Men of the People

A Comparative Analysis of the 2019 Mayoral Election Campaigns in Istanbul and Budapest

by

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Koç University

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ABSTRACT

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In illiberal settings, the defeat of long-standing populist governments by opposition parties presents a significant challenge. In this dissertation, I explore the party strategies that resulted in opposition victories in the 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest using three methodologies. The central methodology of the study is an integrated quantitative content analysis (N = 14,668) capturing various aspects of election campaign rhetoric, including issues such as policies, populism, and character, as well as tone. Aligned with the content analysis findings, I conduct four in-depth qualitative studies on election campaigns. Finally, I introduce the Dynamic Polarization Model, employing time-series analysis on elite rhetoric to observe the emergence of affective polarization and analyze how parties leverage various issues to delineate in-group and out-group dynamics. I argue that, lacking office experience, the opposition leverages strategic communication to defeat entrenched populist incumbents. This involves selectively emphasizing salient issues distinct from government agendas. As a result, elite confrontation shifts towards populist issues rather than policies. This process also tends to draw opposition parties towards populism. However, unlike governments, they emphasize people-centric approaches over anti-elitism to establish credibility and ownership of selected policy issues. Furthermore, the opposition's choice of issues boosts positive communication, while their outreach to diverse voter bases shapes their strategies in confronting the respective governments. The study concludes that while these tactics aid opposition victories over populist incumbents, they can also exacerbate partisan divides and impede democratization efforts in these contexts.

Keywords:

political communication, mixed methods, local election, campaign, populism, affective polarization, agenda setting, issue salience

ÖZETÇE

Halk Adamları: İstanbul ve Budapeşte'deki 2019 Belediye Başkanlığı Seçim Kampanyalarının Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

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Liberal demokratik olmayan ortamlarda, uzun süredir iktidarda olan popülist hükümetlerin muhalefet partileri tarafından yenilgiye uğratılması önemli bir zorluk teşkil ediyor. Bu tezde, İstanbul ve Budapeşte'deki 2019 belediye başkanlığı seçimlerinde muhalefet zaferlerine yol açan parti stratejilerini üç farklı yöntem aracılığıyla inceliyorum. Çalışmanın merkezi metodolojisi, seçim kampanyası retoriğinin tonuna ek olarak politikalar, popülizm ve karakter gibi konuları yakalamak üzere tasarlanmış bütünleşik bir niceliksel içerik analizidir (N = 14,668). İçerik analizi bulgularıyla uyumlu olarak, seçim kampanyaları üzerine dört ayrıntılı nitel çalışma sunuyorum. Son olarak, elit retorik üzerinde zaman serisi analizi uygulayan Dinamik Duygusal Kutuplaşma Modeli'ni tanıtıyorum. Bu model, duygusal kutuplaşmanın ortaya çıkışını yakalamak için zaman serisi analizi uygular ve partilerin iç grup ve dış grup dinamiklerini belirlemek için farklı konuları nasıl kullandıklarını inceler. İktidar deneyiminden yoksun olan muhalefetin, uzun süredir görevde olan popülist yöneticileri yenmek için stratejik iletişime güvenmesi gerektiğini savunuyorum. Bu strateji, hükümet gündemlerinden farklı olarak ve halk tarafından önemli görülen konuları seçici bir şekilde vurgulamayı içerir. Sonuç olarak, elitlerin çatışması politikalar yerine popülist meseleler etrafında yoğunlaşır. Bu süreç aynı zamanda muhalefet partilerini popülizme yönlendirir. Ancak, hükümetlerin aksine, seçilen politika konuları üzerinde güvenilirlik ve sahiplik kurmak için elitizm karşıtlığından ziyade insan odaklılık vurgusu yaparlar. Muhalefetin seçtiği konular, kendileri için daha olumlu iletişim sağlarken, farklı seçmen tabanlarına ulaşmaları, ilgili hükümetlere karşı çeşitli stratejilerini etkiler. Çalışma, bu taktiklerin muhaliflerin iktidardaki popülist yöneticiler karşısında zafer kazanmasına katkıda bulunmasına rağmen, parti çatışmalarını daha da derinleştirdiği ve bu bağlamda demokratikleşme çabalarını engellediği sonucuna varıyor.

Anahtar kelimeler:

siyasal iletişim, karma yöntemler, yerel seçim, kampanya, popülizm, duygusal kutuplaşma, gündem belirleme, konu belirginliği

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party (*Adalet vet Kalkınma Partisi)*
ARIMA	autoregressive integrated moving average model
BP	Budapest
govt	government
CHP	Republican People's Party *(Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)*
CÖF	Civil Cooperation Forum *(Civil Összefogás Fórum)*
DK	Democratic Coalition *(Demokratikus Koalíció)*
EU	European Union
FETO	Fethullah Terrorist Organization
Fidesz	Alliance of Young Democrats *(Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége)*
Fidesz	Hungarian Civic Alliance *(Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Szövetség)*
FP	Virtue Party *(Fazilet Partisi)*
GDP	gross domestic product
KSH	Central Statistical Office (Hungary), *(Központi Statisztikai Hivatal)*
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party *(Halkların Demokratik Partisi)*
HU	Hungary
IMF	International Monetary Fund
İPA	Istanbul Planning Office *(İstanbul Planlama Ofisi)*
IST	Istanbul
IYIP	Good Party *(İyi Parti)*
Jobbik	Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary *(Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, Jobbik)*
KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party *(Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt)*
KESMA	Central European Press and Media Foundation *(Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány)*
LMP	Politics Can Be Different *(Lehet Más a Politika)*
MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar Demokrata Párt)*
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
EP	European Parliament
TR	Turkey
MHP	Nationalist Action Party *(Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)*
MOMA	Modern Hungary Movement *(Modern Magyarország Mozgalom)*
Momentum	Momentum Movement *(Momentum Mozgalom)*
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party *(Magyar Szocialista Párt*)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NVI	National Electoral Office *(Nemzeti Választási Hivatal)*
opp	opposition
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party *(Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan)*
PM	prime minister

MP	member of parliament
PYD	Democratic Union Party *(Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat)*
RP	Welfare Party *(Refah Partisi)*
SP	Felicity Party *(Saadet Partisi)*
SZDSZ	Alliance of Free Democrats *(Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége)*
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
YPG	People's Defense Units *(Yekîneyên Parastina Gel)*
YSK	Supreme Electoral Council (Turkey) (*Yüksek Seçim Kurulu)*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the time of populism and illiberalism (Mudde, 2021), 2019 brought surprising electoral victories for the opposition in Turkey and Hungary. On March 31, the candidate of an opposition party alliance, Ekrem İmamoğlu, won the Istanbul mayoral election, causing a major blow to the long-incumbent right-wing populist Justice and Development Party *(Adalet vet Kalkınma Partisi,* AKP).

On the night of March 31, both top candidates claimed victory. Some minutes later, the Anadolu News Agency stopped updating the vote count, and pro-government media suggested electoral fraud. Soon, government members objected to the result in all the districts of Istanbul and several regions. Nevertheless, on April 1, the Supreme Electoral Council *(Yüksek Seçim Kurulu,* YSK) announced İmamoğlu's victory by a small margin (Özkan, 2019), and he was finally inaugurated. Despite this, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called on the YSK to annul the result and repeat the Istanbul election. Although arguably a significant test for democracy, the annulment signaled that stakes were high in Istanbul: if it loses, the AKP would not control the most important city of Turkey, held by its elite since 1994 (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019; 2021). Also, it would damage the AKP's reputation as an invincible political force, as it has governed Istanbul for 15 and the country for 17 years.

The rerun ended with a more significant victory for the opposition, as İmamoğlu secured 54.2% of the vote on June 23. In his victory speech, he promised the start of a new page in Istanbul and the renewal of the belief of 16 million in democracy (McKernan, 2019). Thus, İmamoğlu won twice. The annulment arguably boosted his vote share in June, but he had captured Istanbul, the 'lifeblood' of the ruling party (Özkan, 2019, p. 73) in March. The scholarship and the public extensively discussed İmamoğlu and the opposition's campaign strategies, arguing for their rhetoric's crucial role in victory.

Shortly, another opposition victory followed in Budapest, where the all-party-backed Gergely Karácsony won the mayoral election on October 13, 2019. His success was arguably a solid blow for the ruling Hungarian Civic Alliance *(Fidesz - Magyar Polgári*

Szövetség), which had controlled the capital and the parliamentary supermajority and had been invincible since 2010 (Political Capital & Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019). Although the government did not object to the result, the opposition alliance faced several obstacles during the campaign. While Fidesz employed tactics to prevent the fielding of joint candidates (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022), the ruling party accused them of corruption and fraud, and the police raided their office.

In his first speech, Karácsony said that, like in Istanbul, people voted against the 'illiberal regime', and he promised a green, free, and pro-European capital to the audience (Agance France-Presse in Budapest, 2019). The following day, he explained in an interview that 'populism in a good sense' and intense campaigning had contributed to his success (Index, 2019). As in Turkey, the opposition campaign that led to Viktor Orbán's party's defeat sparked a vivid public discussion.

The two mayors have since faced several hardships in office, such as a decrease in their autonomy and their budget (İkizer, 2022; Kovarek & Littvay, 2022), attacks against their person and office, while İmamoğlu was even sentenced to prison. Still, their electoral success caused a short-lived euphoria and a somewhat longer-lived hope for opposition voters and the broader public concerned about illiberalism. They were looking ahead to the upcoming general elections with great hopes.

These hopes were crushed first in Hungary, where the parliamentary election resulted in a never-before-seen victory for Fidesz on April 3, 2022. Then, the allied opposition lost the Turkish general and presidential elections to the government on May 14, 2023. In both countries, the opposition followed similar campaign strategies to the local elections. Despite these efforts and significant events that, according to many, were supposed to disfavor them, the AKP and Fidesz could stay in power.

Hence, the 2019 municipal elections remain the democratic opposition's only major electoral success under long-standing populist governments. Local governments are the last resort for the opposition to rebuild, recapitalize, and remain the sole spheres where they can counterweigh illiberal populist governments. After the opposition's defeat in the Turkish and Hungarian general elections, local elections deserve more attention than ever. Thus, this dissertation studies the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest mayoral election campaigns. It analyzes parties' campaign strategies and rhetoric that led to a democratic breakthrough in illiberal regimes.

1.1 Research questions and preliminary findings

How do populists in power lose, and how can the opposition win against them? I argue that lacking experience in office and tackling illiberal settings, the opposition must rely on strategic communication to overcome a populist government. Strategic communication helped challengers defeat the AKP and Fidesz governments in the Istanbul and Budapest mayoral elections. How could they effectively communicate their messages in illiberal settings where ruling parties have excessive control over the agenda?

Populists are rarely in power but contesting them is more challenging in an illiberal than in a competitive democratic system. While earlier, the scholarship was optimistic about their episodic government (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015; Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2007; 2013), by 2015, the publication of *Populists in Power*, there were alarming signs in Turkey and Hungary. Populists were far from never thinking about governing (Mair, 2009). Instead, they thought of never letting go of power by reshaping entire political systems. Therefore, to date, the AKP has secured seven consecutive victories, while Fidesz has won four, solidifying Turkey and Hungary as consolidated dominant party systems.

In democratic systems, as the opposition lacks incumbency experience, its role is to criticize the government and present alternative policy stands to voters (König et al., 2023). While it requires preparedness to overcome incumbents, opposition parties face more significant challenges in effectively countering the ruling party's agenda in illiberal or competitive authoritarian systems (Freedom House 2015, 2018; Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018; Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). The ruling party's control of the media (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Bermeo, 2016), coupled with its avoidance of substantive policy debates with the opposition (Ünan Göktan, 2022), reflects a strategic reluctance to present political alternatives or engage in contrasting opinions, which could undermine its prospects for reelection.

In such contexts, governments often prioritize securing their hold on power through campaign communication strategies and their control over the media landscape (Bermeo, 2016). By controlling the narrative and limiting opposition voices, ruling parties aim to maintain their electoral advantage and minimize the threat posed by opposition forces. This explains the discrepancy between government and opposition voters in their evaluations of critical questions like the state of the economy and democracy (Levitsky & Way, 2010), with government supporters being substantially more satisfied with them (Szabó & Gerő, 2019; Aytaç, 2024). Thus, economic voting does not fully explain opposition victory in

these contexts because, without effective elite communication, a large segment of citizens would not perceive the economy as soring as others (Aytaç, 2024).

As elections are regularly held in these countries, the democratic process becomes increasingly centered around the electoral contest, with ballots serving as the primary mechanism for political contestation and change (Levitsky & Way, 2010). Ironically, while governments minimize competition in all spheres of the political system, elections have increased stakes as they accumulate risks in these institutions (Berhard et al., 2020). Communication and biased mediascape are vital for these governments, while challengers lack the means to reach the electorate and potentially alter their political decisions (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). While there is still work to be done on how governments construct their arguments, it is even more pressing to understand how the democratic opposition can tackle them against the odds.

I argue that challengers employ intricate strategies to counter government communication. Firstly, they prioritize issues a large segment of the electorate found salient during the election. Secondly, they utilize populist communication tactics to establish credibility and assert ownership over these issues. Their strategic issue selection results in more positive campaign messaging, challenging the prevailing academic consensus that positivity is primarily employed by incumbents. Employing these strategies empowers the opposition to adeptly shape their in-party identity, bolster credibility regarding their agenda, and sway voters, countering tactics utilized by the government.

While incumbency offers certain advantages, it also shapes how voters perceive the government, with shortcomings in addressing crucial issues inevitably tarnishing its reputation (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Petrocik, 1996). Unable to effectively address salient issues and hindered by their damaged reputations on these matters, populist governments attempt to divert voters' attention to popular sovereignty and related security issues. In turn, this constraint opens a window of opportunity for the opposition in addressing matters the public finds pressing. Hence, parties relied upon selective emphasis in the 2019 campaigns instead of position cues typical in multi-party systems.

This study uncovers several contextual distinctions between parties, with perhaps the most significant being the differing voter bases targeted by the opposition in Istanbul and Budapest. In Istanbul, where the opposition alliance could not solely rely on opposition votes due to inherent cleavages, İmamoğlu adopted a conciliatory approach towards core

government voters (Özkan, 2019). This approach led to his overwhelmingly positive campaign tone as he sought to avoid confrontation with the ruling AKP. In contrast, the Budapest alliance faced a different dynamic, needing to unite polarized opposition voters disenchanted after the 2018 general election, which yet again solidified Fidesz's dominance. Recognizing the limited prospects for policy debates, Karácsony strategically focused on galvanizing opposition-minded voters against the government, thereby uniting otherwise politically divergent factions (Index, 2019).

