0.174) | | 0.614** (0.250) |
| Islamist Identity Tr. * Econ. Satisfaction | | 0.055 (0.168) | -0.417 (0.260) |
| Islamist Identity Tr. * Candidate Incumbent | | | -0.160 (0.464) |
| Islamist Identity Tr. * Econ. Satisfaction * Candidate Incumbent | | | 0.799** (0.336) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.208*** (0.173) | -1.247*** (0.173) | -1.168*** (0.169) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.641*** (0.175) | 0.709*** (0.176) | 0.577*** (0.171) |
| Constant | 2.728*** (0.778) | 3.166*** (0.727) | 3.701*** (0.726) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 681 | 719 | 719 |
| R ² | 0.272 | 0.201 | 0.252 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.252 | 0.183 | 0.232 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.4: Regression Models for Figure 5

| | Dependent Variable: | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | |
| | (1) | (2) |
| Candidate Incumbent | -2.433*** (0.353) | |
| Candidate AKP | | -1.407*** (0.400) |
| Left to Right Ideology | -0.135** (0.054) | |
| Respondent Religiosity | | -0.126 (0.224) |
| Left-Right * Cand. Incumbent | 0.449*** (0.066) | |
| Respondent Religiosity * Cand. AKP | | 0.583* (0.299) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.082 (0.169) | -0.059 (0.173) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.140*** (0.170) | -1.225*** (0.173) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.662*** (0.170) | 0.724*** (0.175) |
| Constant | 3.953*** (0.724) | 4.030*** (0.730) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 713 | 724 |
| R ² | 0.256 | 0.205 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.240 | 0.188 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.5: Regression Models for Figure 6

| | Dependent Variable: | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.853** (0.393) | -0.048 (0.169) | -0.033 (0.171) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.228*** (0.170) | -1.912*** (0.216) | -1.236*** (0.171) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.727*** (0.172) | 0.715*** (0.170) | -0.702 (0.711) |
| Respondent Religiosity | -0.140 (0.217) | 0.217 (0.153) | 0.209 (0.155) |
| Respondent Islamist Policy Position | 0.384*** (0.092) | -0.039 (0.124) | 0.403*** (0.092) |
| Respondent Welfare Policy Position | -0.0003 (0.139) | -0.052 (0.138) | -0.245 (0.182) |
| Cand. Islamist Identity * Respondent Religiosity | 0.673** (0.294) | | |
| Cand. Islamist Policy * Respondent Islamist Policy | | 0.852*** (0.170) | |
| Cand. Welfare Policy * Respondent Welfare Policy | | | 0.564** (0.275) |
| Constant | 4.237*** (0.709) | 4.366*** (0.689) | 4.431*** (0.744) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 791 | 791 | 791 |
| R ² | 0.127 | 0.148 | 0.126 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.111 | 0.133 | 0.110 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.6: Regression Models for Figure 7

| | Dependent Variable: | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.195 (0.245) | -0.136 (0.220) | -0.043 (0.172) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.389*** (0.249) | -1.231*** (0.171) | -1.320*** (0.394) |
| Respondent Islamist Policy Position | 0.387*** (0.092) | 0.323** (0.130) | 0.386*** (0.092) |
| Respondent Religiosity | 0.210 (0.155) | 0.209 (0.155) | 0.172 (0.214) |
| Cand. Islamist Identity * Cand. Islamist Policy | 0.300 (0.345) | | |
| Cand. Islamist Identity * Respondent Islamist Policy | | 0.117 (0.173) | |
| Cand. Islamist Policy * Respondent Religiosity | | | 0.075 (0.295) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.708*** (0.172) | 0.712*** (0.172) | 0.710*** (0.173) |
| Constant | 3.939*** (0.697) | 3.906*** (0.695) | 3.916*** (0.720) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 791 | 791 | 791 |
| R ² | 0.122 | 0.121 | 0.121 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.106 | 0.106 | 0.105 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

