

Turkey PolTrack® Series

POST ELECTION SURVEY ANALYSIS: ECONOMIC VOTING

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The Turkey PolTrack® series explores Turkish public opinion in its many dimensions.

The analysis is based on the data of Istanbul Economics Research's monthly public opinion survey.

The notes are prepared by the analyst team of Istanbul Economics Research with academic support.

For more detailed results and analysis, please contact our team at info@researchistanbul.com



It's not always the Economy: Retrospective evaluations prevail

This note is part of Istanbul Economics Research Turkey PolTrack Series. The analysis is based on a public opinion survey conducted in August 2018 with 2.500 individuals across Turkey using Computer Aided Telephone Interview (CATI) method. The results are representative at a national level with 95% confidence interval and +/- 2,3 pp accuracy.


Introduction and Summary

The sharp decline of Turkish Lira against the US dollars and the EURO led quite a number of commentators to expect a decline in the votes for the government and President Erdoğan at the 24th June 2018 twin elections. Erdoğan's victory therefore triggered an intensive debate on the role of economy in electoral decision making.

The post election polling data of Istanbul Economy Research reveals that while economy is an important issue, electoral voting decisions remain complex. The polling data shows that for AKP voters, the situation of economy did not undermine their loyalty to the party and to the President.

while recognizing the situation of economy as the most urgent problem the country faces, AKP voters also do not hold the government or the President responsible for the negative situation. Furthermore, they evaluate the economic governance very positively in a retrospective manner. These two conditions bring about an attitude which considers the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the right address to tackle the economic crisis and fix it.

Further analysis also demonstrates a particular pocket-book perspective among the AKP supporters (and MHP supporters to a degree). This indicates that economic performance does not automatically translate into a consensus issue, and may even turn into a conflict issue. That is, individuals may focus more on the preservation and growth of their share of the



pie, rather than the growth or shrinking of the whole pie. In such cases where pocket book considerations of the governing party supporters are higher; the government's focus may be more on distributional measures rather than sociotropic measures, providing and protecting its loyal supporters rather than making sure each member of the society is protected from crisis and benefits from growth.

Polarization in Economic Evaluations

The polarization between AKP supporters and the rest of the society becomes eminent in regards to evaluation of the crisis. AKP and MHP voters externalize the source of the economic crisis and do not hold the government or the president responsible for the negative economic situation.

Who did it? Externalizing the responsibility for economic crisis

When asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement Foreign powers are responsible for the negative economic situation; the respondents are divided; while 42.7 % tend to hold foreign powers responsible for the economic situation (agree and strongly agree); 44.1 % disagree (disagree and strongly disagree). The same divide appears in the solution of the economic crisis. While 44.2 % of the respondents argue that President Erdoğan is the only person that can solve the economic crisis (agree and strongly agree); 45.3 % tends not to see the President as the right address for dealing with the economic crisis.

When analyzed for the party choices, it becomes apparent that these two blocs are divided between AKP voters and the voters of the other parties.

The overall average of agreement on the responsibility of foreign powers for economic crisis is 2.99 out of 5. While the average of AKP voters is 3.88 out of 5, for HDP voters is it only 2.05 out of 5. The average of those who did not vote for AKP-MHP coalition is only 1.74 out of 5, clearly indicating that the responsibility for economic crisis is not externalized for those who vote for opposition.

President to the rescue

On a scale of 1 to 5; where 1 indicates strong disagreement and 5 strong agreement; the average of AKP voters who think President Erdoğan is the only person who can tackle the economic crisis is 4.19 out of 5; while for MHP voters it is 3.36 out of 5. The lowest is CHP voters with 1.81 out of 5 followed by HDP voters with 1.97 out of 5. Considering the whole average is 3.00, the sharp divide becomes more evident.

Which party did you vote for in 24 June 2018 parliamentary elections?	No one but President Erdogan can solve the current economic problems	The only reason behind the downfall in the economy is the foreign powers
AK PARTI	4,19	3,88
CHP	1,81	2,15
HDP	1,97	2,05
MHP	3,36	3,47
IYI PARTI	2,01	2,19
SAADET PARTISI	2,16	2,40
OTHER	2,33	1,67

Potential for a new name to emerge for the opposition

In another question, the respondents were asked to name the leader they think would be the right person to tackle the economic crisis; and for 46,8 %, President Erdoğan was the obvious choice. What is striking is for almost 1 out of 4 respondents, none of the current political leaders is seen capable of addressing the economy, and they would rather have a completely new and fresh leader.

