Learning Constituent Opinion in an Illiberal Democracy: A Multi-Model Study on Home Style in Turkey

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Abstract

To promote their electoral and policy goals, elected officials in liberal democracies make investments in a "home style" – a strategy to learn about their voters, select their public platform accordingly, and win elections. According to the literature, this is distinct from the approach used by political elites in illiberal democracies, which points to nationwide elections as the mechanism for learning about the preferences of citizens. If this were true, we would not expect ex ante investments to be made to learn about voters in illiberal democracies. I conducted interviews with Members of Parliament (MPs) in Turkey establishing that the incumbent party regularly conducts polls to assess voter preferences while the opposition party does not. I then analyze nearly a million MPs tweets and find that the majority party is more likely to communicate on the issues of most importance to their constituents than the opposition. Finally, I conduct a quasi-experiment and find that providing opposition MPs with polling increases their likelihood to communicate about their constituents' most important issues while there is no effect among majority MPs. This result supports the qualitative evidence that the incumbent invests more in learning about voters than the opposition.

1   Introduction

Richard Fenno's pathbreaking book *Home Style* began the systematic study of how legislators communicate their priorities and accomplishments to their constituents in order to win re-election and gain policymaking influence (Fenno 1978). But what do these home styles look like in illiberal democracies?[1] To date, much of the research on representation in illiberal democracies has ignored an elected official's home style, instead focusing on issues such as cleavages and clientelism in explaining the relationship between constituents and elected officials. Missing from this literature is an examination of whether elected officials are responsive to their constituents by promoting the issues that their voters care most about.

In this paper, I present an analysis of elected officials' responsiveness to voters in an illiberal democracy by examining how they form and communicate their home styles. I study the public communications of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Turkey at a particularly tumultuous time for the state of Turkish democracy: in the months immediately after the failed July 2016 coup and before the April 2017 referendum. I conduct a multi-modal study where I first interviewed MPs, advisors, and political consulting firms to understand how Turkish MPs form perceptions of their constituents. Through these interviews, I uncover vast differences in how MPs of the two main parties approach learning about their constituents: the majority Justice and Development Party (AKP) invests heavily in the use of polling to understand constituent preferences and tailor their communications while the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) does not. Second, I conduct an observational study of the public statements of MPs where I compare the communication styles of incumbent and opposition MPs in nearly a million tweets and find that incumbent MPs are far more likely to publicly highlight the issues that are most important to their constituents than opposition MPs, confirming the findings from the structured interviews. Finally, I analyze a quasi-experiment in which MPs of both parties were exogenously given access to survey data on constituent preferences to measure how this information might change MPs' homestyles.

Consistent with the interviews and observational study, I am unable to reject the null hypothesis that providing incumbent MPs with this polling data has no effect on their public communications. Incumbent MPs have already adopted a home style that invests heavily in learning about, determining their position, and discussing issues salient to voters. On the other hand, providing opposition MPs this polling data makes them more likely to focus their public communications on the issues

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[1]Zakaria (1997) originally differentiated between the democratic principles of "free and fair elections" on the one hand and the liberal principles of "the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property" on the other. Thus, by illiberal democracies, I mean those countries that hold elections that are generally "free and fair" but generally lack civil liberties such as a free press, freedom of speech, and the rule of law. See also (Lindberg et al. 2014; Mukand and Rodrik 2017).

most salient to their constituents. When provided public opinion polling, opposition MPs tailored their communications accordingly. Moreover, when MPs were given survey data on constituent preferences via e-mail they were also asked to respond to the message if they were interested in learning more about voter behavior. I find that only one MP from the incumbent party responded and approximately 20% of MPs from the main opposition party responded. This then led certain members from the opposition party's campaign team to implement their information campaigns before the April 2017 as a randomized field experiment, which I analyzed in (Baysan 2018). Overall, this suggests that even in a setting considered by many scholars to be an illiberal, clientelistic democracy (Freedom House 2016), MPs invest in learning about their voters, but that technology decisions – the decision to invest in a modern polling infrastructure – vary significantly across political parties, unlike in countries like the U.S.

Turkey, an illiberal democracy, provides an important case in my understanding of representatives' home styles. With few exceptions (e.g., Ingall and Crisp 2001), much of the extant research on home styles have focused on western, advanced democracies (Heitshusen, Young and Wood 2005; Grimmer 2013) while studies of representation in illiberal and developing democracies have overwhelmingly focused on distributive practices, such as clientelism, patronage, and vote buying (e.g., Stokes et al. 2013).

Yet, distributive practices alone cannot entirely explain the constituent-legislator relationship, even in illiberal democracies. Elected officials and incumbent parties are known to invest in media and other forms of direct communication with their voters (Djankov et al. 2003; Barberá and Zeitzoff 2017). Just recently it was reported that Cambridge Analytica was involved in efforts to re-elect President Uhuru Kenyatta in Kenya. Elected officials care about broadcasting their successes and priorities to their constituents, what Fenno (1978) would refer to as home style. Yet what is unstudied is how elected officials choose what to broadcast. How, in illiberal democracies, do elected officials perceive, represent and respond to their constituents? And how does this vary across parties?

As originally posited by Fenno (1978), the "key problem" in understanding a representative's home style is one of perception. But representatives' abilities to perceive their constituents vary greatly (Broockman and Skovron 2017) and, as Entman (2004, p. 123) notes "prior research into the impact of public opinion on public policy offers surprisingly little insight into exactly how elites figure out what the public is thinking." I might expect these problems of perceptions to be greater in illiberal democracies with threats to press and academic freedom. One reason why representatives may differ in their home styles, even if they represent otherwise similar constituencies, is because they may differ in how they invest in perceiving their constituencies. A prerequisite

for a representative to tailor her appeals to her constituents is to know what her constituents think and want from politics. But there are many ways in which a representative can learn this information, such as convening confidants, meeting with activists, seeking out interest group leaders, or commissioning public opinion polls. The decisions that representatives make in how they go about learning what they believe their constituents care about will then reflect itself in how they communicate back to their constituents through a home style.