Containing populism in power, the opposition must prioritize promoting salient issues, steering clear of policy-based confrontations, and establishing credibility through populist cues. Consequently, populist issues become the focal point of elite confrontation while policy discussions remain one-sided. This dichotomy presents citizens with divergent realities, perpetuating partisanship and influencing their decision-making – a phenomenon already prevalent in these contexts (Matuszewski & Szabó, 2019; Çakır, 2020; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Aytaç et al., 2021; Demirel-Pegg & Dusso, 2022; Faragó et al., 2023). While these strategies facilitate opposition victory, they also risk exacerbating affective polarization and impede meaningful policy discourse, thus hindering democratization efforts.

Affective polarization arises as a consequence of elite discourse, often amplified during election periods when party cues proliferate, reinforcing partisan alignment (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021). This polarization, however, is a dynamic process (Hetherington, 2001; Levin et al., 2021), shaped by parties' interactions with each other and the issues at hand during campaigns. Put simply, political actors can both trigger and exploit polarization dynamics (Macy et al., 2021), leveraging issues to foster in-group affinity and out-group animosity (Harteveld, 2021; Han, 2023).

In the context of populists in power, it is reasonable to expect frequent utilization of character and populist appeals by elites, known contributors to affective polarization (Harteveld et al., 2022; Stefanelli, 2023). I contend that affective polarization does not stem solely from one party; rather, it emerges from elite interactions. The study concludes that while affective polarization may escalate amid open conflict among elites, its persistence does not rely on direct confrontation alone. Parties utilize both policy stances and character narratives to solidify in-group identities, while populism often constructs the out-group. In such environments, parties present divergent realities to voters, shaping their perceptions of

political processes (Levitsky & Way, 2010) and, consequently, fostering affective polarization within societies.

1.2 Theoretical framework

This section summarizes the dissertation's theoretical framework, detailed in Chapter 2. The study primarily aims to contribute to the second-order election campaign and the populism literature, utilizing the issue salience theory and being informed of accounts from negative campaigning and affective polarization. Familiarity with these theoretical concepts is essential for contextualizing and analyzing the characteristics of local elections and political dynamics in competitive autocracies or illiberal systems. These frameworks provide a robust analytical foundation for interpreting empirical data, explaining elite behavior, and predicting potential implications for popular attitudes.

The issue salience theory, as posited by Budge & Farlie (1983) and Petrocik (1996), serves as the foundational theory guiding this study, emphasizing the strategic emphasis parties place on certain issues over others during electoral campaigns. These campaigns are instrumental as they shape electoral outcomes, with contextual factors playing a crucial role (Petrocik, 1996). Parties strategically select issues that resonate with the electorate, aiming to either align with voter preferences or persuade them of the significance of certain issues (Budge & Farlie, 1983). This strategic emphasis on salient topics is key to electoral success (Edwards et al., 1995; Benoit, 2003; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Amorós & Puy, 2010), as parties seek to either take ownership of these issues or divert attention to their competence (Dellis, 2009; Carson et al., 2020; Adams et al., 2023).

In the context of the 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest, these principles of issue salience theory are particularly pertinent. While typically characterized as multi-party systems, these elections took on quasi-two-party configurations, diverging from traditional second-order election dynamics (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Hix & Marsh, 2011; Gendzwill, 2021). With high voter turnout percentages, particularly in Istanbul (83.88%; YSK, 2019) but also in Budapest (51.47%; NVI, 2019b), these mayoral elections assumed the significance of first-order and solid mid-salience ballots (Heath et al., 1999), indicating their importance in shaping political landscapes.

Given the economic and symbolic importance of these cities, particularly for populist governments, the stakes were high in these local elections. Istanbul, Turkey's

wealthiest municipality, held significant political sway under the control of the ruling conservative pro-Islamist elite since 1994 (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019), while Budapest, under Fidesz's rule since 2010, represented a stronghold of power and influence over public resources and European Union (EU) funds (Jakli & Stenberg, 2021; Kovarek & Dobos, 2023). This underscores the significance of understanding campaign dynamics and issue salience in these contexts, where parties heavily invest in campaigning efforts to sway voter sentiment and mobilize support (Lefevere & van Aelst, 2013; Lefevere, 2018).

Tone, alongside issue selection, stands as one of the most critical strategic choices in election campaigning. Benoit's functional theory (1999) serves as the theoretical foundation for this study, delineating between positive, negative, and defensive messaging strategies adopted by political parties. This study adopts the prevailing definitions, depicting positivity as messages oriented toward oneself and negativity as aimed at a rival (Nai, 2020). In other words, while positivity is instrumental in fostering the in-group, negativity propagates the out-group identity. Additionally, it considers defense as the rebuttal of allegations against oneself (Benoit et al., 2003). Based on these definitions, this study contends that the tone of parties' communication is directly influenced by the issues they prioritize; in essence, the content determines how these issues are articulated.

While there exists limited systematic evidence regarding parties' strategic rationales, scholarly consensus suggests that attack rhetoric predominantly benefits opposition parties, which lack experience in office (Lau & Pomper, 2002; Haselmayer, 2019). Positive campaigning, often overlooked in scholarly discourse, is typically regarded as the default strategy employed by political parties due to its straightforward appeal to voters (Damore, 2002). The scholarly consensus is that positivity tends to characterize and benefit incumbent governments due to their "advantage of incumbency" (Lau & Pomper, 2002; Hopmann et al., 2010).

However, in the context of the 2019 elections, opposition parties notably adopted a more positive campaign tone than incumbent governments due to the issues they selected for the campaign. Governments faced constraints that hindered their ability to address salient issues. Instead, they opted for issues on which they had a track record: popular sovereignty with security rationales (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021; Bíró-Nagy, 2022). They likely hoped these narratives would mobilize their core supporters (Stuckelberger, 2021), demobilize opposition citizens (Krupnikov, 2011), and sway swing voters (Rohrschneider,

2002). On the other hand, opposition parties strategically addressed pressing issues to appeal to broader electorates, employing populist appeals to establish credibility and assert ownership over these matters. These narratives resulted in a more positive campaign communication on the challengers' side.

Limited evidence suggests that controlling salient policy issues contributes to positive campaign communication (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2011). However, in contexts where populism prevails, there is reason to expect that the strategic use of populist components also impacts parties' tone. Given the lack of consensus in the literature, this study adopts the ideational approach framework, which maintains a clear distinction between populist and policy content.

According to this approach, populism is a thin-centered ideology or set of ideas revolving around the antagonistic moral opposition between the "good people" and the "evil elites" (Mudde, 2004; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019). While simplistic applications operationalize populism through people-centrism (positive messages about the people) and anti-elitism (negative messages about the elites) (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011), this study contends that populist actors construct these narratives through components, namely, group identities, morality, and popular sovereignty, occurring in either a positive (people-centric) or negative (anti-elitist) context (Ernst et al., 2017). In other words, populist components serve the construction of in- and out-groups in elite discourse and political actors utilize them motivated by strategic calculations in constructing these identities.

While the supply side of populism is a well-researched topic, this dissertation aims to complement elite discourse analysis with insights from the demand side (see Akkerman et al., 2014; Aytaç et al., 2021) and introduces the concept of morality to assess the Manichaean underpinning in party speeches. Thus, it seeks to capture these narratives in the making rather than through media analysis. While there is a growing literature on the biased mediascape and the prevalence of partisan media in these countries (Schnyder et al., 2023), this research aims to identify the sources these outlets rely on, fundamentally impacting citizens.

The analysis of populism reveals several interesting features of party competition in these contexts. First, it elucidates whether and how populist incumbents convert the democratic opposition into populist actors. Second, it unveils the distinct features exhibited by actors, highlighting the dualistic nature of populism, which allows them to utilize its

components to construct in-group and out-group identities liberally. Finally, while experimental designs reveal populist attitudes among citizens in these countries, and some evidence suggests that components do not fare uniformly everywhere, this research demonstrates how elite rhetoric triggers these attitudes. In the Turkish context, popular sovereignty emerges as the dominant populist attitude among the public (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019; Aytaç et al., 2021). Although there is no equivalent experimental account from Hungary, there are indications of a high level of anti-elitism due to low trust in politicians and strong negative partisanship (Enyedi, 2016a; Kostadinova & Kmetty, 2019; Rose & Mishler, 1998).

This study concludes that in competitive autocratic or illiberal systems, party competition often leads challengers to adopt populist rhetoric, albeit with a more people-centric focus compared to incumbent governments. Central to their campaigns is the theme of democracy, which they contend has been corrupted by the ruling elite, and they propose remedies for restoring democratic representation. However, the use of democracy to construct either the in-group or out-group appears to vary depending on the context. In Istanbul, the opposition employs democracy as an out-group argument, whereas in Budapest, it is used to reinforce the in-group narrative. Consequently, the Budapest opposition relies on accusations of corruption to polarize citizens against the government.

These findings suggest a similarity between challengers and governments in their campaign strategies. In both Istanbul and Budapest, the dominant narrative for governments revolved around popular sovereignty, albeit from a security perspective. Additionally, in Istanbul, both the government and opposition appealed to the people and utilized morality to either create or reinforce the in-group, while also casting doubt on popular sovereignty to undermine their opponents. Similarly, in Budapest, the different elite segments faced relentless attacks not only from the government but also from the opposition, showcasing an intense level of anti-elitism permeating the political discourse. Therefore, it is essential not to be misled by the positive campaign tone. Despite its outward positivity, the opposition's discourse contributed to significant affective polarization at the elite level, with the potential to reinforce similar divisions among the public.

The dissertation's central contribution lies in exploring how elite cues shape affective polarization. Chapter 10 introduces the Dynamic Polarization Model, which elucidates how elites utilize issues and tones to sway one another's positions during election campaigns. As

affective polarization intensifies notably during election periods due to elite cues (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021), and considering the entrenched partisan divisions in Turkey and Hungary (Vegetti, 2019; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Ertan et al., 2022; Bettarelli et al., 2023), a critical imperative emerges to comprehend how political actors foster polarization within these distinctive contexts.

The absence of policy-based confrontation leads to a dearth of position cues in election campaigns, resulting in selective issue emphasis or divergent agendas among parties. Consequently, policies primarily contribute to forming the in-group in these contexts. In such cases, populism and character attacks play a significant role in constructing the out-group (Garrett & Bankert, 2020; Harteveld, 2021; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021). While affective polarization typically escalates during election campaigns within democracies (Hernández et al., 2021), in illiberal contexts, the reinforcement of partisan attitudes through elite communication poses an additional obstacle to democratization, as it undermines democratic norms (Kingzette et al., 2021) and may even foster democratic backsliding (Orhan, 2022).

However, polarization is dynamic rather than static and unfolds over time. Therefore, unlike static campaign analyses, the Dynamic Polarization Model considers the temporal dimension, along with the actors and issues involved in the process. While network analysis is valuable for understanding how actors polarize each other (Macy et al., 2021), the application of time series analysis in this study enables the comparison of campaigns across different contexts and time periods. Thus, the Dynamic Polarization Model plays a crucial role in understanding elite polarization within election campaigns, especially in competitive autocracies or illiberal systems. While the dissertation focuses on elite-level dynamics, its implications extend to comprehending societal polarization and populist tendencies. By examining how elites influence political dynamics, this model offers valuable insights into the broader socio-political landscapes of these societies.

1.3 Understanding elite discourse: A mixed-methods approach

The central method of this study is an innovative quantitative content analysis, integrating tone, policy, populist, and character references. Content analysis is the most widely used methodology in elite-level analyses (Riffe et al., 2019), including populism, tone, and policies, although studies rarely and only partially combine these elements. This approach

draws from the functional theory (Benoit, 1999; 2003; Benoit et al., 2003), the Comparative Manifesto Research (Volkens et al., 2020), and the ideational approach (Hawkins et al., 2019). Among other advantages, it measures policy and populist issues simultaneously, revealing the ratio and relation of these contents.

The analysis was narrowed down to a 51-day campaign period, and all available speeches from Istanbul and Budapest, totaling 361, were meticulously collected and transcribed. These speeches underwent rigorous unitization and coding into 14,668 messages, with tones and issues identified through double-coding. To ensure reliability, native coders, who underwent extensive training through online and in-person sessions, independently recoded 10% of the Turkish and Hungarian materials, demonstrating consistently high reliability. Although no methodological tools are available for assessing reliable unitization of textual data, coders found the criteria clear and consistent.

This method facilitates the creation of comparable data based on a priori categories (Neuendorf, 2017), ensuring consistency across parties and politicians. Human coding was essential in the analysis to identify and understand the construct of populist narratives. Thus, text procession resulted in systematic and well-organized qualitative data in addition to frequencies.

In addition to the content analysis, I present four in-depth accounts of government and opposition campaigns featuring original translations and excerpts from elite speeches. This qualitative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the campaign content, overcoming language barriers and capturing subtleties that numerical methods may overlook. By complementing quantitative analysis with qualitative insights, this mixed-methods approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in political campaigns, enriching the findings of the other two methods.

Finally, this study employs time series analysis, specifically utilizing an autoregressive integrated moving average model or ARIMA model (Box & Jenkins, 1976), with positive and negative communication as the dependent variables. This method effectively captures the fluctuating dynamics of affective polarization observed during political campaigns. By examining separate positive and negative communication models, the research seeks to understand how the elite polarizes and shapes in-group and out-group identities throughout campaigns.

This methodological approach is consistent with established theoretical frameworks that emphasize the influence of elite cues and campaign rhetoric on partisan divisions and inter-group animosity (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019; Michelitch & Utych, 2018). The model effectively captures affective polarization as a dynamic process by utilizing positive and negative communication as dependent variables. Positive or in-party cues (affirmations about oneself) strengthen in-group identities, whereas negative or out-party cues (critiques aimed at rivals) exacerbate inter-group hostility, with both leading to affective polarization (Bäck et al., 2023; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021; Sood & Iyengar, 2016).