C Robustness Checks and Alternative Explanations

C.1 Results with Alternative Variables

Table A.7: Results Using Islamist Policy Treatment for Sources of Islamist Advantage

| | Dependent Variable: | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.046 (0.172) | -0.040 (0.172) | -0.065 (0.190) | -0.045 (0.172) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.199*** (0.307) | -1.087*** (0.240) | -0.215 (0.323) | -1.442** (0.632) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.716*** (0.173) | 0.859*** (0.244) | -0.204 (0.196) | 0.712*** (0.173) |
| Mosques per capita | 0.001 (0.002) | | | |
| Islamist Pol. Tr. * Mosques | -0.0003 (0.003) | | | |
| Islamist Pol Tr. * Welfare Pol. Tr. | | -0.292 (0.342) | | |
| Candidate Trustworthy | | | 1.990*** (0.152) | |
| Islamist Pol. Tr. * Trustworthy | | | -0.090 (0.206) | |
| Type of Residence | | | | -0.125 (0.441) |
| Islamist Pol. Tr. * Residence | | | | 0.207 (0.596) |
| Constant | 3.747*** (0.714) | 3.778*** (0.700) | 0.824 (0.772) | 3.996*** (0.847) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 791 | 791 | 355 | 791 |
| R ² | 0.122 | 0.122 | 0.574 | 0.121 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.105 | 0.106 | 0.555 | 0.104 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.8: Robustness Checks with Other Measures of Organizational Strength

| | Dependent Variable: Vote Intention (0-9) | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| | (1) | (2) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -0.394 (0.502) | -0.047 (0.172) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -1.232*** (0.171) | -1.366*** (0.502) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.726*** (0.173) | 0.726*** (0.173) |
| Respondent Religiosity | 0.206 (0.155) | 0.205 (0.155) |
| Respondent Islamist Policy Position | 0.385*** (0.092) | 0.384*** (0.092) |
| Respondent Welfare Policy Position | 0.045 (0.143) | 0.041 (0.143) |
| Qur'an Course Students per resident | 10.678 (20.943) | 17.433 (20.538) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment * Qur'an Course Students | 21.235 (28.744) | |
| Islamist Policy Treatment * Qur'an Course Students | | 8.366 (28.737) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 791 | 791 |
| R ² | 0.124 | 0.123 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.107 | 0.106 |

Note: OLS Regression. Standard Errors in Parantheses

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.9: Robustness Checks with Other Measures of Reputation

| | Dependent Variable: Vote Intention (0-9) | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment | -1.091 (0.700) | -0.328 (0.262) | 1.027* (0.577) | 0.005 (0.287) |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | -0.916*** (0.264) | -0.587 (0.728) | -0.868*** (0.283) | -1.479** (0.573) |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 0.166 (0.274) | 0.188 (0.275) | 0.587** (0.292) | 0.566* (0.294) |
| Respondent Religiosity | -0.208 (0.234) | -0.179 (0.233) | 0.445* (0.270) | 0.455* (0.271) |
| Respondent Islamist Policy Position | 0.069 (0.199) | 0.011 (0.200) | 0.373 (0.237) | 0.355 (0.238) |
| Respondent Welfare Policy Position | 0.043 (0.133) | 0.063 (0.135) | 0.660*** (0.176) | 0.680*** (0.177) |
| Candidate Knowledge | 1.434*** (0.207) | 1.680*** (0.223) | | |
| Islamist Identity Treatment * Candidate Knowledge | 0.350 (0.298) | | | |
| Islamist Policy Treatment * Candidate Knowledge | | -0.148 (0.310) | | |
| Candidate Corruptness | | | -0.398* (0.238) | -0.951*** (0.220) |
| Islamist Identity Treatment * Candidate Corruptness | | | -0.625** (0.309) | |
| Islamist Policy Treatment * Candidate Corruptness | | | | 0.373 (0.311) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 248 | 248 | 249 | 249 |
| R ² | 0.405 | 0.402 | 0.269 | 0.261 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.367 | 0.364 | 0.222 | 0.214 |