In this paper, I focus on the home style of Turkish Members of Parliament. Despite enjoying competitive multi-party elections since 1946, Turkey is generally considered to be an illiberal democracy where civil liberties are limited and the minority group of an ideological cleavage is repressed (Freedom House 2016). For this precise reason, conducting research in these countries, where civil liberties are systemically violated, is difficult. Therefore, despite comprising one of the most common forms of governance, my knowledge on competitive authoritarian states is based on methods that are less comprehensive than those employed in liberal democracies. This study hopes to contribute to the literature by providing quasi-experimental evidence on whether voter preferences affect politician behavior and representative style. In the sections that follow, I first develop my framework of perception in determining a home style before presenting the empirical evidence using multiple research methodologies: in-depth qualitative interviews with Turkish MPs and political consultants, an observational study with millions of Turkish MPs' tweets, and an experiment in which I exogenously provide public opinion polling to MPs to observe how this information changes their public communications.

2   A Resource Theory of Perception and Home Style

Before beginning his exploration of homestyle, Fenno (1978, p. xiii) begins by asking "What does an elected representative see when he or she sees a constituency?" The act of looking at a constituency, what I refer to as perception, is a technological decision. When examining a landscape, an explorer might use her plain eyesight, binoculars, a telescope, or rely on first-hand accounts from others who have been there. Which technology she uses influences her perception of that landscape: while a telescope might lead the explorer to emphasize the fine details of the flora and fauna, her plain eyesight might have her focus more on the topography.

Similarly, elected officials can choose to invest in a number of technologies, used in a loose sense, to learn about their constituents. An elected official can read local news coverage, meet with business leaders, travel home to the constituency, or conduct polls. Different technologies to learn constituent opinion contain different biases in the constituency that a representative sees.

For example, as Miler (2010) shows, members of the U.S. Congress are far more likely to "see" individuals who donate to their campaigns and contact the legislative office, which leads legislators to vote more in favor of these subsets of constituents.

Different elected officials choose to invest in different technologies for a number of reasons. In this paper, I build on Greene (2007) who presents a resource theory of single-party dominance. Greene presents a formal model where dominant parties, through their incumbency advantages, gain asymmetric resources not available to challenger parties. For example, because an incumbent party is dominant, private donors may be less willing to fund challenger parties who are viewed as having little chance of succeeding. This asymmetry may be in exacerbated in illiberal democracies where the threats of retribution from supporting challenger parties are non-trivial. Moreover, as discussed Baysan (2018), when voters are polarized, upfront investments are required to learn how to target voters.

Because of these resource asymmetries and threats of retribution, challenger parties in illiberal democracies may not be able to invest in access costly electoral technologies that the incumbent party can. Specifically, in this paper I focus on access to high-quality, public opinion polls. When it comes to formulating a homestyle that will have the most broad-based appeal, polling information is likely a necessary ingredient. Without access to polling, a party's communications must rely on other, more biased sources to approximate public opinion, such as newspaper coverage or conversations with activists.

In developed countries, like the U.S., the funds that are available to each party is public and the asymmetry is marginal. In the case of Turkey, an incumbent resource advantage was institutionalized by the current incumbent party in 2003 after a period of instability in which it swept into power. The article that was reconstituted by the incumbent stipulates that state funding is proportional to vote share. At the time, the incumbent had a large majority in the Parliament and could implement this policy without dissent. Therefore, since its first term in office starting 14 years ago, the incumbent has had double the state funding relative to the second largest party. Aside from the allocation of state funds, the AKP has had a reputation of engaging intimately with voters through a grassroots approach that other parties have not. It is outside the realm of this study to discuss the origins of the different approaches that political parties took in Turkey to affect voting behavior. Regardless, scholars and pundits in Turkey agree that the investments made by the incumbent party to learn about their constituents is significant. This is not necessarily a view that is corroborated by the literature in political science or political economy.

When it comes to constituent perceptions, the incumbent in Turkey is far more sophisticated than the main opposition party. In Study 1, I use in-depth interviews with Turkish political consul-

tants and MPs of both parties to demonstrate that the incumbent regularly conducts their detailed polling of constituent preferences while the opposition does not. In Study 2, I use an observational study of millions of MPs' tweets to investigate the consequences of these differences in constituent preferences. I find that the incumbent MPs are far better at tailoring their public communications to those constituent preferences than opposition MPs. Finally, in Study 3, I exogenously provided MPs of both parties with detailed polling to measure how this information provision changes what issues they focus on in their public tweets. Consistent with my framework of perception, I find that providing the incumbent MPs with this polling data has no effect because they are already communicating on the issues most important to their constituents. On the other hand, opposition MPs increase their frequency of tweeting on the issues most salient to their constituents after I provide them polling information.

3   Study 1: Interviews of Turkish MPs and Political Consultants

Starting in January 2016, relationships were built with local academics, journalists, and data collection companies. Conversations with both experts and voters contributed to the development of a voter survey conducted in October 2016, which is discussed in greater detail below. Having established these interviews before the coup attempt took place in July 2016 facilitated the ability to continue the survey as planned and to gain permission to enter the parliament.

In conducting this survey, I worked with KONDA, a polling and data collection firm based in Istanbul. KONDA is considered to be Turkey's leading polling organization.[2] KONDA, as well as other companies I spoke to, provided information on how frequently Turkey's political parties conduct surveys of voters. They noted that the main opposition party does not collect data on voter information and does not have personal relations with any of the polling companies. The incumbent, on the other hand, has working relationships with other polling companies, but also collects its own data.[3]

Interviews with MPs confirmed that the incumbent systematically conducts polling while the opposition does not. In January 2016, I conducted 40 formal interviews with MPs.[4] All MPs

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[2] Yörük (2012, p. 521) describe KONDA as "one of the leading public opinion research institutes in Turkey" and Haynes (2010, p. 320) similarly note that KONDA is "one of Turkey's most respected polling organisations."

[3] Kuyucu (2017) notes that every month, the incumbent conducts its own systematic voter surveys."