While many acknowledge the dynamic nature of both campaigns (Shaw, 1999; Apfeld & Branham, 2019) and polarization (Hetherington, 2001), existing accounts often offer snapshot-like views or lack a comprehensive explanation of polarization drivers. Although network analysis offers insights into how actors polarize each other (Macy et al., 2021), time series analysis provides a means for introducing exogenous factors including policy, populist, and character messages, facilitating within- and cross-country comparisons over time. In addition, the autoregressive and moving average components of the ARIMA (1,0,1) model enable the exploration of temporal patterns in polarization dynamics, shedding light on how past communication shapes present polarization levels and how external factors influence future polarization trajectories. Consequently, this method presents an opportunity for future research to explore the elite polarization dynamics in and beyond the contexts of populism in power.

1.4 Outline of the dissertation

Until the writing of this dissertation, the 2019 mayoral elections have been the sole instances of electoral success for the opposition in Turkey and Hungary. How did the opposition effectively challenge long-standing populist incumbents in illiberal settings? I argue that effective communication was crucial for the opposition, particularly given their lack of government experience.

Within metropolitan settings, a significant portion of the electorate could perceive the incumbents as unresponsive to their salient concerns. The challengers capitalized on the "advantage of opposition," allowing them greater latitude in addressing citizens' most pressing issues, a freedom that incumbents, burdened by damaged issue reputations, could not exploit. In other words, the economic crisis and the critical state of healthcare alone

were insufficient to account for the opposition's success, as challengers also needed to persuade the electorate of their superior competence. This study reveals party strategies employed across different countries, contingent upon the electoral landscape. Despite contextual differences, the opposition shared common strategies for challenging populist incumbents, who, although exhibiting similarities, were driven by diverse rationales.

Chapter 2 lays the conceptual groundwork for this study, drawing primarily from the issue salience theory as its theoretical framework. The 2019 elections, arguably among the most competitive ballots in Turkey and Hungary, exhibited two-party dynamics amid traditionally multi-party systems. This chapter identifies key strategic elements and incorporates the ideational approach to populism alongside discussions on negative campaigning and affective polarization. Additionally, Chapter 2 establishes the foundation for the Dynamic Polarization Model, which captures the mechanism of affective polarization within elite discourse. While Turkey and Hungary exhibit substantial levels of affective polarization and the discernible impact of elite cues on citizens' perceptions and political choices, the precise formulation of in-group and out-group identities by parties and their role in affective polarization among the electorate requires further inquiry. This model, which considers populist, personal, and policy cues, shows how content influences affective polarization and the elite's role in perpetuating it.

Chapter 3 introduces the central methodology employed in this study, which is an innovative quantitative content analysis, based on Benoit’s functional theory (Benoit, 1999), utilizing the codebook of the Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2020) and populism measurements applied by the ideational approach. Following this, Chapter 4 contextualizes the 2019 elections by examining the political trajectories of the ruling AKP and Fidesz, emphasizing their adoption of populist strategies amidst increasing illiberal tendencies. Furthermore, this chapter underscores the significance of municipal politics in shaping the success of these parties, drawing parallels between their tactics. Through a comprehensive review of recent elections in Istanbul and Budapest, this chapter provides insight into previous mayoral ballots in Istanbul and Budapest.

Chapter 5 is a fusion of the election contexts and descriptive statistics. This chapter provides insights into candidate selection and parties' strategic considerations offering descriptive statistics derived from the content analysis, revealing diverse structural configurations of campaigns. I argue that the opposition in Istanbul and Budapest made

distinct strategic choices in criticizing ruling parties, influenced by their targeted voter bases. Although both opposition alliances mirrored governments in their predominant campaign genres, they differed in their approach to attacking the government, with Istanbul's opposition refraining while Budapest's did not. İmamoğlu opted for minimizing attack messages to appeal to AKP voters, whereas Karácsony utilized government criticism to unify polarized opposition supporters.

The human-coded content analysis generated qualitative data, which is detailed in Chapter 6 through in-depth accounts of the 2019 election campaigns. This chapter provides insights into these elections by incorporating references to speeches and excerpts from original texts, enriching our understanding beyond mere quantification and abstraction.

Chapter 7 demonstrates the applicability of the issue salience theory to the Istanbul and Budapest cases and presents content analysis findings regarding campaign issues. While the AKP and Fidesz emphasized sovereignty and survival as a narrative for popular sovereignty, it provided terrorism and immigration as rationales for the perceived emergencies. In contrast, opposition parties prioritized welfare concerns. İmamoğlu targeted women and children, marginalized groups for social justice, while Karácsony focused on healthcare and green issues. Despite differences, both incumbents and challengers used populist and character-driven messaging. While ruling parties stressed security competence, aiming to transmute issue salience, opposition candidates addressed citizen concerns, leveraging populist rhetoric. Furthermore, İmamoğlu's emphasis on traffic and unemployment served as the basis for positive campaigning, propagating his ownership over these issues. Conversely, Karácsony's focus on democracy and political corruption aimed to rally polarized opposition groups against the government, leading to a more varied tone in his messaging.

In Chapter 8, I explore the content analysis findings regarding populism in mayoral election campaigns. Contrary to traditional literature, governments exhibited more anti-elitist rhetoric than their challengers. Fidesz's anti-elitism, mainly directed towards national and EU elites, was notably pronounced. Similarly, while the AKP emphasized popular sovereignty grievances, it highlighted its moral standing and appealed directly to the people.

On the side of the challengers, the Istanbul opposition primarily centered its campaign around moral integrity, aligning with frequent appeals to the people. In contrast,

the Budapest opposition adopted a dual approach, equally emphasizing anti-elitism and people-centric messaging. Their primary focus was on highlighting government corruption while offering to restore popular sovereignty through democratic reforms. This divergence in opposition strategies can be attributed to the distinct voter bases targeted by each party. In Istanbul, securing the votes of core government supporters was crucial, while in Budapest, the aim was to unite polarized opposition voters against the government. However, both challengers prioritized people-centric narratives to establish credibility on salient issues, while ruling parties sought to undermine challengers through prevalent anti-elitist rhetoric.

In Chapter 9, I present the content analysis findings regarding campaign tone, highlighting that the opposition conducted notably more positive campaigns than the governments in both cities. This challenges the conventional notion in the literature on negative campaigning, which typically suggests that challengers employ more negativity than incumbents because of its strategic advantage in elections. I argue that their strategic selection of issues influenced the positive tone of opposition parties, which eventually convinced voters about their superior competence in salient issues. Additionally, I compare parties and individuals, revealing the division of labor in party communication.

Chapter 10 presents the time series analysis and introduces the Dynamic Polarization Model, which explores the intricate dynamics of issue salience and political actors' interactions. Unlike static approaches that provide mere snapshots of election campaigns, this model offers a nuanced understanding of how various issues and actors influence each other over time.

In the context of an opposition victory against an illiberal populist incumbent, the model reveals a significant shift away from policy-based confrontations. Instead, parties primarily engage in debates surrounding populist issues, as governments shy away from policy discussions to safeguard their electoral prospects. This strategic maneuver by the opposition effectively challenges incumbents, highlighting the importance of promoting alternative agendas over attacking their policies. As governments resort to populism and character attacks to discredit the opposition, the absence of policy-based criticism compels the opposition to respond in kind. In other words, parties minimize their position cues, essential for a healthy democracy, and partisanship becomes prevalent in citizens' political

decisions. Consequently, overcoming the populist right becomes contentious, as the most effective approach poses further threats to fragile political systems.

In Chapter 10, I develop distinct models illustrating how elite polarization manifests positively and negatively, revealing the construction and reconstruction of in- and out-party groups in election campaign discourse. Across both Istanbul and Budapest, the opposition consistently adopts a more positive communication style, emphasizing the formation of in-group identity.

While both government and opposition rhetoric often invoke appeals to the people and morality in Istanbul, İmamoğlu's policies notably contribute more to in-group identity formation. Despite polarization over popular sovereignty, the AKP's messages exert a greater influence on the negative aspect. However, the analysis reveals no consistent pattern of elite members impacting one another, suggesting their strategic choice to overlook their opponents. In Budapest, both the government and the opposition directed their attacks towards each other, adding complexity to the findings. The analysis suggests that while its policy messages were more systematic throughout the campaign, only the opposition appealed to the people directly. Here, different aspects of popular sovereignty were significant for both the government and the opposition, but while the opposition utilized it for in-group, the government relied on it for out-group construction. Additionally, mentions of the elite, particularly regarding corruption, played a significant role in constructing the out-group identity, leading to reciprocal attacks between rivals.

In Chapter 11, I offer a comprehensive summary of the study's findings and provide conclusions regarding strategies for countering populist governments. This chapter also explores insights derived from analyzing campaign dynamics in Istanbul and Budapest, shedding light on both government and opposition strategies. By examining elite cues, including policy and populist messaging, and analyzing elite polarization, I investigate how these factors contribute to the construction of affective polarization among citizens. Furthermore, I explore how parties polarize, construct in-group and out-group identities, and foster populist attitudes in citizens, addressing a gap in the existing literature. I also extend the analysis to the general elections of 2022 and 2023, illustrating how the opposition's failure to communicate efficiently hindered its ability to challenge the government. Additionally, I propose future research directions and considerations for revisiting rival explanations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Local elections and campaigns

Political science literature distinguishes between first and second-order elections based on voter turnout. National elections are first-order, and non-national elections are second-order ballots (Reif & Schmitt, 1980; Schmitt, 2005; Schmitt & Toygür, 2016; van der Brug et al., 2016; Schmitt et al., 2020). Their distinction is based on turnout: non-national elections typically attract fewer voters as they perceive them of lesser salience (Marien et al., 2015). However, the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest elections were no ordinary second-order votes. Attendance approached those of national ballots in Istanbul with 83.88% (YSK, 2019), while it exceeded the usual turnout in Budapest with 51.47% (NVI, 2019b). What made these elections so important?

Local elections can attract more attention due to the size of the municipality at stake (Kelleher & Lowery, 2004, 2009; Gendźwiłł & Kjaer, 2021; Oliver, 2021), its political importance (Schakel & Jeffrey, 2013) and visibility vis-à-vis the national government (Liñeira, 2016). Individual-level analyses find that identity (Liñeira, 2016; Harfst et al., 2023) or ideology (Hobolt & Wittrock, 2011; Marien et al., 2015) may motivate one to vote in local elections. However, like in the case of national elections, mobilization is expected to drive turnout. Hence, campaigning should profoundly impact the election's perceived salience.

The argument that local campaigns matter is far from new (Elklit, 1991; Whiteley & Seyd, 1994; Pattie et al., 1995; Carty & Eagles, 1999; Harrison & McSweeney, 2008). Moreover, party organizations and mobilization at the local level have a crucial role in electoral politics (Frendreis et al., 1990; Scarrow, 1993), and local campaigns can have a spillover effect on national votes (Cutts et al., 2014). These campaigns are more likely to pay off as well: it is easier for parties to reach people in municipalities, as citizens are more exposed to these campaigns (Lefevere & van Aelst, 2014).

However, less attention has been given to these campaigns, as local ballots have systematically generated lower turnouts (Morlan, 1984; Schakel & Jeffery, 2013). Some attribute this phenomenon to the elite's perceived lack of campaigning efforts (Ervik, 2012; Lefevere & van Aelst, 2014). Consequently, when the elite perceives high stakes in a local election, it may invest more in mobilization efforts, potentially boosting voter turnout.

Indeed, parties have various means to elevate election salience. The candidate's persona (Allen & Post, 2004; Marien et al., 2015) and the party's presence in national politics (Schakel & Jeffrey, 2013) can attract more voters. While parties typically allocate fewer resources for local campaigns, increased investments (Benoit & Marsh, 2003; Lefevere & van Aelst, 2014; Put et al., 2015) and canvassing efforts (Green et al., 2003; Gerber & Green, 2000) are believed to foster turnout, or even translate to electoral success (Bochel & Denver, 1972). In contemporary campaigning, investing in social media campaigns can also contribute to securing electoral victories (Sobaci et al., 2016; Effing et al., 2016).

Which issues parties campaign with also impacts election salience. Local elections are widely considered to be at least partially bound to national politics and government performance (Rodden & Wibbels, 2011; Lindstam, 2019), so parties can utilize national issues when an important municipality is at stake or where previously parties performed poorly at the national elections (Dodeigne et al., 2021). However, others argue that local issues are more critical in vote choice (Cutler, 2008; Marien et al., 2015), as the elite has leverage over making these matters salient (Lefevere, 2018). In addition, partisans' perceived issue salience tends to follow that of their party, which can motivate them to vote based on national issues (Lefevere, 2018). It seems that, like on the national level, parties have the means to divert voters' attention, and elite messaging can transmute issue salience.

The 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest shattered the conventional framework of second-order elections. Far from being ordinary local contests, these elections took on national significance. Istanbul's ballot rose to the level of a first-order election, while Budapest's became a significant mid-level salience vote (Heath et al., 1999). Beyond mere municipal governance, these critical elections held enormous sway due to the economic importance of the municipalities, the robust party organizations involved, and the intricate clientelist networks at stake. Securing victory in these municipalities provided independent

budget allocation, enhanced visibility, mobilization resources, and network expansion opportunities for opposition parties.

Both ruling and opposition parties leveraged national issues to boost election salience. While the government emphasized popular sovereignty, opposition parties prioritized nationally relevant issues, promising local remedies for government neglect. However, while both sides mobilized intensely in Istanbul, only the opposition showed significant interest in Budapest, leading to the disparity in voter turnout.

2.2 Strategic issue selection, issue salience, and issue ownership

The issue salience theory was formulated contrary to Downs' (1957) spatial theory of issue competition. Downs argued that parties compete with policy alternatives in an ideal system, and voters pick the party that most closely represents their issue positions. As opposed to this, Budge and Farlie (1983) argued that parties strategically draw attention to advantageous and downplay disadvantageous issues instead of representing policy alternatives, hence the term selective emphasis. Based on the UK and US two-party systems, the theory aims to explain both elite and voter behavior (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008).