Note: OLS Regressions. Standard Errors in Parantheses

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.10: Robustness Checks with Other Measures of Incumbency and Congruence
(Candidate Perception = Incumbent Coalition)

| | Dependent Variable: | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
| Candidate Incumbent | -2.433*** (0.353) | -1.405*** (0.418) | -0.943*** (0.230) |
| Economic Satisfaction | 0.584*** (0.088) | 0.688*** (0.086) | 0.628*** (0.087) |
| Left to Right Ideology | -0.135** (0.054) | | |
| Respondent Religiosity | | -0.339 (0.254) | |
| Respondent Islamist Policy | | | -0.022 (0.137) |
| Left-Right Ideology * Candidate Incumbent | 0.449*** (0.066) | | |
| Respondent Religiosity * Candidate Incumbent | | 0.816*** (0.312) | |
| Respondent Islamist Policy * Candidate Incumbent | | | 0.683*** (0.180) |
| Constant | 3.953*** (0.724) | 4.436*** (0.763) | 3.711*** (0.678) |
| Respondent-Level Covariates | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Other Treatments | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Observations | 713 | 724 | 721 |
| R ² | 0.256 | 0.197 | 0.218 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.240 | 0.180 | 0.202 |

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table A.11: Robustness Checks with Other Measures of Incumbency and Congruence
(Candidate Perception = AKP)

| | Dependent Variable: | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Vote Intention (0-9) | | | |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Candidate AKP | -1.394*** (0.236) | -2.334*** (0.341) | -1.407*** (0.400) | -1.161*** (0.224) |
| Economic Satisfaction | 0.109 (0.126) | 0.583*** (0.088) | 0.669*** (0.086) | 0.603*** (0.087) |
| Left to Right Ideology | 0.102*** (0.038) | -0.070 (0.050) | | |
| Respondent Religiosity | -0.026 (0.163) | | -0.126 (0.224) | |
| Respondent Islamist Policy | 0.229** (0.102) | | | 0.040 (0.125) |
| Economic Satisfaction * Candidate AKP | 0.850*** (0.171) | | | |
| Left-Right * Candidate AKP | | 0.376*** (0.065) | | |
| Resp. Religiosity * Candidate AKP | | | 0.583* (0.299) | |
| Resp. Islamist Policy * Candidate AKP | | | | 0.646*** (0.179) |
| Constant | 2.631*** (0.776) | 3.652*** (0.717) | 4.030*** (0.730) | 3.589*** (0.667) |
| Observations | 681 | 713 | 724 | 721 |
| R ² | 0.268 | 0.253 | 0.205 | 0.227 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.248 | 0.237 | 0.188 | 0.210 |

Note:

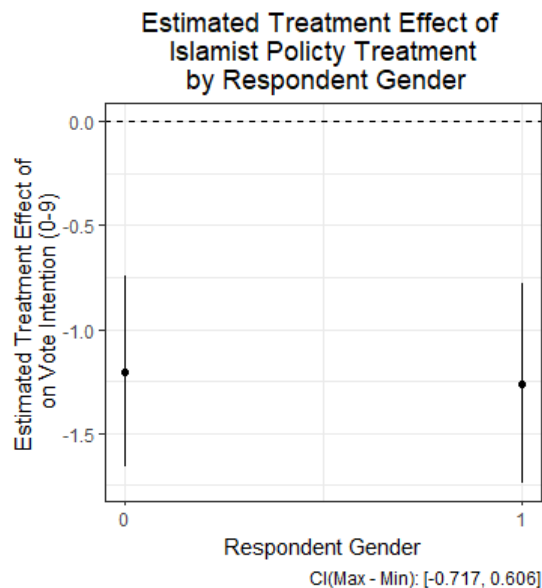
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

C.2 Further Robustness Checks and Alternative Explanations

One straightforward concern about the results can be that certain “bad controls” we include in the models in our main models may be driving the results. In order to address this concern, we run all the models without including any covariates (results not reported). The results do not change.

Another concern to be addressed is regarding the Islamist policy treatment. One worry here can be that on average women may be much more likely to react negatively to this statement. In order to check whether women and men react differently to this treatment we interacted the respondent’s gender with the treatment. We find no difference across genders; the treatment effect is negative and very similar in each subgroup as we visualize in figure A.1.