[4] These interviews were disproportionately with the main opposition party. This is because of availability. It was easier to promptly get interviews the opposition. Only a small number of MPs from either party rejected an interview, but there was a greater delay in setting up appointments with the incumbent because of their intense schedule.

representing the same 11 constituencies were contacted and asked for an interview.[5]

The specific purpose of the structured interviews was to learn the voter information that MPs already have access to, the funding sources for their voter information, their knowledge about their constituents, and their policy positions. In each interview, the MPs were asked the share of voters in their constituency that Completely Disagreed, Disagreed, Agree, and Completely Disagreed to various questions that had been asked in the voter survey. The average time of the interviews were 42 minutes, with the minimum being 20 minutes and maximum being close to 2 hours.

During these interviews, it became obvious that the incumbent party systematically and nearly monthly collects voter information at a geographically disaggregated level (province or district) while the opposition party does not. In some interviews, MPs from the incumbent AKP party were emphatic that surveying voter preferences is a fundamental part of democracy and aligned with the values of their party. One of the MPs, who has a relatively high leadership position and was a part of the committee that collects and sees the raw data, wanted to compare the results of their survey to the one conducted for this study. Not all of the MPs directly view the results of the survey conducted by their party, but know that their party collects them and that instructions on how to approach their constituents are based on this information.

Interviews with the opposition party were a stark contrast to those with the incumbent. It was clearly established that MPs from opposition party at best have access to surveys that are nationally representative (despite not even having representation in 38 out of 81 provinces.) In addition, these surveys mainly cover horse-race predictions for upcoming elections but not constituent policy preferences. Many of the MPs were enthusiastic about the survey in this study and it was clear that the results would be novel information to them. It was even arranged that I meet the party leader to share the survey information. It was unclear if the opposition did not have access to voter information because their leadership and other members of the party did not want to align their policies with the majority of voters for ideological reasons or because they faced a resource constraint.

Overall, the in-depth interviews with Turkish political consultants and MPs clearly established that the majority AKP regularly conducts detailed surveys of constituent preferences while the opposition does not. In the next two studies, I turn to the effects that access to data on constituent preferences has on elected officials' public communications.

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[5] At the time of the study, once inside the Parliament, it is permitted to knock on the doors of MPs' offices at random. However, to enter the Parliament, an appointment and citizen identification is required.

4 Study 2: Observational Study of MPs' Communications

4.1 Voter Data

The voter survey conducted by KONDA took place three months after the attempted coup with a sample of 1,770 voters in 11 constituencies of Turkey. Voters were surveyed on their policy preferences. After responding to basic questions on demographics, respondents were asked to list the issues most important to them and were asked in an open format. Respondents were then asked on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with various policies. Topics included the economy, religious freedom and practices, terrorism and national security, the state of emergency and arrests, the Kurdish issue, and gender equality.[6] To construct the questionnaire, I referenced a number of resources: KONDA's database with all voter survey questions it has asked since its inception; the 2011 Turkish Election Study (TES); issues most mentioned in Tweets by MPs, focus groups with voters, and the interviews with MPs.

4.2 Politician Data

In developed countries, legislator voting behavior is observable to the public. In Turkey, many policy proposals are voted on secretly. In addition, the incumbent party has had a majority in Parliament since 2003. For this reason, the opposition rarely shows up to vote on policies. So, how do voters in countries like Turkey form preferences on their legislators? One possibility is that politicians inform their voters through the media. However, there is also high censorship in Turkey. Therefore, social media, like Twitter, provides an alternative platform for voters to form opinions of their politicians through social media. Even in the U.S., I have seen how Twitter is used to bypass traditional forms of communication with the public. In another example, a recent study provides evidence that joining Twitter increases contributions politicians receive from individual donors (Petrova, Sen and Yildirim (2017)).

Twitter activity is high among politicians in Turkey. 95% of MPs in both the incumbent and opposition parties use Twitter. Over a ten month period in 2016, the average number of tweets per day among the opposition party is 3 and the median is .8. The average number of tweets per day for the incumbent was 2.4 and the median was .88 over the same period.

Figure 1 shows a measure of the most used words within each party. After scraping the tweets of all MPs, I dropped all words that were of length one and that were retweets.[7] I also dropped

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[6] During the interview, respondents were shown a colored Likert scale on a card where only the endpoints were labeled with "Completely disagree" and "Completely agree."

[7] Approximately 30% of tweets are retweets across both parties.

words that were in the top 3 percentile in terms of most used words. I then manually stemmed all words.[8] To construct Figure 1, I restricted the data to the most used words within each party. For the sake of providing information on what MPs tweet about, I removed words without substantial meaning, like "today."

The table shows that the incumbent tweets substantially about terrorism; words like "casualty" are also strongly associated with terrorist activity. The incumbent's Twitter behavior is consistent with the fact that in the voter survey, incumbent voters report terrorism as the issue of highest concern to them. Figure 1 shows that the opposition party does not discuss the economy that much. While they do discuss terrorism, they are more likely to use words related to human rights and the media. This is in contrast to the fact that even the majority of opposition party supporters do not disagree with the arrests. In addition, opposition voters report the economy as the most important issue to them. Overall, the opposition party's Twitter behavior is less consistent with the results from the voter survey and provides descriptive evidence of the asymmetry of voter knowledge across the two parties.

5   Study 3: Politician Experiment

To test whether the incumbency resource advantage translates into a voter information advantage, MPs were sent the voter report. The report was sent in mid-January 2016. The timing of the report was purposely after the proposal to go to a referendum had passed within the parliament. At the time that the report was sent, the MPs did not know the exact date of the referendum, but it was expected to be within 2-4 months. When the MPs were sent the report by e-mail they were asked to respond to two questions at the end of the report. With the help of a couple of staff members in parliament, all of the treated MPs' doors were knocked on to notify them that a voter report had been sent. MPs are rarely in their offices, since the plenary sessions are in a separate building, but their three advisors are in the office every day. Staff members and MPs are not necessarily responsive by e-mail and so knocking on the doors increased the likelihood that the report would be seen. If someone did not open their door, they received a follow-up phone call. The two questions at the end of the report asked if the MP would want additional voter information and the type of information they wanted. Importantly, 25% of MPs from the opposition party and only 1% of the incumbent MPs responded to the e-mail.