A common critique of the issue salience theory is its limited applicability in multi-party systems, where parties often converge on campaign issues (Dolezal et al., 2014; Banda, 2013). Despite Turkey and Hungary being multi-party systems, the 2019 mayoral elections saw quasi-two-party dynamics: two primary candidates, supported by party alliances, vied for the majority of votes, while others received minimal attention and electoral support. Faced with the challenge of confronting illiberal populist governments, opposition parties recognized the limitations of relying solely on position cues. Ruling parties hesitated to engage in policy debates, fearing potential repercussions on their electoral prospects. Moreover, government control over the media made it difficult to undermine their credibility on issues over which they claimed ownership. Consequently, promoting distinct issues emerged as a strategic approach for opposition candidates vying for mayoral positions in critical municipalities. Their strategy was an important reminder that the context does not translate to results, even in illiberal regimes. Thus, despite the curtailed institutional settings and excessive government control over media, parties had the means to alter these election contexts.

As the election context does not translate to results automatically, parties aim to alter it with the help of selective emphasis through campaigns (Petrocik, 1996). According to the issue salience theory, parties campaign on different issues because their proposed solutions to political problems often do not substantially differ (Budge, 2001). In modern campaigning, parties are constantly updated about voters' preferences, allowing them to utilize pressing matters (Petrocik et al., 2003/2004).

However, parties are not entirely free to choose their campaign topics, as their reputation and the election context influence their agenda. Initially, voters may perceive a party as competent exclusively based on campaign speeches and other materials, but incumbency constantly calls its reputation into question (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Petrocik, 1996). Thus, ironically, while incumbency offers advantages, opposition parties often have greater flexibility in selecting campaign themes (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010; Green & Jennings, 2012a). Nevertheless, a party's salient issue ideally aligns with its perceived competence and resonates with what voters find important as well (Budge & Farlie, 1983). The latter is crucial, for controlling salient issues is likely to translate to electoral victory (Edwards et al., 1995; Benoit et al., 2003; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Amorós & Puy, 2010). Hence, parties strategically communicate with the electorate to convince them regarding the salient issue and assert their ownership over it.

Elite cues undeniably influence perceived issue salience. While some argue for the supremacy of messages over political judgments (Rahn, 1993), others highlight their collective impact (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006; Bullock, 2011; Boudreau & MacKenzie, 2014). Additionally, some scholars emphasize the conditional nature of party cues (Druckman et al., 2013; Guisinger & Saunders, 2017) alongside the media's role in disseminating them (Zaller, 1992; Brians & Wattenberg, 1996; Hayes, 2008; Wirth et al., 2010). Regardless of these mediating factors, the influence of elite messaging on issue salience remains significant, often translating into electoral success (Dellis, 2009; Carson et al., 2020; Adams et al., 2023).

In their endeavor to sway voters on salient issues, parties must also establish their superior competence over them (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996; Benoit & Hansen, 2004; Green & Hobolt, 2008; Dolezal et al., 2014; Budge, 2015). Some scholars assert that issue ownership directly influences voter behavior (Bellucci, 2006; Green & Jennings, 2012a), while others argue that it must interact with perceived issue salience (Benoit et al.,

2003; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Green & Hobolt, 2008; Stubager & Slothuus, 2012; Walgrave et al., 2012; 2015) or prior party preferences (Stubager & Slothuus, 2013; Lachat, 2014; Dahlberg & Martinsson, 2015).

As Petrocik (1996) noted, establishing credibility is a multifaceted process involving both partisan and identity elements. However, what ultimately matters for the electoral outcome is which candidate voters perceive as more competent in addressing pressing issues. Issue ownership, particularly regarding economic matters, is volatile (Green & Jennings, 2012b), with voters often prioritizing concerns such as the economy (Christensen et al., 2015). As a result, heading to an election, political parties face the challenge of simultaneously shifting attention to an issue and convincing voters that they are best equipped to handle it.

Chapter 5 delves into the context of the 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest, where the issue salience theory gained relevance in multi-party frameworks. Opposition actors formulated party alliances to increase the competitiveness of the elections. The election context constrained the AKP and Fidesz, offering rare opportunities for their challengers. Their incumbency set barriers for these governments: they could not address economic and welfare problems, which citizens could potentially hold them accountable for, impacting their electoral prospects.

Due to government policies, Istanbul faced economic challenges, including rising unemployment (Öniş, 2019). Despite initial economic success, doubts about the AKP's handling of economic issues emerged over time, notably in 2015 (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021). The rapid decline in living standards from 2018 onwards likely further undermined the party's credibility. Consequently, in 2019, the AKP struggled to address economic concerns, significantly impacting campaigning in two ways. Firstly, the ruling party sought to shift focus to popular sovereignty, framing the election as a security crisis, its prime competency. Secondly, this backdrop provided an opportunity for the opposition alliance: Ekrem İmamoğlu could address unemployment and economic problems, aligning with the pressing concerns of Istanbul residents.

Like Istanbul, economic concerns were not at the forefront of the government's campaign in Budapest. Despite the facade of a thriving economy, its benefits were scarcely felt at the micro level. Furthermore, signs of economic slowdown began to emerge. Residents were primarily focused on healthcare issues (Boros & Laki, 2018), presenting a

challenge for Fidesz, which had been in power for nearly a decade. While the shift in voters' attention had previously benefited the AKP (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021), Fidesz, drawing from past experiences, recognized its capacity to strategically redirect attention towards security issues, a tactic they had successfully employed in previous elections (Bíró-Nagy, 2022). Like Istanbul, the Budapest opposition also seized the opportunity presented by the government's limitations and campaigned to establish credibility on salient issues such as welfare and environmental policies.

While campaign agendas hold significant importance, the precise purpose behind parties' emphasis on particular issues remains unclear. Simply put, we know little about whether a party uses a salient issue to acclaim itself or to attack its rival. Budge and Farlie (1983) suggest that parties rarely engage in discussing their opponents, let alone their policies. Similarly, Damore (2002) observes that parties often adopt a positive campaign strategy, focusing on their strengths to secure votes efficiently. These findings imply an overall trend towards positivity and reduced negativity in campaign rhetoric.

However, existing research primarily examines policy issues within the context of Western democracies, overlooking the dynamics of campaigns under illiberal populist regimes. Traditional policy debates are minimalized in such environments, while populist rhetoric and character-based attacks are prevalent in political discourse. Parties will likely pursue distinct agendas, leveraging traditional policies to bolster their image and reinforce their party identity. As a result, populism emerges as a central tool for critiquing opponents and constructing an in-group identity. Despite its inherently polarizing nature, populism will also solidify credibility around the issues each party promotes.

In light of the literature review, this study tests the following hypotheses in the context of the Istanbul and Budapest mayoral election campaigns:

H1: In the context of an opposition victory under a populist government, as policy messages increase, elite confrontation will decrease.

H2: In the context of an opposition victory under a populist government, as populism rises, elite confrontation will intensify.

2.3 Measuring populism in campaign discourse: the ideational approach

During its prominence, populism has become a widely recognized term in contemporary politics (Mudde, 2004). It has been applied to various phenomena, from political rhetoric to social movements, and even public attitudes towards science (Mede & Schäfer, 2020). However, it is important to exercise caution and refrain from categorizing everything as populist, given the lack of scholarly consensus on its precise definition. Therefore, this study adopts the ideational approach as its theoretical framework to ensure a nuanced understanding and avoid oversimplification.

Populist cosmology interprets the world as the 'Manichaean struggle between the will of the common people and an evil, conspiring elite' (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019, p. 2; see also Hawkins 2009; 2010). This definition implies that three components must coincide to speak of populism: 1) the homogeneous and authentic people, 2) the corrupt elite, and 3) their antagonistic moral struggle (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013). Thus, populism is essentially a 'moral discourse' about the irresolvable opposition between the good people and the evil elite (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019, p. 3).

Populism fails the criteria for a proper ideology because of the lack of a systematic set of beliefs and normative prescriptions for state, economy, and society (Freeden, 2003; Norris, 2020). Thus, populism may be combined with ideologies from left to right. Populist actors politicize social resentment relevant at a given time, defining and re-defining the in and out-group, that is, the people and the elite (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019). Thus, populism is depicted as a 'thin-centered ideology' (Mudde, 2004), often used interchangeably with 'a set of ideas' by the ideational approach.

Another avenue of inquiry examines populism as a form of discourse (Laclau, 2005). Some scholars propose a positivist view within this perspective, considering populism as a quantifiable aspect of discourse or rhetorical strategy (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Hawkins, 2009; Moffitt, 2015; Aalberg et al., 2016). Conversely, others, rooted in the ideational approach, also focus on discourse but emphasize its centrality in understanding elite-level populism (Elçi, 2019; Rooduijn, 2014; March, 2019). This underscores that while different theoretical approaches exist, they converge in their emphasis on the communicative aspect of populism, suggesting that their distinctions may not be as stark as initially perceived.

While various approaches in the study of populism often share a focus on political communication, their divergent definitions of populism contribute to nuanced interpretations. Definitions of populism range from minimalist perspectives that equate populism with simple people-centrism (Van Leeuwen & Zienkowski, 2019) to broader ones that emphasize the role of social exclusion (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Aalberg & de Vreese, 2016). Positioned between these theoretical extremes, the ideational approach acknowledges the presence of morally antagonistic groups – the "people" and the "elite" – but tends to associate exclusion more prominently with right-wing political forces (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012).

Thus, one strand of scholarship conceptualizes populism as discourse, while another interprets it as a thin-centered ideology. Despite this theoretical divergence, both strands emphasize the importance of political communication and elite messaging, particularly evident in electoral campaigns. Election campaign discourse serves as the primary source for assessing challengers' policies and populism, given their limited government experience. While there is no consensus on the precise benchmark for classifying an actor as a populist, scholars have outlined the essential qualities their discourse should encompass. This lack of consensus underscores the need for a comparative approach to populism, wherein actors are evaluated based on within- or cross-country comparisons to determine the extent of their populist attributes.

Following the ideational approach, this study operationalizes populism through distinct components. These components are categorized into two columns aligning with populism's core tenets: people-centrism and anti-elitism (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011; Ernst et al., 2017; Castanho Silva et al., 2019; 2023). Populist actors leverage these elements to shape both in-group and out-group identities. Accordingly, people-centrism entails positive references to the in-group, while anti-elitism involves negative cues about the out-group. Simultaneously, the scholarship operationalizes populism through various items, such as Manichaeanism, the people, the elite, and popular sovereignty. This suggests that certain aspects of populism emphasize people-centrism while others accentuate anti-elitism, thereby presenting voters with a dualistic worldview.

Thus, in this study, people-centrism includes positive messages about 1) the people, 2) morality, and 3) popular sovereignty. On the other hand, anti-elitism includes negative messages about 1) the elites, 2) morality, and 3) popular sovereignty. Within the framework

of dualist cosmology, each category is represented both within the realm of people-centrism and in that of anti-elitism. For instance, morality is a component of both people-centrism and anti-elitism. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 present the operationalization and measurement of populist components.

Table 2.1: Populist Components.

People-centrism	*Anti-elitism*
+ The People	- Elites
+ Morality	- Morality
+ Popular sovereignty	- Popular sovereignty

Table 2.2: Operationalization of populist components.

	People-centrism (+)
The People	Appeals to the people, mentions of the will, power, beauty, or wisdom of the people. Includes liking the speaker to the people, claiming that he/she is one of them or his/her love for them.
Morality	Positive references to the self's or extended self's personal characteristics, morality, outlook, or nature.
Popular sovereignty	*1) Freedom and democracy:* Positive references to freedom and democracy, the quality of democracy, the definition and redefinition of democracy, etc. *2) Sovereignty and survival:* Acclaims about tackling perceived threats that undermine the nation's (people, country) sovereignty. Includes internal and external threats and issues such as self-determination and autonomous decision-making regarding finances and politics.
	Anti-elitism (-)
Elites	Negative references to elites, including *1) political elite, 2) political alliance, 3) European Union,* and *4) political corruption.*
Morality	Negative references to the opponent or opponents' personal characteristics, morality, outlook, or nature.
Popular sovereignty	1) Negative references to *'freedom and democracy.'* 2) Negative references to *'sovereignty and survival.'*

The concept of 'the people' encompasses direct appeals to the people, their will, and their glorification. While some scholars do not differentiate between appeals to the people and the notion of popular sovereignty (Castanho Silva et al., 2019; Ardag et al., 2020; Erisen et

al., 2021), others argue for their distinction (see Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Wiesehomeier, 2019; March, 2019; Aytaç et al., 2021; Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2023). This study treats 'the people' and popular sovereignty as separate categories.

The 'elites' category encompasses messages about various elite segments, including 1) direct references to the elite, 2) the political alliance, 3) the European Union, and 4) political corruption. These distinct categories are included to address the multifaceted representations of elites in political discourse. While political actors often articulate corruption allegations instead of directly targeting elite groups, there are valid reasons for their inclusion in the analysis. At the same time, within the populist worldview, corruption is perceived as a systemic feature of politics (Boatright, 2020; Busby et al., 2019), a perception often reflected in public opinion surveys (Rahn et al., 2019) and present in elite discourse (Gründl, 2022). Additionally, Busby and colleagues (2019) underscore the significance of corruption as a key message in activating populist attitudes among the public.

In contrast to public opinion surveys, where Manichaeism is typically assessed as a single variable (e.g., Castanho Silva et al., 2020; Aytaç et al., 2021; Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2023), elite discourse rarely directly portrays politics as a struggle between good and evil. Instead, politicians construct the dichotomy between the people and the elite through moral references, often focusing on aspects of 'morality' such as personal qualities, nature, and outlook. Positive messages depict the speaker as morally upright, while negative messages attack rivals for their perceived immorality. While public opinion research addresses moral dualism, this approach is not directly transferable to the analysis of elite discourse. Nonetheless, some scholars argue that populists utilize personal messages to align themselves with the people (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007; Vossen, 2010; Grbeša & Šalaj, 2019) or to attack the elites on moral grounds (Wiesehomeier, 2019). The omission of morality in elite content analyses thus overlooks the Manichaean nature of populism, limiting their ability to capture its essence fully. This analysis represents a novel contribution as it comprehensively assesses moral messages and their roles in elite discourse for the first time.

Populism claims that elites corrupted popular sovereignty and that the populist actor can restore 'true' representation (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). Popular sovereignty incorporates two types of messages in this analysis: injuries and corrective messages. Negative popular sovereignty messages politicize injuries popular sovereignty suffered.

Hence, they are an aspect of anti-elitism, as elites are blamed for these grievances. Positive popular sovereignty messages propose to mend injuries popular sovereignty suffered. Hence, positive popular sovereignty messages are an aspect of people-centrism, which is about restoring people's representation. In this analysis, they are captured by the categories of 'sovereignty and survival' and 'freedom and democracy.'