Figure A.1: Interaction Between Islamist Policy Treatment and Respondent Gender



One can also worry that the sample may be too secular overall and that secular people can be more likely to negatively react to this treatment. This may be the reason why on average we see a negative reaction to this treatment among the population and also why we do not see any difference across genders. In order to address this concern, we can refer back to the descriptives in table A.15 where we provide the descriptive statistics of the

sample. The descriptive statistics of the respondent in this survey are representative of the Turkish population overall. We also compared our sample to the sample in the ISSP 2018 survey conducted in Turkey, another nationally representative survey. We tested if the characteristics of the sample were different across the two surveys and none of the t-tests that compare the mean values of the characteristics of the two samples are significantly estimated. Thus, we can argue that our sample is representative of the Turkish population and not any different in terms of religiosity.

We also believe that we need to address the fact that Turkish electoral system is Proportional Representation and some electoral districts have large district magnitudes, which may render some Turkish voters unaccustomed to vote based on candidate characteristics, the number of candidates from each party in their district being too many. In order to address this, we control for the district magnitude of each observation, knowing in which district each respondent resides). The results (not reported) show that results do not change.

Next, we checked if the results changed according to the level of electoral competitiveness in the electoral district. The reasoning here is that if an electoral district is more competitive and hence a given voter's vote is more pivotal, she can pay more attention to elections and who the candidate is. We used the differences in the vote percentages between the first and the second parties in the respondent's district in June 2018 parliamentary elections as a measure of the district's competitiveness. The results (not reported) are no different when we include this variable. We also interacted each of the three major treatments (Islamist identity, Islamist policy and welfare policy) with district magnitude and electoral competitiveness measures in order to check if the effects of these treatments are different across different district magnitudes and levels of electoral competitiveness. The results (not reported) indicate that the treatment effects are not different across different values of the district magnitude and electoral competitiveness variables.

In order to check for the robustness of one of our key variables, Islamist policy, we replicated all the models using the respondent's support for Sharia law as another measure

of having (more general) Islamist policy preferences. This way, we also provide a robustness check if this indicator captures a broader dimension of Islamist policy. Table A.12 presents the wording of the question.

Table A.12: Support for Sharia Law

| Exact Wording (Turkish. English Translation in parentheses) | Answer Categories |
|---|--|
| Lütfen şimdi okuyacağım ifadeye ne ölçüde katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtiniz: Türkiye'nin kanunları şeriata dayalı olmalıdır. (Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: Laws in Turkey should be based on sharia.) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I do not agree at all 2. I do not agree 3. I agree 4. I definitely agree 5. I do not know 6. No answer |

When we use support for sharia law as a measure of Islamist policy positions, there are no changes in the results(not reported). The coefficient of the interaction effect between respondent's support for Sharia law and Islamist policy treatment declines to 0.550 (from 0.852 in the original analysis), yet it is still substantively very high¹ and statistically distinguishable from 0. This finding shows us that our findings on Islamist policy are not variable-specific and when we use other measures that capture a similar factor, we can support our findings.

¹This decline in the effect is lower than it seems since the original question had four categories while the sharia question has five categories.

D Candidate Party Affiliation

One aim of our experimental design was to isolate the effects of party affiliation. To evaluate how successfully we were able to isolate candidate party affiliation, we asked the respondents what would be their guess regarding the party affiliation of the candidate. A concern can be that the respondents may think that the candidates are from certain parties due to certain candidate characteristics, even with the lack of any information about party affiliation. Table A.13 presents the wording of the question. In Figure A.2, we present the results from logistic regressions where the dependent variable is the respondent's guess of candidate party affiliation and the independent variables are the six treatments. We include results for the five largest Turkish political parties (the dependent variable is one of these parties in each model).

The overall results for this party identification exercise are satisfactory. None of the treatments predict whether respondents associate any candidate with the AKP, the MHP or the HDP. This alleviates any concern that religious candidates may be associated with the ruling Islamist AKP. Respondents are more likely to think that the pro-welfare candidate is from the IYI Parti, while the candidate who declares the Islamist policy position is less likely to be associated with CHP. No other parties were mentioned by a sufficiently large number of voters to conduct any logistic regression analysis. Overall, then, since there is no clear and consistent association of certain characteristics with specific type of parties, we can claim that voters' choices here are independent of candidate's party affiliation. For the reader who is not familiar with Turkish political parties, we provide a brief description of these parties in table A.14.