All MPs who responded to the first e-mail were eventually contacted and asked if they wanted

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[8]I originally intended to use a package that conducts stemming in Turkish, but at the time of analysis, the stemmer under the Porter website performed poorly. However, a package in R called Resha came out later. I compared the manual stemming procedure to this one and find that the results do not change.

to do a research project with their own resources. It is this interaction that led to the voter campaign experiment. Given the interviews and response rate to the e-mail with the voter report, it was not expected for the incumbent to express any interest and only a few party members from the opposition had an organized set of volunteers that could carry out a reasonable project. So, the opportunity to do a research project was non-partisan, but it became clear that only the opposition would take up the offer because they were not already investing in learning voter information.

5.1 Empirical Design

The first part of the voter report stated that MIT and UC Berkeley funded the survey, my affiliation, and that the survey had been implemented in partnership with KONDA. The sampling scheme was also outlined and the confidence intervals were provided for each result. The first result mentioned in the voter report was that the two issues most important to voters were reported as the economy and terrorism. The rest of the report then included voter preferences on policies regarding those two issues; for example, voters were asked whether they supported the government funded large infrastructure projects, welfare programs are insufficient, the arrests made during the ongoing state of emergency were necessary, etc. MPs in the treatment group received the voter report and the control group received nothing. Figure B1 provides an example of the content in the report.

Randomization was conducted at the MP level for the incumbent party. Across 9 constituencies, 48 MPs were randomly selected into the treatment group and 48 were randomly selected into the control group.

Estimation for AKP follows the randomization design:

$$Y_{it}^j = \alpha + \beta T_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

Where Y_{it}^j is the number of times MP i said word j per week t. T indicates whether MP i is in the treatment group.

A series of arrests among members of the opposition party started at the end of October and this led to a reduction in sample size.[9] Since I wanted to estimate the treatment effect separately for the incumbent and opposition parties, I had to switch to a difference-in-differences experimental design with the opposition party. For this reason, instead of randomly selecting MPs from the opposition party into treatment or control within the 9 constituencies, as I did for the incumbent,

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[9]Originally, MPs from both the HDP and the CHP were a part of the experiment as the opposition parties. Starting at the end of October, many MPs from the HDP were detained and so I could only conduct the experiment with the main opposition party, the CHP.

all opposition MPs in the 9 constituencies were treated. In the end, there are 70 MPs from the opposition party in the 9 Treatment constituencies and 61 MPs in the 38 control constituencies.

Estimation for the CHP follows a difference-in-difference design:

$$Y_{irt}^{j} = \delta_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{-6}^{-1} \beta_{-t} D_{rt} + \sum_{1}^{5} \beta_t D_{rt} + \epsilon_{irt} \tag{2}$$

where D_{rt} is the interaction of the time dummies and the treatment; the lead coefficients (β_{-t}) are for the pre-intervention period and lag coefficients for post; Y_{irt}^{j} is the number of times MP i said word j per week t in constituency r; δ_i are MP fixed effects; γ_t are week fixed effects; standard errors are clustered at the province level. The words of interest, j, include "Ekonomi" (economy) and "Teror" (terrorism) since these are the words most used by respondents when reporting the issues most important to them.

5.2   Results

I show the results for both parties in terms of figures and looking at the difference-in-difference between the treatment and control groups. However, in the figures, I include more leads than in the difference-in-differences specification in equation 2, which is shown in the results provided in Table B4. In Figure 3, I see that there is no discernible effect of the treatment on the number of times an incumbent MP used the word "terrorism," but I do see an increasing among the opposition in Figure 2. The spikes in the figure relate to actual terrorist attacks during this period. The treatment has a large effect on the number of times that an MP uses the word "economy." Since there are a small number of treatment clusters for the difference-in-differences estimate, I conducted randomization inference to correct the standard errors. The results of this exercise can be found in Figure B2 Again, I do not see any effect among the incumbent MPs. The balance test and estimation results for the incumbent are shown in Tables B1, B2, and B3.

It is worth noting that neither party discusses the economy that much. This could be because they use other words to describe the economy, but I see that the opposition party was most responsive to the word "economy." This may reflect that they realized it is more important to voters than issues like civil liberties. Moreover, it is not surprising that the incumbent discusses the economy infrequently because economic conditions are doing poorly and they are unable to implement successful policy when national security is so low. In contrast, they can have a successful platform on increasing national security to lower terrorist activity. This sort of platform is consistent with their desire to hold the referendum right after the attempted coup and argue that weakening constraints

on the executive would increase stability. The voter survey also indicates that the majority of their core voters stated terrorism as their primary issue of concern.

One final note on the design is the Stable Unit Treatment Value Assumption (SUTVA). Under both the difference-in-differences and randomized experiment, I assume that information given to a treated MP does not "spill over" to control MPs. Insofar as this assumption may be violated, my estimated treatment effects are nevertheless biased toward zero (Aronow and Samii 2017). My estimates of the effects of access to public opinion data on MPs' tweets can therefore be taken as conservative estimates.

6 A Discussion: Incumbent Resource Advantage in Voter Information Acquisition

Results from the politician experiment show that the opposition responds to basic information on voters, suggesting that, on average, they did not have high quality voter data to change any of the votes in the referendum. Hypothetically, they should only have responded to the information if it was better than what they had.[10] In contrast, I cannot reject that the incumbent responds to the same basic information on voters. Moreover, in the interviews, it was clear that the incumbent invests heavily in collecting voter data.

In this section, I summarize an explanation as to why the opposition does not have high quality voter data and why there is an asymmetry between the parties. First, the voter model, which is supported by the empirical evidence, clarifies that expensive voter data is necessary in order to target information. Moreover, the entire experiment that was conducted resulted in a monetary loss for the party because they could not increase the aggregate "No" vote share in the sampled areas. This implies that there is an upfront fixed cost required for a targeted door-to-door campaigning before one can expect to increase vote share. Without investing to learn through experimentation, the party would not know how to increase its vote share. In contrast, "blanket" door-to-door campaigning requires less information about voters, but any marginal investment will not increase vote share, as seen in the door-to-door campaign. The fact that only the opposition responds to basic voter information suggests that one reason they have been unable to learn how to effectively contest for votes is that they are resource constrained.