The frame of 'sovereignty and survival' in elite discourse embodies the concept of popular sovereignty. Here, sovereignty is perceived through a security lens, suggesting internal and external sources threaten it. These threats are distinct from nativism, as Mudde (2009) discussed. In this study, messages concerning threats posed by non-native elements to the unity of the authentic population are categorized under 'immigration' or 'multiculturalism.' However, according to arguments centered around popular sovereignty, the will of the people itself is perceived as endangered, a narrative that political actors aim to address and restore.

The security aspect of popular sovereignty underscores the perception that threats to the unity and sovereignty of the people are imminent and must be addressed. This understanding aligns with populist rhetoric, as it pictures the nation as a monolithic bloc and emphasizes the need to protect its interests and will against perceived internal and external threats. Thus, framing popular sovereignty in terms of security reinforces the populist narrative of defending the collective identity and interests of the people, making it a legitimate aspect to assess within the context of populism.

Negative references to 'sovereignty and survival' are often conspiracy theories about elite collusion. Many address the relationship between conspiracy theories and populist attitudes (Castanho Silva et al., 2017; Hameleers, 2021; Erisen et al., 2021; Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019) or their use in elite discourse (Castanho Silva et al., 2019; Hameleers, 2021; Bergmann & Butter, 2020; Jenne et al., 2021; Pirro & Taggart, 2023), while opinions divert on whether it is essential to the political right (Castanho Silva et al., 2019; Jenne et al., 2021) or both sides (Andreadis & Ruth-Lovell, 2019). Populists argue that representation got into crisis due to elite conspiracy, which, eventually, is reflected in popular attitudes and diverts attention from real policy problems to not-so-real ones (Carlin et al., 2019).

This analysis presents an original contribution by illuminating the similarities between the governments of Fidesz and the AKP. While these parties are often likened due

to their illiberal tendencies and populist strategies, a closer examination reveals shared rhetoric beyond their perceived salient issues. While some emphasize terrorism as the primary concern in the AKP's 2019 campaign (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019; Yavuzyılmaz, 2021) and immigration as Fidesz's central argument since 2017 (see Enyedi, 2018; Bíró-Nagy, 2022), solely focusing on these issues overlooks the underlying similarity in their discourse. Both governments prioritize the security aspect of popular sovereignty, with terrorism and immigration serving as auxiliary arguments. At the heart of their populist strategies lies the notion that sovereignty is at stake, while terrorism and immigration provide the rationale. This innovative analysis sheds light on this commonality, offering a fresh perspective on the political discourse of ruling parties.

Finally, popular sovereignty can be framed as an issue of democracy. Many recognize that popular sovereignty is central to both populism and democracy (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; 2013; Stavrakakis, 2018; Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2023). Within the discourse of populism, popular sovereignty holds a central position, offering to restore and enhance democratic principles (Mouffe, 2018; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). According to Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2012), populism aims to mend representation by including previously excluded groups in politics, thereby enhancing democratic accountability and coalition building. Thus, excluding the democratic aspect of popular sovereignty from analysis would provide an incomplete picture, limiting our understanding of its multifaceted nature (Mudde, 2004).

In conclusion, this analysis measures two core components of populism: people-centrism and anti-elitism. These components are operationalized through three key elements: group identity, morality, and popular sovereignty. Negative references to the elite construct anti-elitism, while positive references to the people foster people-centrism, illustrating the process of in and out-group identity construction. Negative and positive references are essential to capture the antagonistic opposition of these two groups, which is in the heart of populism. By incorporating these innovative elements, this analysis offers a more comprehensive understanding of elite discourse than previous studies, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of populism.

In the context of populists in power, this comprehensive framework examines how ruling parties utilize populist strategies and how opposition parties respond, utilizing different aspects of populism. Hence, it sheds light on how mainstream parties may adopt

or modify populist tactics when challenging populist incumbents. This analysis provides valuable insights into the dynamics of populism in governance and its impact on political competition, offering a nuanced understanding of the strategies employed by parties both in and out of power.

Within democratic contexts, the opposition typically adopts more anti-elitist rhetoric (Otjes & Louwerse, 2021) due to its political role. However, empirical evidence from the 2019 mayoral elections suggests that this strategy is not solely contingent upon incumbency. Instead, strategic considerations drive the utilization of both people-centrism and anti-elitism. Demiralp and Balta (2021) proposed the concept of 'inverted populism' to explain how the Istanbul opposition's emphasis on people-centric rhetoric contributed to their victory. Analyzing the Budapest and Istanbul elections reveals the pivotal role of the opposition's people-centrism in repolarizing the electorate, reshaping group dynamics, and establishing credibility on salient issues, particularly given their lack of governing experience. Despite the advantage of incumbency, the AKP and Fidesz campaigns primarily relied on attacking opponents. Anti-elitist messaging likely aimed to undermine opposition credibility, solidify support among core voters, attract swing votes, and deter opposition supporters.

In light of the literature review, I test the following hypothesis on the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest mayoral election campaigns:

H3: In the context of opposition victory under populism in power, the opposition will adopt populist strategies, emphasizing people-centrism more than anti-elitism.

2.4 Positive and negative campaigning

The political communication literature delineates negative campaigning as comprising attacks against an opponent or opponents (Houston et al., 1999; Benoit et al., 2003; Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Carraro et al., 2010; Nai & Walter, 2016). Conversely, positive campaigning entails acclaiming oneself (Harrington & Hess, 1996; Benoit, 1999; 2003; 2016; Benoit et al., 2003; Carraro et al., 2010; Nai, 2020). Hence, the polarity of campaign messaging hinges on whether the intent is to enhance one's own image or to undermine the opponent's (Harrington & Hess, 1996), i.e., whether the focus is inward or outward (Nai, 2020).

While positive campaigning is rarely addressed in the literature, it is considered the most straightforward method to acquaint voters with a party (Damore, 2002). Evidence suggests that positivity resonates more favorably with voters (Gerbaudo et al., 2019), or at least they dislike negative campaigning (Patterson, 2009; Lau & Pomper, 2004). In contrast to positivity, there has been a surge in scholarly interest in negative campaigning (Haselmayer, 2019). However, whether negative communication has indeed increased is not readily discernible: while several studies argue in favor of this trend (Benoit, 1999; Benoit et al., 2003; Geer, 2006), others remain skeptical about its long-term prevalence (Walter, 2014; Buell & Sigelman, 2009; Lau & Pomper, 2004).

The literature presents mixed views on the effects of negative political communication. Recent studies on elite-level dynamics suggest that negativity can spur policy reform (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010; Seeberg, 2023). Certainly, negativity in political discourse can trigger counterattacks, hence more mudslinging among political elites (Dolezal et al., 2016). However, it is important to note that negative campaigning can also have positive outcomes. Research suggests it can foster fruitful debates, ultimately boosting voters' knowledge about candidates and their policy platforms (Damore, 2002; Geer, 2006).

At the same time, opinions vary on how negative campaigning impacts voters. While there is evidence that the public generally dislikes negative campaigning, which can result in a decrease in voter turnout (Patterson, 2009; Lau & Pomper, 2004; Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995), some report increased political engagement (Mayer, 1996; Brooks & Geer, 2007), mixed results (Krupnikov, 2011), or even no effects of negative communication (Finkel & Geer, 1998). Alternatively, negative campaigning contributes to strategic mobilization, although the evidence of its effectiveness is limited and often contradictory. For example, Rohrschneider (2002) suggests that negative campaigning can mobilize swing voters, while Stuckelberger (2021) contends that it also serves to reassure core constituents. Nevertheless, there is increasing emphasis on its potential to exacerbate affective polarization among voters (Iyengar et al., 2012; Garrett et al., 2014; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017).

While the impact of negative campaigning remains uncertain, there is little consensus on its underlying rationale as well. The predominant explanation revolves around incumbency, suggesting that opposition parties are more inclined towards negativity due to

their lack of governmental experience (Nai, 2020; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter & Van der Brug, 2013; Druckman et al., 2009; Johansson, 2014). Consequently, negative communication tends to yield benefits for the opposition (Lau & Pomper, 2002), whereas positive campaigning often aids the incumbent (Hopmann et al., 2010; Lau & Pomper, 2002), which is also more frequently targeted by attacks (Dolezal et al., 2015).

Alternatively, another line of research examines parties' polling positions (Damore, 2002; Mair et al., 2004). Lagging behind in polls may foster the utilization of attack messages (Hassell, 2021), while closely contested races can also incentivize similar strategies (Lau & Pomper, 2004; Druckman et al., 2009). Regarding individual politicians, it is observed that high-profile figures often delegate negative campaigning to less prominent members of their party (Dolezal et al., 2017).

Recent scholarship suggests that populist candidates tend to adopt a more confrontational tone compared to their non-populist counterparts (Nai & Walter, 2016; Nai, 2020). The association between populism and polarizing rhetoric stems from the former's inherent Manichaean worldview (Moffitt, 2015; Nai, 2020; Roberts, 2022). However, it is important to note that polarizing discourse is not exclusive to populists, as their opponents may also employ moralizing and homogenizing language against them (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018; Stavrakakis, 2018). During the intensity of election campaigns, individuals across the political spectrum may resort to populist tactics and negative messaging (Klinger et al., 2022), with the latter approach often yielding greater success (Hameleers et al., 2021).

The significance of issues in shaping campaign tone has received scant attention despite their pivotal role in determining the polarity of messages. Put simply, the content of communication profoundly influences its tone, making issue selection a critical factor. Elmelund-Præstekær (2011) contends that campaign tone is determined by the salience and ownership of issues, with parties more likely to adopt positive messaging when they own salient issues. Conversely, negativity tends to prevail when a party lacks ownership of salient issues. However, contrary findings by Poljak and Seeberg (2024) suggest that parties are inclined towards negativity when they own the salient campaign issue. Additionally, some argue that candidates may attack issues owned by their rivals, as their track record influences voter perceptions (Damore, 2002; Seeberg & Nai, 2021). In sum, our

understanding of the role of issues in campaign tone remains limited and often contentious. This is surprising given that the substance of communication fundamentally shapes its tone, implying that what is communicated should inherently influence how it is communicated.

As political discourse extends beyond policy discussions, negativity can have non-political content, too. While cross-national analyses within democratic contexts reveal a prevalence of policy-based attacks over personal ones (Maier & Nai, 2023), examining hybrid cases sheds light on variations in campaign dynamics and the prominence of character-based negative campaigning (Bjarnøe et al., 2023). Emerging research in populist communication indicates that populist actors tend to engage more frequently in ad hominem attacks (Berti & Loner, 2023; Nai et al., 2019). This should be expected, as morality is essential to populism, unlike expert policy-based politics.

In the context of an opposition victory against an illiberal populist incumbent, one would anticipate increased personal or non-policy messages in campaigns. With distinct agendas, parties are less likely to clash over issues, making personal matters a viable avenue for attacking rivals. Additionally, parties are expected to differ in their use of negativity. While negativity is typically associated with opposition parties in democratic contexts, they are expected to adopt a more positive tone in such extraordinary circumstances. For example, İmamoğlu and Karácsony had to navigate strategic considerations while addressing salient issues and mobilizing support. Despite the incumbency advantage, governments tended to employ more polarizing rhetoric, possibly to solidify support among core voters and emphasize security issues aimed at swaying swing voters.

Hence, in addition to H1 and H2 concerning the source of inter-party conflict, and H3 regarding the content of populist messages, I test the following hypothesis on the 2019 mayoral election campaigns in Istanbul and Budapest:

H4: In the context of an opposition victory under a populist government, the opposition's issue selection will result in more positive campaign rhetoric.

2.5 Party interactions in illiberal populist environment: The Dynamic Polarization Model

Political science scholarship distinguishes between ideological and affective (social) polarization observed at the elite and public levels. Ideological polarization reflects parties' disagreements on policies, while affective polarization revolves around negative feelings

toward out-party and positive toward in-party identities. The influence of elite polarization extends to the mass level, as elite cues, similar to issue salience, alter voters' behavior (Banda & Cluverius, 2018; Skytte, 2021).

Many argue that affective polarization stems from social identity, an extension of partisan group identity, accelerated by elite cues in political campaigns (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019). Affective polarization emerges because partisan sorting intensifies, aligning social identity with ideology and partisanship (Iyengar et al., 2019). However, while there is ample evidence for the intense affective polarization among Turkish and Hungarian citizens (Vegetti, 2019; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021), we know little about how the elite generates this polarization. Because of the frequency of elite cues, campaigns intensify partisanship (Michelitch & Utych, 2018) and, especially negative campaigning, increases the inter-group affect (Sood & Iyengar, 2016). Thus, campaign analysis can reveal elite polarization dynamics and help understand how parties affectively polarize the electorate.

Initially developed in the UK and US two-party systems, the issue salience theory has gained relevance in contexts such as the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest mayoral elections. Leading candidates ran under party alliances, creating quasi-two-party configurations in these events. In affectively polarized systems like Turkey and Hungary, the issue salience theory explains party competition better than spatial positions. Selective issue emphasis is closely tied to partisan identity (Petrocik, 1996; Alesina, 1988) and serves as a method for distinguishing between parties, increasing the decidability of the election (Gunderson, 2024). While existing literature suggests that position cues help distinguish political parties (Hetherington, 2001; Levendusky, 2010; Druckman et al., 2013; Zingher & Flynn, 2018; Dalton, 2021) and affective polarization intensifies with ideological polarization (Nicholson, 2012; Bäck et al., 2023), strategic issue selection can also be expected to increase the affect within the electorate. In this case, parties distinguish themselves by conveying different realities to voters, which can further increase the divide between partisan identities.

Thus, elite cues aim to distinguish between parties, but there are various messages to reach this end. The selective emphasis on specific policy issues, including cultural cues, can polarize voters (Han, 2023) by reinforcing in and out-group identities (Harteveld, 2021). Moral messages, on the other hand, can facilitate the connection between political actors and voters' moral intuitions, thus contributing to affective polarization (Garrett & Bankert,

2020; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021). Populism is often discussed in connection with moral (Harteveld, 2021) and group-identity messages (Hameleers & Fawzi, 2020; Fuller et al., 2022) and has been argued to account for polarization (Harteveld et al., 2022; Stefanelli, 2023; Davis et al., 2024; Pérez-Rajó, 2024). Hence, elite discourse analysis under illiberal populist governments sheds light on affective polarization and the dynamics of populism in campaigns. Such analysis can reveal whether contesting these governments transforms the democratic opposition and whether ruling parties convert them to populism in the campaigning process, too.