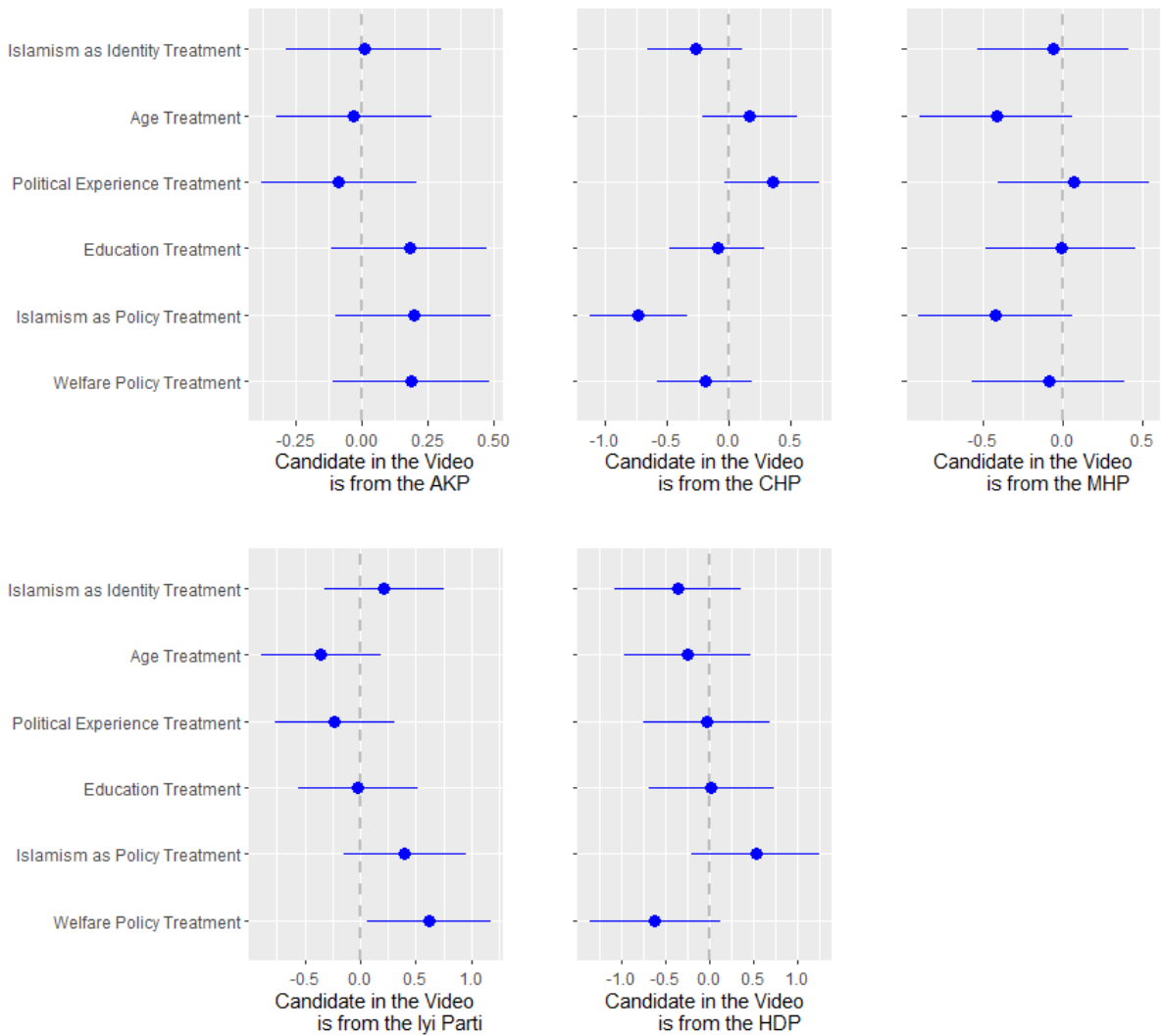
Table A.13: Party Identification Guess Question

| Exact Wording (Turkish. English Translation in parentheses) | Answer Categories |
|--|---|
| Tahmin etmenizi istesek, sizce bu aday hangi partidendir? (If you had to guess, which party do you think is this candidate from?) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) 2. Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) 3. Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP) 4. İyi Parti 5. Halkların Demokrasi Partisi (HDP) 6. Other Party (Please write what that party is) <i>[to be written below]</i> |