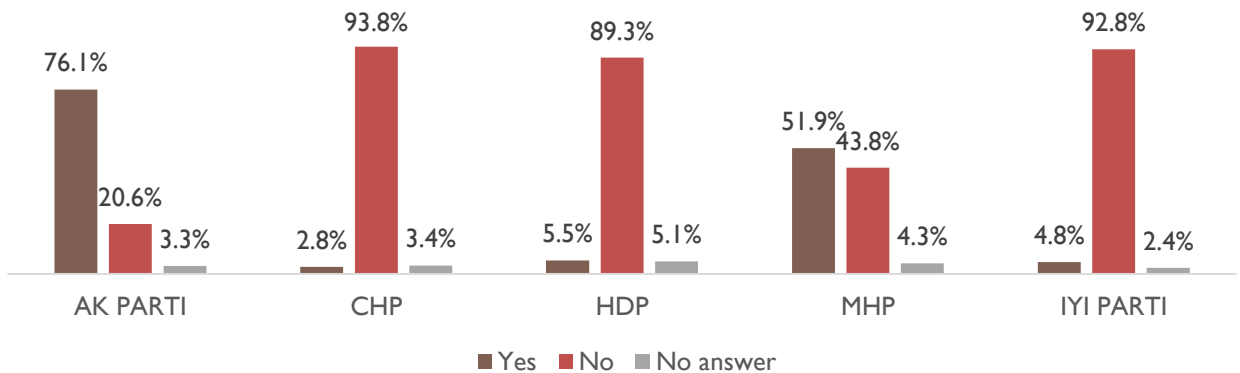
Who do you think is most suited to solve Turkey's economic problems?	%
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	46,8
Meral Akşener	3,7
Muharrem İnce	14,0
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu	1,9
None of the leaders, we need someone new	23,0
No answer	5,3
Selahattin Demirtaş	5,2
	100,0

Rewarding for the past performance: Retrospective evaluation of the economy

In terms of economic evaluation by the voters, it seems that for half of the surveyed individuals, the decision is made based on a retrospective evaluation. The President is seen as capable of managing the economy successfully in the eyes his supporters, as he did in the past.

When looked at party support level; we see the striking picture of AKP voters have a clear positive evaluation of the economic performance for the past five years, while for the voters of other parties, the economic governance for the past five years is very poor. Only MHP voters seem to be divided internally in their evaluations of the past economic record, while 51.9 % argue that Turkish economy has been well governed in the past 5 years, 43.8 % tend to disagree.

Do you think the Turkish economy has been governed effectively in the previous 5 years? / Which party did you vote for in 24 June 2018 parliamentary elections?



Future considerations: We will take care of our people

AKP and MHP voters are also more closely aligned compared to the rest of the political spectrum in terms of their prospective economic expectations: They believe that Turkish economy will be good by the end of 2018. For those who voted for AKP, almost 7 out of 10 have positive expectations for the economy; followed by MHP voters, with 47 % stating positive expectations about the Turkish economy. The opposition's expectations are grim; 8 out of 10 voters expect the Turkish economy to be in a bad shape by the end of 2018. The voters of the Saadet Party appear to be the most pessimists, 56% think Turkish economy will be very bad.

How do you think will the economy fare by the end of 2018?

Which party did you vote for in 24 June 2018 parliamentary elections?	Very bad	Bad	Neutral	Good	Very good
AK PARTI	3,5%	7,3%	20,9%	51,5%	16,8%
CHP	42,5%	41,0%	10,8%	4,6%	1,1%
HDP	40,3%	41,4%	11,6%	4,9%	1,9%
MHP	10,5%	17,5%	25,0%	39,0%	7,9%
IYI PARTI	40,2%	43,9%	10,9%	5,0%	-
SAADET PARTISI	56,0%	24,0%	12,0%	8,0%	-
OTHER	20,0%	20,0%	20,0%	40,0%	-

As an end note, it is important to remember that in cases where pocket book considerations of the governing party supporters are higher; the government's focus may lay more on distributional measures rather than sociotropic measures. The policies and interventions may aim to protect loyal supporters rather than making sure each member of the society is protected from crisis and benefits from the growth.

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