However, campaigns are not static events but processes that unfold over time. Many emphasize the importance of temporality in polarization, as it is also a process with internal dynamics that change through time (Hetherington, 2001; Garner & Palmer, 2011; Banda & Cluverius, 2018; Zingher & Flynn, 2018; Levin et al., 2021). As an empirical framework, time series analysis has been applied to polarization to understand its temporal trends and patterns and enable comparisons across contexts (Hetherington, 2001; Enders, 2021). However, while these accounts are valuable, they explain little about actors' roles in the polarization process.

Parties campaign to mobilize the electorate by distinguishing themselves from their rivals, so their interactions are essential in unfolding polarization and the general campaign discourse. Macy and his colleagues' (2021) account is one of the few that show how political actors polarize one another. They demonstrate how elite members negatively and positively influence each other through an agent-based complexity model and argue that polarization is a self-reinforcing and irreversible process. Therefore, it is clear that not only issues, including policies, populist, and moral cues, but actors can also account for polarization, and they can push each other in a positive or a negative direction.

As populists are rarely in power (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015; Pappas, 2019), we know little about how they behave in campaigns, let alone how their opposition challenges them. While some have been optimistic about populists diverting strategies once in government (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2015; Krause & Wagner, 2021), others have observed no such change (Schwörer, 2022). Still, these accounts solely concern populist party behavior but do not focus on how it impacts other actors. Another line of research systematically compares populist and non-populist parties and finds that the former uses more negative, personal, and fear appeals than others (Nai, 2020), regardless of incumbency

(Gerstlé & Nai, 2019). However, these findings are based on expert surveys, thus providing a static image of campaigns and explaining neither the content nor the actors' roles in the process. Thus, much need remains for analyses that uncover campaign dynamics and, as such, understand populism and polarization in the making, especially in countries with long-standing populist governments.

Thus, one must consider actors, issues, tones, and time together to understand campaign dynamics. Turkey and Hungary are rare examples of illiberal systems under populist party rule, and as such, they are crucial in understanding party interactions outside Western democracies. At the same time, these political systems are rigged with affective polarization at the societal level, for which parties, particularly governments, have been held accountable. Elite rhetoric strengthens partisanship to the extent it becomes predominant in citizens' political decisions (Matuszewski & Szabó, 2019; Çakır, 2020; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Aytaç et al., 2021; Demirel-Pegg & Dusso, 2022; Faragó et al., 2023). Nevertheless, we have little systematic knowledge about how parties polarize in Turkey and Hungary.

This study proposes a dynamic polarization model to comprehensively assess party competition under illiberal populist rule and derive comparisons from such cases. Time series analysis is a quantitative empirical framework that can account for these considerations simultaneously. Time series methodology and model specifications are outlined in Chapter 10. Nevertheless, while the proposed model cannot account for ideological polarization, it can explain affective polarization at the elite level and reveal what contributes to its positive and negative aspects. Consequently, it helps the understanding of intense affective polarization and populist attitudes among citizens in polities under illiberal populist rule.

The 2019 mayoral elections held in Istanbul and Budapest were pivotal events, with political parties investing significant resources in competing for these crucial municipalities. As populist incumbents, the governments mobilized voters with a focus on populist and moral messaging, which likely influenced the strategic decisions of opposition parties to adopt similar tactics. Despite this, the opposition emerged victorious in these critical elections by appealing to a broader base of voters. Positive campaigning and the strategic deployment of populist appeals likely played a role in their campaign strategy. However, it is important to note that this does not imply a lack of polarization. Instead, the opposition repolarized the electorate, drawing core supporters away from the incumbent in Istanbul and

rallying opposition-minded citizens in Budapest. Throughout this process, parties needed to selectively emphasize policy issues, which served to deepen rather than diminish the divide between them and consequently intensified polarization among voters exposed to these campaign strategies.

High affective polarization has been well-known in Turkey and Hungary. While Hungary stands out as one of the most polarized societies in Europe (Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021; Hernández et al., 2021; Orhan, 2022), the persistence of intra-partisan hostility sets it apart from other cases (Bettarelli et al., 2023). Similarly, Turkey is among the most divided states (Ertan et al., 2022; Patkós, 2023). Laebens and Öztürk (2021) demonstrate the growing salience of partisanship and affective polarization under the AKP governments. The authors suggest elite cues account for stronger threat perceptions toward rival parties. However, we do not know how political elites generate these perceptions and which messages serve to reinforce in- and out-group identities.

There is ample evidence for populist attitudes in the Turkish electorate, especially among AKP voters (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019), with an emphasis on popular sovereignty (Aytaç et al., 2021), which the authors explain with elite cues. Limited evidence suggests the prevalence of populist attitudes in the Hungarian electorate, especially among opposition voters (Krekó, 2021). Still, it remains unclear how parties evoke populist attitudes in these electorates.

Ahead of the campaigns, the opposition's most crucial recognition was that competing in such political systems with spatial cues was impossible. Governments would not engage in policy debates, as they would jeopardize their electoral support. The lack of opportunity to contrast themselves rendered spatial cues meaningless for opposition parties, so they promoted alternative realities, including salient policies governments could not claim for themselves. As populism and polarization are prevalent in these political systems, there is reason to expect that populist strategies, including moralizing language, helped to establish the opposition's credibility and turn voters to their side. At the same time, convincing voters did not mean opposition parties were depolarizing. Instead, they stressed the positive aspect of polarization, including their own policies and in-group cues over attacking the ruling parties.

Thus, in addition to the hypotheses on the role of policy and populist messages in inter-party conflict, I test the following hypothesis on the Istanbul and Budapest mayoral campaigns:

H5: In the context of opposition victory under populism in power, reactions between political actors will intensify polarization dynamics in campaign rhetoric, as parties engage in heightened confrontation and mutual influence, shaping distinct in-party and out-party identities.

2.6 Measuring polarization, policy, and populism in campaigns – A novel content analysis

Content analysis has been the primary method for elite communication analysis (Riffe et al., 2019), encompassing issues (Volkens et al., 2013), populist messages (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019), and tone (Lau & Pomper, 2004; Lau et al., 2007; Dolezal et al., 2014). While content analysis is the primary approach, various means exist to scrutinize elite communication, ranging from manifestos to social media posts.

When policies take center stage, many argue for the superiority of manifestos due to their comprehensive depiction of party programs (Klingemann et al., 2006; Volkens et al., 2013; Wagner & Meyer, 2014). However, some contend that relying solely on manifestos may be inadequate, especially considering the time lapse between their publication and elections (Baumann et al., 2021). This issue is particularly pertinent in contexts where illiberal populist parties hold power, as these parties may not issue manifestos, leading to reliance on party cues to discern their policy positions. For instance, in recent years, Fidesz has refrained from publishing manifestos, complicating efforts to ascertain its policy stance.

Despite the availability of alternatives for analyzing party communication, such as adverts (Damore, 2002; Sides, 2006), press releases (Wagner & Meyer, 2014; Meyer et al., 2020; Baumann et al., 2021), or social media posts (Borghetto & Belchior, 2020; Ennser-Jedenastik et al., 2022), party speeches emerge as the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of party programs (Benoit, 1999, 2003, 2016; Benoit et al., 2003; Green & Jennings, 2019; Hager & Hilbig, 2020; Traber et al., 2020). Analyzing party speeches not only facilitates the mapping of policies but also enables the exploration of other campaign dynamics, including populist strategies, tonality, and polarization, arising from party interactions.

After selecting a method, one must determine whether to pursue a qualitative or quantitative approach and whether to employ human or computer coding for elite messages. A quantitative methodology is indispensable for conducting thorough and systematic analyses of elite speeches. By assigning codes to specific communication elements, one can discern and measure patterns, trends, and shifts in political discourse over time. Additionally, quantitative analysis enhances the reliability and validity of findings, enabling robust conclusions regarding the nature and impact of elite communication. Burscher and colleagues (2015) emphasize the importance of quantifying elite messages, as it enables mapping dynamics in issue salience. Furthermore, quantitative data is crucial for models like the Dynamic Polarization Model, facilitating cross-national comparisons and yielding generalizable findings, both within and beyond contexts where populism holds sway.

While qualitative approaches remain valuable for understanding how populism is constructed in elite discourse and for generating contextual insights (Hawkins & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2019; March, 2017; 2019), quantitative content analysis, with predetermined coding categories (Neuendorf, 2017) offers broader scope and a more solid foundation for comparisons, both within and across countries (Bernhard & Kriesi, 2021; Schmuck & Hameleers, 2020; Hunger & Paxton, 2022; Klinger et al., 2023).

In terms of policy analysis, human coding remains prominent, as evidenced by the Manifesto Project and scholars following its scheme, while machine learning methods encounter challenges due to contextual constraints (Burscher et al., 2015). Similarly, for populist analysis, qualitative methods offer valuable insights into the construction of populism in elite discourse. Nevertheless, quantitative content analysis provides ample room for comparisons and offers a sturdy foundation for cross-country analyses.

Human coding involves the qualitative assessment of elite cues, revealing how parties construct populism in various contexts. As discussed in Chapter 3, a novel approach was introduced to assess populism in campaign discourse, emphasizing the importance of understanding group identity, morality, and popular sovereignty for comprehending how actors construct in-groups and out-groups in these contexts. The combination of human coding and quantitative content analysis involving qualitative assessment enables a comprehensive understanding of this construction process while providing the necessary data for examining party dynamics and making comparisons.

While binary coding is prevalent in policy analysis, its application in tone analysis is less straightforward. Many studies examining negativity utilize binary coding, categorizing messages as either negative or positive (Peterson & Djupe, 2005; Lau & Rovner, 2009; Auter & Fine, 2016; Klinger et al., 2023). However, this approach has faced criticism for its inability to fully capture voters' perceptions and for introducing discrepancies in data (Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Lipsitz & Geer, 2017).

To address these limitations, some researchers have proposed alternative approaches. For instance, they have distinguished between different types of negativity, introducing additional categories such as mixed statements (vanHeerde-Hudson, 2011) and defensive messages (Benoit, 1999; 2003; Benoit et al., 2003). Additionally, some studies have advocated for scale measurement to provide a more nuanced understanding of negativity (Gerstlé & Nai, 2019; Maier & Nai, 2020; 2023). Nevertheless, categorical coding remains prevalent but accounts evaluating the impact of negative campaigning on the media or the public utilize more complex approaches to overcome controversies that binary coding would lead to (Benoit, 1999; Benoit et al., 2003; Min, 2004; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Carraro et al., 2010; Gerstlé & Nai, 2019; Nai, 2020; Nai & Maier, 2021; Maier & Nai, 2023). While categorical codes are easy to interpret, they make comparisons between parties and individuals substantially easier.

The functional analysis, rooted in issue salience theory and frequently applied to elite discourse (Benoit & Hansen, 2004; Benoit, 1999; Benoit et al., 2003), offers several distinct advantages. Firstly, it accommodates the adoption of external policy coding schemes, allowing researchers to incorporate established frameworks seamlessly. Secondly, it enables the measurement of character references, providing insight into a critical aspect of populism: morality. Thirdly, unlike binary coding, which may overlook nuanced campaign messages, functional analysis employs three categories: acclaim, attack, and defense. The inclusion of 'defense' is particularly noteworthy, as it accounts for instances where candidates refute previous accusations, thereby offering a more comprehensive view of party interactions during campaigns.

Benoit's functional analysis also allows for the incorporation of issues, facilitating the creation of populist categories based on the ideational approach (Section 2.3). To conduct a thorough policy analysis, I employ the codebook of the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2020), adapted to suit the nuances of the local election context (Chapter 4).

Given its foundation in issue salience theory and widespread usage in scholarly research, this coding scheme emerges as the ideal choice for policy analysis in this context.

The final quantitative content analysis integrates tone and issues, encompassing populist content and personal messages, thereby offering a comprehensive assessment of elite communication in election campaigns. Despite some studies simultaneously measuring certain categories, none capture all aspects. While some accounts combine policy and character references with tone (Benoit, 1999; 2003; Benoit et al., 2003; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Hopmann et al., 2018), fewer examine populism within this framework (Nai, 2020; Gerstlé & Nai, 2019). This lack of comprehensive analysis is perplexing, given that populism complements existing ideologies rather than standing alone (Freeden, 2003; Mudde, 2004; Norris, 2020).

It is widely argued that populist parties tend to advocate policies typical of their core ideology (Mude & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; 2013; Akkerman & Rooduijn, 2015). For example, right-wing populist parties often favor nativist or authoritarian policies (Mudde, 2007), whereas left-wing populists focus on economic issues (March & Mudde, 2005). However, our understanding of how populist messages intertwine with policies and their relationship with ideologies, including the ratio of these elements, remains limited.

Furthermore, Gerstlé and Nai (2019) highlight that there are few examples of cross-national comparisons of populist campaigning, and those that exist are typically static assessments that fail to capture the dynamics of party competition. This quantitative content analysis addresses these challenges by concurrently assessing tone, policy, character, and populist messages. This approach paves the way for further quantitative and comparative research, providing a more nuanced understanding of elite communication in election campaigns.

Chapter 3

INTEGRATED QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS: MEASURING TONE, POLICY, CHARACTER, AND POPULISM IN ELITE DISCOURSE

The previous chapter discussed the prevalent use of content analysis in elite-level research, including the use of tone, policies, and populist strategies (e.g., Benoit, 1999; 2003; Benoit et al., 2003; Lau & Pomper, 2004; Schmuck & Hameleers, 2020; Klinger et al., 2023). However, a significant gap exists in understanding how policies and populism intersect in political discourse, hindering a comprehensive understanding of elite communication. Similarly, while some studies have explored the relationship between populism and tone (Nai, 2020; Klinger et al., 2023), there is limited insight into its influence on political rhetoric.

Moreover, our understanding of populist discourse and the strategies used by their challengers remains underdeveloped, especially given the rarity of populism in power over extended periods. This chapter introduces a novel quantitative content analysis framework to examine mayoral election campaign rhetoric. By simultaneously measuring tone, policies, character, and populist messages, this approach promises valuable insights into political discourse dynamics, particularly in the context of populism and democratic opposition.