Table A.14: Party Names and Brief Description of Positions

| Party Name | Abbreviation in Turkish | Party Position |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi | AKP | Right, Islamist |
| Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi | CHP | Center-Left, Secularist |
| Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi | MHP | Right, Turkish Nationalist |
| İyi Parti | İYİ Parti | Center-Right, Turkish Nationalist |
| Halkların Demokratik Partisi | HDP | Left, Kurdish Minority Rights |

Figure A.2: Predictors of Guessing if the Candidate in Video was from any Party



E Descriptive Statistics and Covariate Balance Checks

Table A.15: Descriptive Statistics of the Treatments and the Covariates Used in the Analysis

| Statistic | N | Mean | St. Dev. | Min | Median | Max |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|----------|--------|--------|--------|
| Islamist Identity Treatment | 834 | 0.522 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Islamist Policy Treatment | 834 | 0.502 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Welfare Policy Treatment | 834 | 0.489 | 0.500 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Age Treatment | 834 | 0.494 | 0.500 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Political Experience Treatment | 834 | 0.528 | 0.500 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Education Treatment | 834 | 0.490 | 0.500 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Likelihood to Vote | 830 | 3.205 | 2.503 | 0.000 | 4.000 | 9.000 |
| Candidate Trustworthiness | 369 | 1.214 | 0.975 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 3.000 |
| Respondent Religiosity | 812 | 5.461 | 1.969 | 0.000 | 6.000 | 9.000 |
| Respondent Islamist Policy Position | 823 | 0.802 | 0.989 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 4.000 |
| Respondent Welfare Policy Position | 808 | 2.496 | 0.630 | 0.000 | 3.000 | 3.000 |
| Respondent Age | 833 | 36.938 | 13.024 | 18.000 | 35.000 | 79.000 |
| Respondent Gender (1=Female) | 834 | 0.484 | 0.500 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Respondent Kurdish Dummy | 834 | 0.193 | 0.395 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Respondent Education | 834 | 3.496 | 1.180 | 0 | 4 | 6 |
| Respondent Building Type | 834 | 0.977 | 0.287 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Economic Evaluations | 827 | 0.925 | 1.036 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 3.000 |
| Left-Right Self Placement | 818 | 4.560 | 2.627 | 0.000 | 4.000 | 9.000 |

Table A.16: Balance Checks for the Islamist Identity Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 37 | 12.848 | 36.869 | 13.231 | 0.131 | 0.891 | 0.147 |
| Gender | 0.490 | 0.500 | 0.479 | 0.500 | 0.011 | 0.035 | 0.316 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.200 | 0.400 | 0.185 | 0.389 | 0.015 | 0.028 | 0.524 |
| Religiosity | 5.485 | 1.990 | 5.435 | 1.949 | 0.050 | 0.138 | 0.361 |
| Education | 3.483 | 1.224 | 3.511 | 1.132 | -0.029 | 0.085 | -0.336 |
| Ideology | 4.585 | 2.630 | 4.532 | 2.627 | 0.054 | 0.182 | 0.294 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.912 | 1.049 | 0.939 | 1.023 | -0.026 | 0.073 | -0.364 |
| Married Dummy | 0.604 | 0.490 | 0.586 | 0.493 | 0.017 | 0.034 | 0.507 |

Table A.17: Balance Checks for the Islamist Policy Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 36.754 | 13.148 | 37.123 | 12.912 | -0.369 | 0.911 | -0.406 |
| Gender | 0.499 | 0.501 | 0.470 | 0.500 | 0.029 | 0.035 | 0.834 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.186 | 0.390 | 0.200 | 0.400 | -0.014 | 0.027 | -0.513 |
| Religiosity | 5.435 | 1.920 | 5.486 | 2.020 | -0.052 | 0.133 | -0.388 |
| Education | 3.523 | 1.156 | 3.470 | 1.205 | 0.053 | 0.080 | 0.659 |
| Ideology | 4.604 | 2.606 | 4.515 | 2.651 | 0.090 | 0.180 | 0.496 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.887 | 1.002 | 0.964 | 1.070 | -0.077 | 0.069 | -1.107 |
| Married Dummy | 0.593 | 0.492 | 0.598 | 0.491 | -0.004 | 0.034 | -0.126 |