In the case of Turkey, an incumbent resource advantage was institutionalized by the current incumbent party in 2003 after a period of instability in which it swept into power. The article

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[10]It should also be noted that they did not cite this study in their tweets. Instead, the tweets made in response to the voter report specifically increased discussion on the economy and terrorism.

that was reconstituted by the incumbent stipulates that state funding is proportional to vote share. At the time, the incumbent had a large majority in the Parliament and could implement this policy without dissent. Therefore, since its first term in office starting 14 years ago, the incumbent has had double the state funding relative to the second largest party. In this case, they simply are able to use state financing to collect sophisticated voter information. In contrast, the opposition would have to supplement its state funding from private sources in order to be as competitive as the incumbent in contesting for non-ideological votes.

I describe this argument more formally as follows: Let there be two parties, one of which is the incumbent, I, and the other is the opposition, O. The parties can take two actions: low cost method of campaigning, which has a cost of 0, or the high cost method to campaigning, which has a cost $f \in (0, 1)$ measured in vote shares (as an opportunity cost)[11]. Consider that the low cost method is just showing up and holding rallies, which guarantees that each party gets its ideological vote share. These are the voters who always vote for one party or the other. We normalize the vote share each party gets from the low cost method to 0. There is some uncertainty in the expected increase from implementing the high investment method, but both parties will increase their vote share to either $\frac{V_1}{2}$ or $\frac{V_2}{2}$ where $0 < V_1 < V_2$. Each party's payoff is their expected utility from investing f: $E(U) = p\frac{V_1}{2} + (1-p)\frac{V_2}{2} - f > 0$. In an extensive form game with perfect information and equal access to funding, where the party I chooses a method first, the unique subgame perfect equilibrium is for both parties to invest f and implement the high investment method. If party O does not have access to funds for f then it is disadvantaged and its payoff is 0.

If we assume that state funding cannot be a sufficient financial constraint for the opposition and that politicians in Turkey can access private capital, we can extend the argument further. Consider theories of rational predation that have been used to explain the persistence of competitive advantage among firms (Bolton and Scharfstein (1990)). In this literature, a company with more resources can maintain an advantage by using various methods to "prey" on its competitor. In this case, Party I has a "deep pocket" and can use state funds to increase its vote share through the high investment method, such as targeted door-to-door campaigning. Party O has to raise funding from private sources. The private source can be thought of as a lobbyist that wants to change legislation and so gives transfers based on expected electoral performance. An increase in vote share for Party O increases its representation and therefore the investor's ability to control legislation. Therefore, the utility of the private source is also a function of $p, V_1,$ and V_2. Between elections, at time period 0, the private investor gives a take-it-or-leave-it offer to the opposition party where the opposition

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[11]State funding is allocated to the party headquarters and is therefore centralized. The opportunity cost could be thought of as personal gains the party leader gets that they cannot get from increased vote share

party repays the investor if their vote share is not sufficiently high. The opposition party only takes the transfer if its expected vote share is above a certain threshold.

Suppose we further extend this framework. Party I can increase p for just party O, which we now denote p_O, by threatening to arrest their canvassers or the legislators themselves at a cost of t. If p_O if large enough relative to V_1 and V_2, then the opposition will only be able to engage in the low cost method because it will not be able to take the transfer.

This study was implemented during a state of emergency set by the incumbent party in which canvassers could be detained and jailed without trial for an extended period. Of the neighborhoods sampled for the randomized door-to-door campaign, 20% could not be completed because of the threat of arrest. This effectively increased the probability p_O that the door-to-door campaign yield a low payout in terms of voter share.

7   Conclusion

This paper has provided novel evidence on how elected officials in an illiberal democracy develop their style of public communication. Building on my framework of constituent perception, I show first in my in-depth interviews that of Turkey's two main parties, only the incumbent regularly has access to detailed polling while the opposition does not. Then, analyzing tweets from MPs in these two parties, I show that the incumbent is significantly more likely to match their public communications to issues their constituents care about than the opposition. Finally, by exogenously providing MPs polling data, I find that elected officials are responsive. Opposition MPs, who otherwise lack access to high-quality polling, became far more likely to tweet about the salient issue of the economy when provided with this information compared to control MPs.

Substantively, this paper demonstrates that even in an illiberal democracy, elected officials from both the incumbent and opposition parties are responsive to public opinion on policy issues. Elected officials in these contexts do more than appeal to pre-existing ethnic and religious cleavages or garner votes through distributive policies. Elected officials actively track public opinion and tailor their communications accordingly.

Left unanswered in these studies is the political and policy consequences of elected officials mirroring their communications to match their constituent concerns. Are elected officials merely employing cheap talk where they pay lip service to these issues but otherwise leave them unaddressed? Or are public communications a good proxy for legislative attention to an issue? My initial finding of responsiveness suggests that future research ought to consider these questions.