Neuendorf (2017) argues that quantitative analysis 'produce(s) counts of critical categories and measurements of the amounts of other variables' (2017, p. 44). Hence, a quantitative content analysis generates frequencies of all variables set before the research, and the analysis is independent variable-driven (e.g., King et al., 1994). Relying on a priori measurement instruments is crucial, as coders, regardless of their backgrounds, should be able to adopt and use the coding scheme so the analysis meets the criterion of scientific reliability (Neuendorf, 2017).

This content analysis adopts the main variables from Benoit's functional analysis (e.g., Benoit, 1999; 2003; 2004; 2014; Benoit et al., 2003): tone and issue (Table 3.1).

Following a more broadly used terminology, variable names are changed. In functional theory, function (tone) has three categories: acclaim, attack, and defense, which are hereafter called positivity, negativity, and defense for simplicity. In functional theory,' issue' is called' topic,' which can have as many categories as one prefers. This content analysis adopts these categories from the 2021 Manifesto Codebook (Volkens et al., 2020) to a comprehensive assessment of policies cued in mayoral campaigns. Thus, in the coding process, each message is coded into two categorical variables: tone and issue (see Appendix 1).

Table 3.1: Content Analysis variables and categories.

V_1 Tone	*V_2 Issue*
Positivity Negativity Defense No tone applies	51 categories, including policy and character issues. Populist categories are integrated into the code list. Includes 'No issue applies.'

3.1 Procedure

In 2020, a comprehensive data collection was conducted, covering all major social media channels utilized by mayoral candidates and their parties. The aim was to filter videos relevant to the 2019 campaigns. Appendix 2 contains all speeches, their unique identification, and source links. Notably, all videos were archived during the data collection process, ensuring their availability regardless of online removal.

The final database comprises 361 speeches extracted from 253 videos. Of these, 242 speeches are from Budapest, while 119 are from Istanbul. Interestingly, campaign videos from Istanbul were twice the duration of those from Budapest (Section 5.3.1). In the coding process, district-level locations were assigned to speeches. In Istanbul, the district's name *(ilçe)* was used, while in Budapest, the district number *(kerület)* was assigned to speeches. If the precise location of the speech was not clear, the city or no location was assigned to it.

Based on the candidates' campaign programs outlined on their social media platforms and in the media, speeches relevant to the campaign were sourced from their respective social media accounts. Specifically, speeches were obtained from the AKP's YouTube channel for the Turkish government. Notably, speeches by Erdoğan constituted a

significant portion of the party's Istanbul campaign and were readily accessible on the party's channel. In cases where they were not found on the party's channel but were aired on television, they were easily located on other platforms (Appendix 2). In contrast, İmamoğlu's YouTube channel served as the primary source for the Turkish opposition, where he live-streamed and shared rally speeches and other pertinent content. Videos not available on his channel were retrieved from alternative YouTube accounts (Appendix 2).

Regarding Fidesz, they opted not to run a separate Budapest campaign but instead centralized their efforts, incorporating speeches addressing both the Budapest mayoral and municipal elections. These speeches were shared on YouTube and were consequently collected from their channel. On the other hand, the opposition predominantly relied on social media platforms. Gergely Karácsony, for instance, live-streamed his speeches and discussions on his Facebook channel, facilitating easy access for data collection purposes.

In the second phase of the study, native speakers were tasked with transcribing campaign videos in their original languages. These individuals underwent comprehensive training, including detailed instructions and online sessions on transcription techniques. A database was then created from all the speeches without applying any filters.

Following this, unitization and coding processes were implemented. During unitization, a total of 14,668 messages were identified and subsequently coded based on tone and issue. The final codebook comprised two main variables: tone, with four categories (positivity, negativity, defense, and no tone applies), and issue, with 51 categories covering policy, character issues, and populist themes, along with a category for 'no issue.'

To ensure reliability, in line with Neuendorf's (2017) recommendations, two additional coders were recruited to code 10% of units in Turkish and Hungarian. Coders underwent both face-to-face and online training sessions and were provided with coding instructions, the codebook, and definitions (refer to Appendix 1). Their feedback played a crucial role in refining the coding instructions and finalizing Appendix 1.

For inter-coder reliability tests, texts were randomly selected. However, units could not be randomly selected, as messages needed to be assessed within their context (refer to Appendix 1). Reliability tests based on Krippendorff's measures (2004; 2011) indicated high reliability for both tone (Turkish: N = 887, $\alpha = .9524$; Hungarian: N = 581, $\alpha = .9168$) and issue (Turkish: N = 887, $\alpha = .9185$; Hungarian: N = 581, $\alpha = .9186$).

While Neuendorff (2017) emphasizes the importance of unitization reliability tests in quantitative content analysis, no specific tool is available for testing unit matches in textual data. Nonetheless, to assess the adequacy of the unitization criteria, two sample texts that had been unitized were randomly selected (N = 94). Coders evaluated the success of unitization based on the criteria outlined in Appendix 1, reporting agreement with all but one message unitized earlier. Although this test does not fully measure unitization reliability, coders affirmed the clarity of instructions prior to the coding process.

3.2 Unitization

The analysis comprises two main phases: unitization and coding. Appendix 1 provides an exhaustive account of the unitization process. Here, the unit of analysis is defined as a message or quasi-sentence in alignment with the methodology established by the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2020). Following the unitization process, a total of 14,668 distinct quasi-sentences were identified, subsequently referred to as messages.

Benoit's functional theory (see Benoit, 1999; especially Benoit et al., 2003), which provides the theoretical groundwork for this study, adopts a different approach, and uses 'utterance' as the unit of analysis. However, the concept of utterance lacks a straightforward definition within linguistics (Crystal, 1991), and Benoit and colleagues present varying conceptualizations across their works. For instance, in an earlier volume, they define utterance as 'a single assertion about some subject' (Benoit et al., 2003, p. 23), whereas in a later work, texts are unitized into themes described as 'the smallest unit of discourse capable of expressing a coherent idea' (Benoit, 2014; p. 28). Additionally, these works lack demonstrative samples to enhance the central concept's adaptability. Therefore, this analysis opts to utilize the unitizing and coding principles outlined by the Manifesto Project in Appendix 1.

However, the main challenge in analyzing election campaign communication lies in its subject. Contrary to carefully constructed and edited manifestos, speeches contain spontaneous and disruptive elements, be they manuscript or memorized. Therefore, unable to directly adopt the unitization criteria of the Manifesto Research, Appendix 1 accommodates modifications in methodology and elucidates unitization through several examples.

3.3 Variables: Modifying functional analysis

Functional theory posits that speakers employ three distinct tones in campaign discourse: acclaim, attack, and defense. According to Benoit et al. (2003), partisan cues within campaigns enable voters to make inherently comparative judgments and subsequently cast their votes. The direction of the message conveyed through tone plays a crucial role in this process. Candidates may acclaim themselves for their policies or character, attack their rivals for similar reasons, or defend themselves against rivals' attacks (Benoit, 1999, p. 15).

Functional analysis offers a nuanced perspective on campaign discourse, moving beyond a binary view. It allows for the simultaneous identification of mixed statements involving both the speaker and their rivals. Though an unpopular communication strategy, defense is expected to be the least common tone (Benoit, 2016). Nonetheless, it serves a crucial purpose in minimizing the potential costs of an attack and restoring one's credibility (Benoit et al., 2003). Therefore, the category of defense serves as an important control in filtering out mixed messages and provides valuable qualitative insights into the issues that compel parties to assume a defensive stance.

Campaign dynamics, especially concerning the direction of messages, demonstrate a higher level of complexity than what functional theory initially suggests. It is crucial to note that candidates do not exclusively target each other during an election campaign. Instead, multiple actors are involved, and candidates may direct criticism towards entities such as the EU, foreign politicians, or the international financial elite. Additionally, references to political parties or the government are commonplace, leading to messages directed towards various entities. Similarly, messages may also address broader groups such as 'the people,' partisans, or specific segments of the electorate. This underscores the limitations of functional theory in comprehensively capturing the breadth of discourse within campaign contexts.

Consequently, functional analysis necessitates several adjustments. Clarification of these categories facilitates a more thorough assessment and enhances reliability. Thus, instead of solely focusing on individual candidates, the analysis should center on parties, with the tone of their messages equating to in- or out-party cues. While these categories currently serve to capture the tone of messages, this operationalization lays the groundwork for future analysis of affective polarization.

1. *Positivity (acclaim):* In-party cues. This includes mentions of the self and their accomplishments and references to the 'extended self,' encompassing the party, fellow partisans, and campaign participants. Additionally, positivity extends to references to third parties in a favorable light, such as the audience, electorate, constituents, social groups, or the general public.

2. *Negativity (attack):* Out-party cues. This category involves mentions of the other and their actions, including rivals, their respective parties, politicians from opposing parties, and their campaign participants. Furthermore, negativity extends to references to third parties, such as constituents of rival parties, social groups, or the general public, but in a negative context.

3. *Defense:* Mixed cues. This encompasses refutations of attacks against the self or the extended self. It includes responses to attacks from rivals, rival parties, politicians, specific actors, constituents, the media, and others.

4. *No tone applies:* This category includes formalities and interruptions that lack relevance to the discourse at hand.

One of the notable advantages of the functional theory is its flexibility in accommodating external coding schemes related to message topics. For instance, Benoit and colleagues (2003) suggest the integration of coding categories from public opinion surveys, facilitating the alignment of elite data with public-level data (2003, p. 81-82). To ensure a comprehensive understanding of campaign rhetoric, I adopt the coding scheme proposed by the Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2020), which I tailor to the context of local elections and populism in power (Section 3.4).

Another advantage of the functional theory pertains to the measurement of character references, a feature not permitted by the Manifesto Codebook, which typically focuses on political programs devoid of personal references. Therefore, drawing from functional analysis (e.g., Benoit, 1999; 2003; 2004; 2014; Benoit et al., 2003), this content analysis incorporates dimensions of competence, morality, and political ideology. Morality encompasses personal qualities and is directly derived from functional analysis. Competence encompasses leadership abilities and skills, constituting a category within the original scheme. Additionally, the coding scheme includes political ideology, a distinction not addressed by Benoit and others (2003) in their work (Appendix 1.3).

While morality aligns with the ideational approach and constitutes a populist component, competence and ideology serve as important controls for non-policy messages. It is reasonable to anticipate that elite members frequently reference their skills, abilities,

and ideology, which are vital for democratic contestation and may assist voters in making comparative judgments. While moral messages may be unavoidable, they play a central role in populist discourse (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013) and contribute to affective polarization at the public level (Garrett & Bankert, 2020; Harteveld, 2021; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021).

3.4 Extending policy analysis: The Comparative Manifesto Project

For unitization, the majority of rules outlined in the Manifesto Project's fifth coding manual (Volkens et al., 2020) and its coding categories were adopted without alteration. However, the Manifesto Project typically codes many issues' positive and negative aspects separately to evaluate policy positions. This aspect was omitted from the analysis, as selective emphasis formed the theoretical foundation of this study. Consequently, the central assumption was the absence of ideological polarization in these election campaigns and the focus on elite interests in reinforcing or shifting partisan boundaries. In this context, policies are anticipated to play a crucial role in constructing the in-party group, thereby reinforcing partisan bias. Hence, rather than relying on position cues aligning voters' preferences with the candidate closest to their policy preferences, partisanship is considered the decisive factor informing voters about their choice.

The Manifesto Codebook (Volkens et al., 2020) comprises fifty-six standing categories grouped into seven code groups. This content analysis incorporates fifty-one issue codes organized into eight code groups. While most categories are grounded in the Manifesto Codebook, several emergent categories were formulated during the data collection phase and pilot tests (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 153). Initially, a new code group was established focusing on character (Domain 8), which included modified categories from the functional analysis. Populist codes (Section 2.3) were integrated into existing domains based on their thematic proximity.

Additionally, several codes were introduced to address the context of local elections. These encompassed democracy-related issues (deliberation, transparency, media), political system-related topics (political alliance, political elite, electoral system, and elections), economic concerns (poverty), welfare issues (green areas, livable city, traffic, transportation, waste management and public cleansing, urban renovation, and development), fabric of society issues (immigration, emigration, terrorism, sovereignty and

survival), and social groups (the people, small-scale businesses). Many of these issues are specific to local politics, such as waste management or traffic and transportation, typically overseen by local authorities. Other themes, like terrorism and immigration, emerged as significant categories given their prominence as political themes for governments. Appendices 1.2 and 1.3 provide the code list and definitions with examples in each language.

Conversely, several issues were excluded from the Manifesto Codebook (Volkens et al., 2020) as they are not typically addressed in local election campaigns. These include external relation issues (anti-imperialism, internationalism), democracy-related topics (authority), and economic issues (free market economy, market regulation, economic planning, corporatism, protectionism, Keynesianism, controlled economy, nationalization, Marxist analysis, anti-growth economy). Authority was replaced by competence and relocated to Domain 8 (Character), aligning this section with the functional analysis.

Chapter 4

FROM THE LOCAL TO THE NATIONAL: TRACING *POPULISTS IN POWER*

4.1 The rise of the AKP: Populism and illiberalism in Turkey

By 2019, there were six successful national elections behind the AKP. After coming to power in 2002, it secured most municipalities, including Istanbul, with 41.67% of the vote in 2004. Although democratic norms and institutions may not have been consolidated ever since the establishment of the multiparty system in 1946, Turkey experienced significant democratic backsliding in the 2010s. Aytaç and Elçi (2019) extensively examine the AKP's governance through a populist lens, noting its strategy of addressing challenges by shifting crises into the electoral realm, employing populist rhetoric that taps into historical societal divisions (p. 97).

Understanding the AKP's populism relies heavily on the political journey of its founder, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Erdoğan began his career within the National Outlook *(Milli Görüş)* movement during the late 1970s. Aytaç and Elçi (2019) argue that this Islamist-Ottomanist movement emerged as the most populist force in post-1980 Turkey, framing a narrative that pits morally bankrupt, secular, Western-aligned elites against devout and virtuous Muslims (p. 93). Their rhetoric reignited longstanding identity divisions in society, which Mardin (1973) delineated as the center-periphery cleavage, where secular urban elites clashed with rural, traditional, and religiously inclined masses.