Table A.18: Balance Checks for the Welfare Policy Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 36.216 | 12.757 | 37.631 | 13.254 | -1.415 | 0.884 | -1.601 |
| Gender | 0.466 | 0.499 | 0.502 | 0.501 | -0.037 | 0.035 | -1.060 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.199 | 0.399 | 0.188 | 0.391 | 0.011 | 0.028 | 0.388 |
| Religiosity | 5.348 | 1.989 | 5.569 | 1.947 | -0.221 | 0.138 | -1.605 |
| Education | 3.493 | 1.167 | 3.500 | 1.195 | -0.007 | 0.081 | -0.091 |
| Ideology | 4.521 | 2.625 | 4.597 | 2.632 | -0.075 | 0.182 | -0.414 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.913 | 1.033 | 0.936 | 1.041 | -0.023 | 0.072 | -0.319 |
| Married Dummy | 0.578 | 0.494 | 0.612 | 0.488 | -0.033 | 0.034 | -0.973 |

Table A.19: Balance Checks for the Age Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 38.338 | 13.454 | 35.573 | 12.457 | 2.765 | 0.932 | 2.967 |
| Gender | 0.510 | 0.501 | 0.460 | 0.499 | 0.050 | 0.035 | 1.442 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.177 | 0.382 | 0.209 | 0.407 | -0.031 | 0.026 | -1.184 |
| Religiosity | 5.535 | 1.862 | 5.388 | 2.068 | 0.147 | 0.129 | 1.137 |
| Education | 3.500 | 1.203 | 3.493 | 1.159 | 0.007 | 0.083 | 0.085 |
| Ideology | 4.453 | 2.583 | 4.664 | 2.668 | -0.211 | 0.179 | -1.181 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.893 | 1.062 | 0.957 | 1.011 | -0.064 | 0.074 | -0.872 |
| Married Dummy | 0.618 | 0.486 | 0.573 | 0.495 | 0.045 | 0.034 | 1.322 |

Table A.20: Balance Checks for the Experience Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 36.565 | 12.765 | 37.353 | 13.311 | -0.788 | 0.885 | -0.890 |
| Gender | 0.518 | 0.500 | 0.447 | 0.498 | 0.071 | 0.035 | 2.060 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.198 | 0.399 | 0.188 | 0.391 | 0.010 | 0.028 | 0.358 |
| Religiosity | 5.444 | 1.933 | 5.479 | 2.013 | -0.035 | 0.134 | -0.260 |
| Education | 3.430 | 1.202 | 3.571 | 1.153 | -0.142 | 0.083 | -1.698 |
| Ideology | 4.523 | 2.558 | 4.602 | 2.705 | -0.079 | 0.177 | -0.442 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.963 | 1.047 | 0.883 | 1.025 | 0.081 | 0.073 | 1.110 |
| Married Dummy | 0.582 | 0.494 | 0.611 | 0.488 | -0.029 | 0.034 | -0.843 |

Table A.21: Balance Checks for the Education Treatment

| | Treatment Mean | Treatment SD | Control Mean | Control SD | Difference | Difference SE | t-value |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------|
| Age | 36.665 | 13.138 | 37.200 | 12.924 | -0.535 | 0.910 | -0.588 |
| Gender | 0.487 | 0.500 | 0.482 | 0.500 | 0.004 | 0.035 | 0.121 |
| Ethnicity (Kurdish Dummy) | 0.198 | 0.399 | 0.188 | 0.391 | 0.010 | 0.028 | 0.355 |
| Religiosity | 5.463 | 2.092 | 5.459 | 1.846 | 0.004 | 0.145 | 0.026 |
| Education | 3.482 | 1.203 | 3.511 | 1.160 | -0.029 | 0.083 | -0.347 |
| Ideology | 4.463 | 2.650 | 4.655 | 2.604 | -0.192 | 0.184 | -1.044 |
| Economic Evaluations | 0.911 | 1.052 | 0.938 | 1.023 | -0.027 | 0.073 | -0.374 |
| Married Dummy | 0.592 | 0.492 | 0.599 | 0.491 | -0.007 | 0.034 | -0.216 |