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Figure 1: Stems

| AKP			CHP		
Stem	**Stem Share**	**Bigram**	**Stem**	**Stem Share**	**Bigram**
president	3,99%	president honorable	president	3,52%	president republic
casualty	3,07%	casualty done	republic	2,48%	republic democracy
terrorism	2,90%	terrorism organization	kilicdaroglu	2,37%	kilicdaroglu talking
republic	2,79%	republic erdogan	person	2,12%	human rights
god	2,64%	god mercy	nation	2,08%	country govern
mercy	2,48%	mercy injure	constitution	1,84%	constitution change
prime	2,37%	prime minister yildirim	terrorism	1,76%	terror attack
citizen	2,18%	citizen between	news	1,75%	#newspaperspokes
nation	2,06%	nation people	coup	1,62%	coup entry
district	1,90%	district head	democracy	1,60%	democracy secularism
july	1,69%	july coup	feto	1,45%	feto effort
attack	1,67%	attack casualty	casualty	1,45%	casualty one
feto	1,57%	feto coup	tbmm	1,33%	tbmm board
coup	1,48%	coup entry	attack	1,30%	attack casualty
unity	1,41%	unity together	parliament	1,26%	parliament president
person	1,37%	person thanks	children	1,25%	children come
minister	1,36%	minister honorable	district	1,14%	district organization
parliament	1,35%	parliament meet	citizen	1,09%	citizen holiday
work	1,28%	work about	state	1,08%	state govern
family	1,28%	family responsible	student	1,08%	student student
pkk	1,23%	pkk terror	ataturk	1,05%	ataturk his
turk	1,23%	turk people	organization	1,05%	organization unity
visit	1,21%	visit found	visit	1,02%	visit did
tbmm	1,12%	tbmm general	unity	0,99%	unity together
national	1,11%	national space/recipient	mercy	0,99%	mercy injured
democracy	1,09%	democracy casualty	struggle	0,99%	struggle continue
veteran	1,08%	veteran is	law	0,94%	law state
constitution	1,03%	constitution change	god	0,92%	god mercy
organization	1,02%	organization effort	media	0,90%	media follow
healing	1,01%	healing wish	director	0,89%	director board
state	1,01%	state people	freedom	0,84%	freedom democracy
injured	0,99%	injured urgent	arrest	0,80%	arrest journalist
erdogan	0,94%	#reppresterdogan terror	minister	0,80%	minister board
struggle	0,94%	struggle doer	rights	0,80%	rights day
province	0,91%	province head	blame	0,79%	blame not
traitor	0,90%	traitor attack	power	0,79%	power party
yildirim	0,84%	binali yildirim	education	0,76%	education student
municipality	0,81%	municipality head	work	0,76%	work continue
teacher	0,81%	teacher day	municipality	0,76%	municipality head
chp	0,80%	chp general	turk	0,74%	turk people
board	0,77%	board member	young	0,74%	young arm
urgent	0,77%	urgent healing	woman	0,74%	woman arm
holiday	0,76%	holiday celebrate	peace	0,71%	peace sibling
head	0,72%	head condolence	government	0,69%	government terror
opening	0,71%	opening ceremony	soldier	0,66%	soldier god
program	0,70%	program join	learn	0,66%	learn student
director	0,69%	director board	verdict	0,66%	verdict tie
woman	0,69%	women arm	holiday	0,63%	holiday cellebrate
young	0,69%	young arm	province	0,58%	province head
service	0,62%	service do	live	0,58%	live broadcast
soldier	0,60%	soldier god	economy	0,57%	economy crisis
committee	0,58%	commission meet	foreign	0,57%	foreign politics

Stem share ranks the most used words by party after the coup and before the experiment with voters. Bigram shows the most used subsequent word for each most used word. To construct this table, I restricted the data to the most used words within each party. For the sake of providing information on what MPs tweet about, I removed words without substantial meaning, like "today."

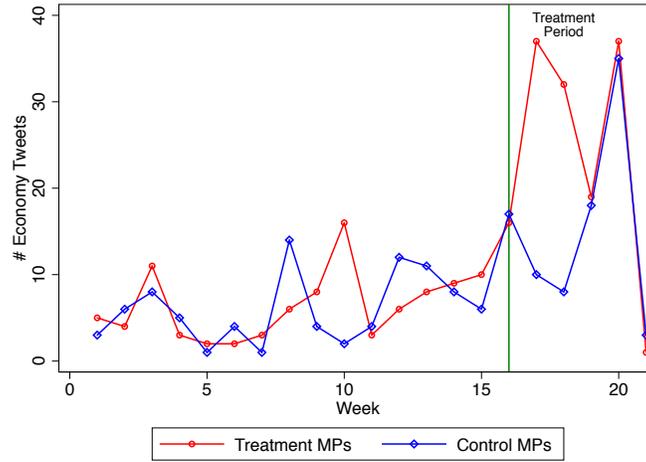**Figure 2:** Terrorism tweets by Opposition
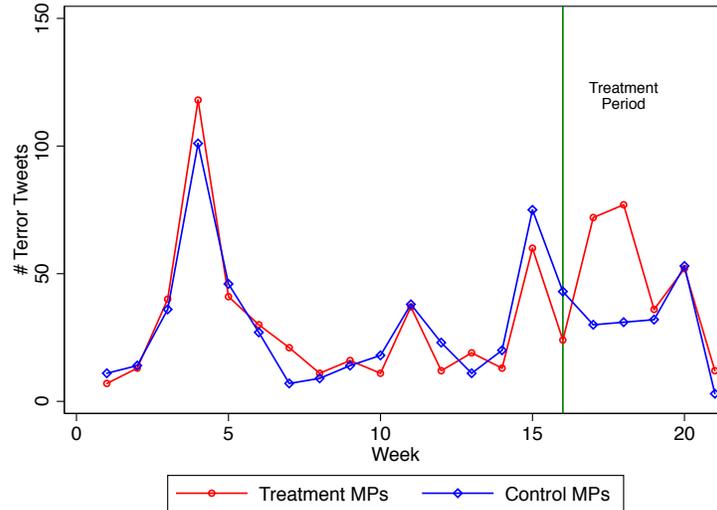
The outcome variable includes the total number of times that an MP from the incumbent tweeted the word Economy
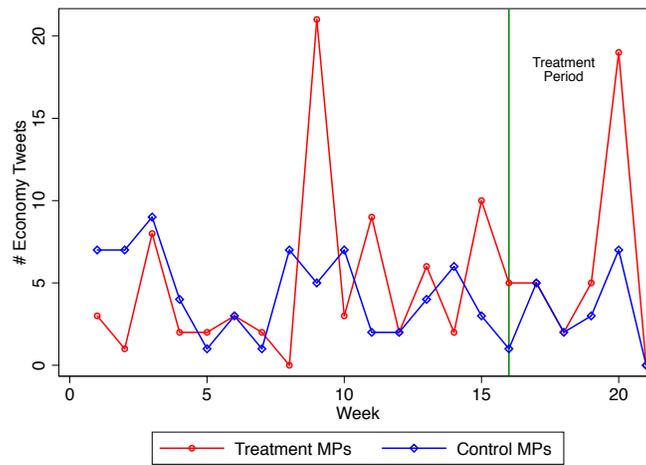
Figure 3: Terrorism tweets by Incumbent
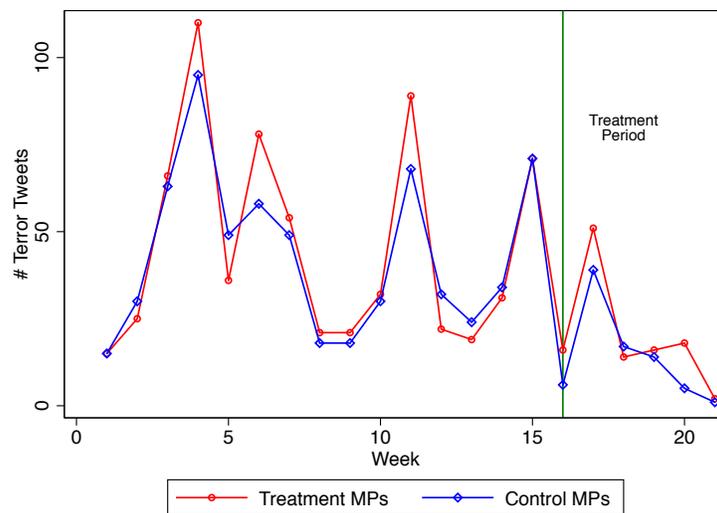
and Terrorism in a given word in a week. The green line marks when the voter information report was sent. The x-axis includes each week.

Figure 4: Economy tweets by Opposition

Figure 5: Economy tweets by Incumbent

The outcome variable includes the total number of times that an MP from the opposition tweeted the word Economy and Terrorism in a given word in a week. The green line marks when the voter information report was sent. The x-axis includes each week.
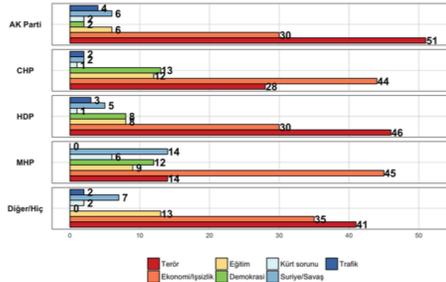
18

Appendix

Report for Politician Experiment

Figure B1: Sample from Report Sent to MPs

The figures show how voters responded to the following question: **What is the most pressing issue in Turkey for you?**

Figure 1: By self-reported party (Diğer/Hiç means they did not report a party)

Figure 2: By region

The figures show whether voters disagree, are neutral, or agree with the following statement: **I believe the arrests made during the OHAL are correct.**
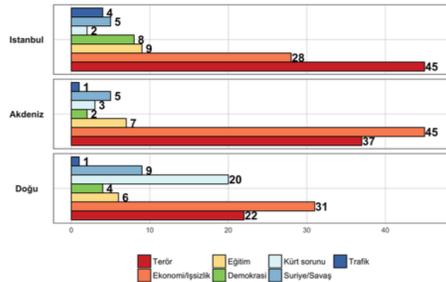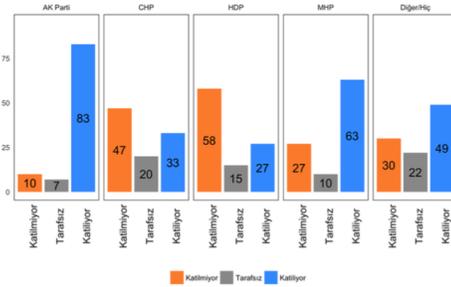
The major difference with Figures 11 and 12 above is that the majority of CHP voters are now against the arrests, but still less than half (47%). Voters generally agreed with the arrests at the time of the survey. Perhaps, this is not surprising given the concern with national security.

Figure 13: By party

Margin of error: 3% (AK Parti), 9% (CHP), 7% (MHP), 11% (HDP), and 6% (Diğer)r

Figure 14: By region
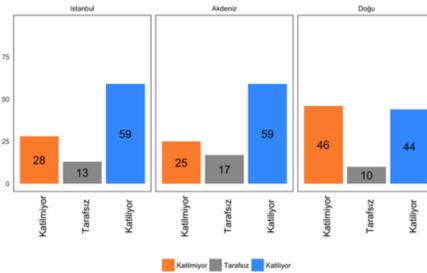
Margin of error: 5% (Istanbul), 6% (Akdeniz), and 7% (Doğu)

This figure shows two sample pages from the voter report that was sent to the politicians. All results were shown by self-reported party and by region. The panel on the left shows the first figures that were provided on the issues that voters self-reported as most important to them. The figures on the right-hand side provide information on an issue that relates to terrorism. The attempted coup was widely regarded as a terrorist attack. The figures provide information on how voter responded to the statement: "I agree with the arrests made during the state of emergency." The reports were sent in Turkish.

Politician Twitter Experiment: Twitter Analysis

Table B1: Balance for RCT with Incumbent

	(1)
	treat
Economy	-0.022
	(0.060)
Unemployment	-0.534
	(0.316)
Terror	0.004
	(0.015)
Casualty	0.002
	(0.012)
Democracy	-0.035
	(0.036)
Arrest	0.537
	(0.589)
N	86
R^2	.069
p-value	.77

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Covariate balance across treatment and control. A treatment indicator is regressed on the total number of each pre-treatment Tweets individuals had. In expectation, from random assignment, the covariates should be independent of treatment assignment. As a summary statistics, we also report the p-value from the F-statistic of this multivariate regression.

Table B2: Treatment Effect for RCT with Incumbent

	(1) Economy	(2) Unemployment	(3) Terror	(4) Casualty	(5) Democracy	(6) Arrest
Treatment	-0.042	-0.023	-0.541	-0.346	-0.359	-0.021
	(0.151)	(0.023)	(0.517)	(0.791)	(0.371)	(0.024)
Outcome of Mean	0.34	0.01	1.66	3.15	0.70	0.01
N	86	86	86	86	86	86
R^2	.044	.084	.1	.067	.043	.026

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The outcome variable includes the total number of times that an MP tweeted a given word in a week. The main outcomes are the number of times the MP tweeted the Economy and Terrorism. Other possible outcomes are included as a placebo check.

**Table B3:** Treatment Effect with Covariates for RCT with Incumbent

	(1) Economy	(2) Unemployment	(3) Terror	(4) Casualty	(5) Democracy	(6) Arrest
Treatment	-0.008	-0.026	-0.493	-0.422	-0.236	-0.021
	(0.142)	(0.023)	(0.430)	(0.581)	(0.346)	(0.024)
Baseline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean of Outcome	0.34	0.01	1.66	3.15	0.70	0.01
N	86	86	86	86	86	86
R^2	.17	.089	.38	.5	.19	.026

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The outcome variable includes the total number of times that an MP tweeted a given word in a week. The main outcomes are the number of times the MP tweeted the Economy and Terrorism. Other possible outcomes are included as a placebo check. Covariates includes baseline tweets.

Figure B2: Randomization Inference for DiD with Opposition
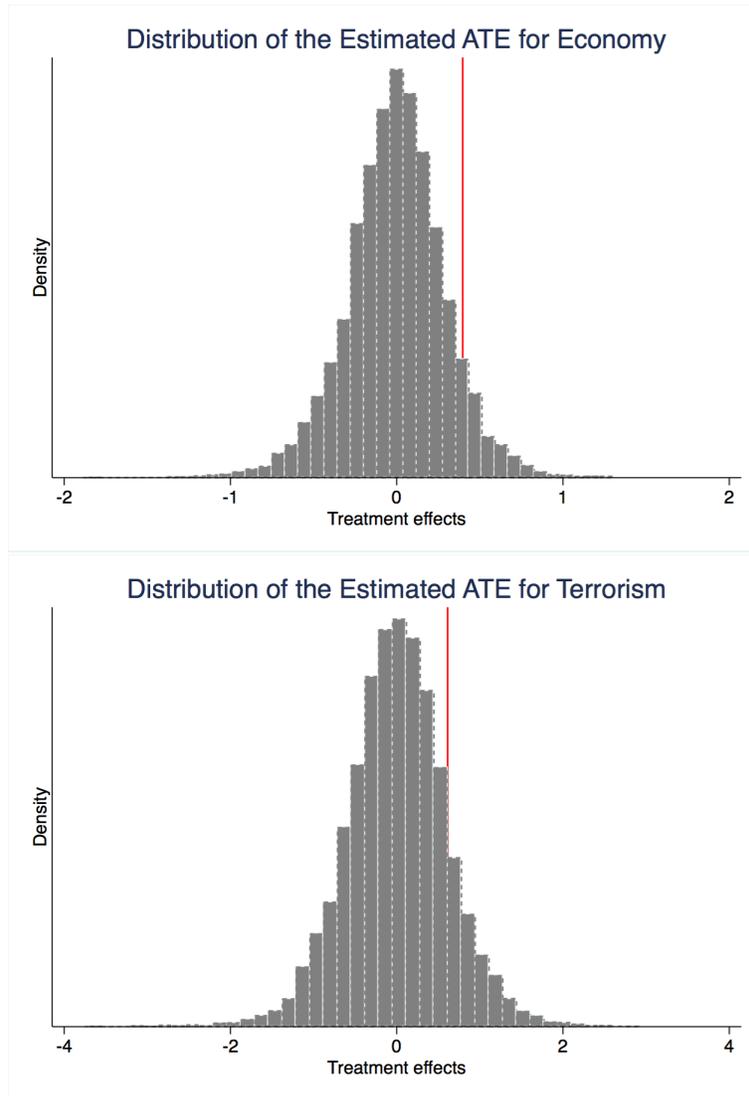
Here I conduct randomization inference for the difference-in-differences estimate for the total number of times the incumbent used the word economy. To implement randomization inference, I ran 10,000 permutations of the treatment to the MPs in the sample and estimate the coefficient. This generates a distribution of coefficients. I find that the p-value is .08 for the effect on the word economy and .14 for the effect on the word terrorism.

Table B4: Treatment Effect for DiD with Opposition

	(1) **Economy**	(2) Unemployment	(3) **Terror**	(4) Casualty	(5) Democracy	(6) Arrest
Lag 5	-0.096	-0.048	0.039	-0.044	-0.127	-0.115
	(0.138)	(0.054)	(0.134)	(0.244)	(0.196)	(0.198)
Lag 4	-0.145	-0.031	-0.251	0.121	-0.110	-0.027
	(0.238)	(0.072)	(0.207)	(0.354)	(0.224)	(0.147)
Lag 3	-0.118	-0.033	-0.119	0.349	-0.335**	0.085
	(0.172)	(0.049)	(0.201)	(0.251)	(0.157)	(0.191)
Lag 2	0.285**	-0.021	0.545	-0.100	-0.156	-0.040
	(0.115)	(0.049)	(0.372)	(0.216)	(0.196)	(0.131)
Lag 1	0.317	-0.188	0.483**	0.314	0.266	-0.015
	(0.229)	(0.193)	(0.224)	(0.203)	(0.396)	(0.210)
Lead 1	-0.005	0.017	-0.454	-0.103	0.153	0.089
	(0.104)	(0.018)	(0.606)	(0.254)	(0.131)	(0.144)
Lead 2	-0.055	-0.033	-0.188	-0.308	-0.061	0.183*
	(0.059)	(0.021)	(0.186)	(0.260)	(0.212)	(0.099)
Lead 3	-0.114	0.068	0.108	-0.149	-0.088	-0.017
	(0.138)	(0.121)	(0.125)	(0.225)	(0.219)	(0.169)
Lead 4	-0.188*	-0.219	-0.264	-0.166	-0.161	-0.029
	(0.097)	(0.149)	(0.166)	(0.247)	(0.213)	(0.154)
Lead 5	-0.060	-0.062	-0.156	0.075	-0.322*	-0.146
	(0.079)	(0.061)	(0.192)	(0.166)	(0.172)	(0.188)
Lead 6	0.182	0.004	-0.175	-0.191	-0.270	-0.035
	(0.157)	(0.064)	(0.149)	(0.182)	(0.174)	(0.122)
Mean of Outcome	0.232	0.106	0.577	0.528	0.702	0.146
Number of Observations	1326	1326	1326	1326	1326	1326
R squared	.0705	.088	.0765	.0903	.155	.0597

The outcome variable includes the total number of times that an MP tweeted a given word in a week. Every specification includes week and MP fixed effects. The main outcomes are the number of times the MP tweeted the Economy and Terrorism. Other possible outcomes are included as a placebo check. Lags include the weeks after the voter report was sent. Asterisks indicate that coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% ***, 5% **, and 10% * levels.