Erdoğan rose through the ranks of the Islamist Welfare Party *(Refah Partisi,* RP) during the 1980s and early 1990s, affiliated with the National Outlook movement, and was considered an outsider to the mainstream establishment (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). He gained prominence as the mayor of Istanbul on March 27, 1994, securing 25% of the vote. However, his tenure was short-lived. After reciting a poem by Ziya Gökalp in the city of Siirt, Erdoğan was imprisoned, and his party was disbanded in 1998. He was convicted of inciting hatred and domestic unrest, with the court citing his division of society into 'two fundamentally different camps:' followers of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and righteous Muslims

(Yeşilada, 2002, p. 68). Viewing the decision as a clash between elites and the populace, Erdoğan launched the AKP in 2001 after conflicts with the elite of the subsequent Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi,* FP), which had also held the Istanbul mayoral office before its closure in 2001 (Yeşilada, 2002).

The economic crises of 2000 and 2001 presented the AKP with a unique opportunity (Öniş, 2009). In 2002, it became the first party to secure a clear majority in Turkey's parliament since 1987 by making populist pledges, including promises of economic equality and easing the headscarf *(türban)* ban, appealing to widespread discontent (Çarkoğlu, 2002). Its ascendancy reshaped Turkey profoundly, as it adopted a conservative democratic stance and distanced itself from the National Outlook movement (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). The AKP's initial years, often dubbed its 'golden age,' witnessed significant democratic and economic progress, buoyed by the prospect of EU accession (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019; Öniş, 2015). However, by 2007, economic and democratic advancements slowed, EU negotiations stalled, and foreign relations soured (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). This year, a political crisis unfolded as tensions between the government and the opposition escalated. With over 60% but less than a two-thirds majority in parliament, the government lacked sufficient votes to elect its preferred presidential candidate. The main opposition, the Republican People's Party *(Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi,* CHP), citing concerns over secularism, opposed the candidacy of Abdullah Gül, plunging Turkey into political turmoil.

The AKP's attempt to amend the constitution for direct presidential elections was initially thwarted when President Ahmet Necdet Sezer vetoed the bill. However, the AKP proceeded with early elections, winning both the rerun with 46.5% and the constitutional referendum with 70% support (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Aytaç and Elçi (2019) note the AKP's unconventional response to the conflict, opting not to yield as previous peripheral forces had done but instead calling for a referendum and general election to seek popular approval.

This success propelled the AKP forward, enabling it to implement political reforms that reshaped modern Turkey. With support from the MHP, the party passed a constitutional amendment in 2008 to lift the ban on wearing headscarves at universities. That same year, the chief prosecutor sought to shut down the AKP and ban its leadership, including Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Gül, from politics. While the court did not close the AKP, it found the party guilty of anti-secularism (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012; Aytaç & Elçi, 2019).

The Ergenekon trials, which ensued in 2008, implicated former special operations personnel and military members in a conspiracy against the AKP government (Gürsoy, 2015). Subsequently, hundreds were arrested and incarcerated (Gürsoy, 2015). Later investigations revealed the involvement of members of the Gülenist movement, now classified as a terrorist organization by Turkey, in fabricating evidence and targeting the military and secular officers of the 'center' (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019; Akkoyunlu & Öktem, 2016). In 2015, the Constitutional Court ordered the release of the prisoners. However, as early as 2008, the scant evidence collected and the unlawful imprisonment of many led the media and opposition to label the trials as political (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). In turn, the AKP accused the CHP and MHP of siding with the military and labeled the Supreme Court and the Council of State as 'agents of anti-AKP, anti-democratic, pro-military (authoritarian) forces' (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012, p. 4). They framed the trials as a struggle against the 'deep state' (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019).

Kalaycıoğlu views the early 2010s as a resurgence of the old inter-elite hostility of the 1950s, marking the onset of a period of intense polarization in Turkey (2011). As in the past, economic growth, which peaked at nearly 7% in 2009, slowed down significantly by 2011, triggering de-democratization (Öniş, 2016; Aktas, 2017). To preempt potential closure, the AKP proposed constitutional amendments, including the enlargement of the supreme courts, which faced backlash due to concerns over the appointment of pro-government judges (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Meanwhile, the party's third consecutive election victory in 2011 transformed the Turkish party system into a dominant one (Çarkoğlu, 2011; Gumuscu, 2013; Ciddi & Esen, 2014).

By 2011, having effectively neutralized the military and judiciary – key institutions of the old 'center' – the AKP found it necessary to adapt its populist strategies (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). With the main opposition CHP and critical civilians as its prime targets, Erdoğan directly associated the CHP with terrorist organizations, marking a pivotal shift (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019). Simultaneously, the government intensified its efforts to expand hegemony-building into civil society, media, and opposition parties, signaling a surge in illiberalism. The erosion of civil liberties reached a tipping point with the Gezi protests in 2013, accompanied by crackdowns on various segments of civil society (Öniş, 2015; Aygül, 2016).

Following the June 2015 national elections, despite losing its parliamentary majority, the AKP opted not to resign (Esen & Gumuscu, 2021), prompting a snap election in the fall, during which the government garnered increased support. Due to a deteriorating economy and poor policy performance, the AKP failed to secure a majority vote in June. However, the focus shifted in the lead-up to the snap election as a series of bomb attacks heightened public concerns about security crises. Capitalizing on its stance on security issues, the AKP garnered additional votes in November, enabling it to retain power (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021). Subsequently, in 2016, Turkey experienced a coup attempt, resulting in the declaration of a state of emergency and governance through governmental decrees for a two-year period (Esen & Gumuscu, 2021; Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2022). Confronting these crises, the AKP intensified its populist rhetoric, attributing them to a purported 'mastermind' *(üst akıl)* orchestrating efforts to weaken and destabilize the nation, ranging from protests and the coup attempt to international political maneuvers and even fluctuations in interest rates (Aytaç & Elçi, 2019, p. 99-100).

In 2017, the AKP launched another constitutional referendum, transitioning Turkey from a parliamentary system to an executive presidency. Concurrently, Freedom House (2018) downgraded Turkey's status from partially free to unfree, citing an unbalanced campaign environment preceding the presidential referendum and the consolidation of excessive power in the presidency resulting from the constitutional change. The report also highlighted crackdowns on opposition municipalities, with trustees replacing elected mayors as a common political tactic.

Since 2002, the AKP has significantly reshaped Turkey's media landscape through legal and financial pressures on opposition outlets (Yeşil, 2018). Additionally, it has facilitated investments by loyal businesses in media companies, aided by state bank loans, and transformed mainstream outlets into pro-government entities (Metin & Ramacotti Morales, 2022). Notably, the acquisition of Doğan Group's media assets by the pro-government Demirören Group in 2018 underscored the concentration of media ownership in such businesses (Metin & Ramacotti Morales, 2022). As a consequence, pro-government businesses now control 90% of Turkey's media, fostering high levels of polarization (Schnyder et al., 2023; Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2023; Çarkoğlu et al., 2014).

This media landscape, marked by limited diversity and the absence of alternative viewpoints, has left little room for political challenges (Freedom House, 2019a; Metin &

Ramacotti Morales, 2022). Moreover, in response to significant political events such as the Gezi protests and the coup attempt, the AKP has intensified its crackdown on the media, targeting social media sharing critical content and imposing censorship on online platforms (Yeşil, 2018; Çarkoğlu & Andı, 2021). This crackdown has been accompanied by a surge in journalist imprisonments, reaching record levels (Yeşil, 2018).

4.2 The AKP and municipal politics

In Turkey, municipal elections, held every five years, are integral to a well-defined three-tier local government system encompassing villages, municipalities, and provincial administrations. This structure is particularly evident in cities with populations exceeding 750,000, where a two-tier system comprising metropolitan and district municipalities is established (Toros, 2012).

These elections are organized into various electoral districts, tailored to the specific type of election. Metropolitan mayoral elections correspond with administrative districts, while municipal mayoral and council elections operate on a town-based electoral district system. Additionally, districts serve as electoral units for the election of provincial councilors (Dawson, 2019).

Local elections in Turkey utilize two distinct electoral systems. Direct elections determine mayors through a first-past-the-post system, whereas councilors at both levels are elected through proportional representation, employing the D'Hondt method for seat allocation (Aygül, 2016). Meanwhile, in villages and neighborhoods, non-partisan headmen *(muhtar)* and members of the Aldermen Council are chosen through first-past-the-post elections (Dawson, 2019). Underpinning this electoral landscape is the mayor-council structure of Turkish local governance, characterized by robust, executive-like mayors leading relatively weaker councils (İkizer, 2022). This delineation of power underscores the significant prestige associated with winning control over a substantial municipality for ambitious politicians.

The current electoral system reflects the AKP's strategic efforts to maintain power amidst declining voter support. Facing dwindling vote shares, the party resorted to tactics such as curbing municipalities before the 2009 elections and employing gerrymandering in Istanbul and Izmit in 2004 (Aygül, 2016). Ahead of the 2014 local elections, the AKP orchestrated a comprehensive overhaul of the electoral framework, adding districts and

villages to metropolitan areas and creating new districts to dilute opposition votes (Aygül, 2016). This skewed allocation of municipal councilors, where smaller districts hold disproportionate sway, significantly favored the AKP's electoral prospects (Aygül, 2016, p. 193). These strategic modifications, initiated after the AKP's success in 2004, played a crucial role in securing victories in the 2009 and 2014 local elections, enabling the party to maintain its grip on power despite challenges from opposition forces.

Municipalities hold paramount significance in the AKP's rise and consolidation. In Turkey's highly centralized budgetary distribution system, municipalities serve as arenas for pork barrel politics, with the government using fund allocation to reward loyal and penalize disloyal entities (Çınar, 2019). This strategic allocation of public resources has been closely linked to the AKP's electoral success, as it selectively employs public funds and social housing to secure or bolster electoral support (Eder, 2010; Aytaç, 2014; Marschall et al., 2015; Kemahlıoğlu & Özdemir, 2018).

Çınar (2019) highlights the disparities faced by opposition municipalities, encountering bureaucratic hurdles and financial constraints, while friendly municipalities receive easier access to resources from the central government. Moreover, local politicians foster citizen-politician linkages through ancillary organizations like charities, providing employment opportunities and reinforcing the party's hegemony (Çınar, 2019).

Similarly, Esen and Gumuscu (2021) identify triangular dependencies in major metropolitan regions since the 1990s, where businesses rely on the government for public contracts, tax benefits, and other advantages in exchange for support and investment in pro-government media (Esen & Gumuscu, 2021; Eder, 2010; Buğra & Candaş, 2011). Constituents, in turn, support the government in expectation of benefits such as job opportunities within these businesses (Esen & Gumuscu, 2021).

Thus, municipalities in Turkey serve as more than just platforms for local democracy and policy solutions; they are emblematic of a robust hierarchical power structure characterized by favoritism, hindering expert policymaking (Bakır & Ertan, 2018). Within this heavily centralized system, mayors function as "local presidents," wielding considerable authority over councils yet ultimately serving as extensions of the national government (Çınar, 2019). They maintain direct contact with constituents through charities and other organizations, offering employment opportunities and social assistance (Çınar, 2019). Prioritizing populist services in response to central government directives, these

strong executives operate under the arbitrary control of the national government, which oversees sub-contracts (Bayraktar, 2018). Consequently, their local successes resonate in national elections, with voters viewing them as the most capable political actors (Eligür, 2010; Ark-Yıldırım, 2017; Kemahlıoğlu & Özdemir, 2018; Esen & Gumuscu, 2019, 2021; Çınar, 2019; İkizer, 2022).

4.3 Mayoral elections in Istanbul

Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, boasts nearly sixteen million residents and contributes to 31% of the country's economy (İPA, 2021). The metropolitan area comprises thirty-nine districts, each with directly elected mayors who serve under the mayor of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. While mayors automatically assume seats in the municipal assembly, additional councilors are elected via a proportional representation system, with party lists heavily influencing candidate selection in each district (İkizer, 2022). Mayoral candidates are either directly nominated or chosen through intra-party elections (Joppien, 2019).

For the past four decades, Istanbul has been under the control of right-wing pro-Islamist parties since Erdoğan's election as mayor in 1994, despite securing only 25% of the vote. Following its rise in 2001, the AKP consistently won the city in three consecutive elections from 2004 to 2014, employing strategic measures to solidify its grip. Prior to the 2004 local election, the AKP expanded the boundaries of Istanbul Municipality, encompassing rural areas where it held stronger support, thereby diminishing the influence of urban votes (Aygül, 2016). This prolonged political dominance in Istanbul, spanning 25 years, has been sustained through clientelist networks, with Erdoğan's pervasive influence persisting despite his transition to prime minister in 2002 (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019, p. 317). The AKP's establishment of numerous companies in the city, generating significant revenues alongside substantial government-provided rents, has been instrumental in fostering connections with construction firms and cultivating a network of cronies (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019, p. 335).

Erdoğan reinforced his influence by strategically appointing loyal allies to key political positions. Kadir Topbaş, a former advisor to Erdoğan, served as Istanbul's mayor from 2004 to 2017, illustrating the significance of the office given his reelection despite challenges from opposition figures (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019). However, upon Erdoğan's request, Topbaş resigned in 2017 and was succeeded by Mevlüt Uysal until 2019. In the

2019 election, Erdoğan fielded Binali Yıldırım, his longstanding ally, while he took the lead in the campaign (Chapter 5). These strategic choices underscore the significance of Istanbul Municipality for the AKP. If it loses, the opposition can cut patronage links and gain control over immense resources vital for power maintenance.

4.4 The rise of Fidesz: Populism and illiberalism in Hungary

By 2019, Fidesz had achieved three resounding victories in national elections, securing a supermajority in parliament in 2010, 2014, and 2018. However, Fidesz's rise to dominance did not start in 2010: it had previously served one term in government from 1998 to 2002. Following four years in opposition, the party's momentum surged after a sweeping victory in the 2006 local elections, which laid the groundwork for its ascension to national power by 2010. Notably, Fidesz also won the Budapest mayoral ballot that year, retaining control over the capital for nine years.

The year 2010 marked a significant turning point akin to Turkey, ushering in a period of rapid de-democratization. Upon assuming power, Fidesz systematically dismantled Hungary's established democratic institutions, leading to a gradual erosion of democratic norms. By 2015, the nation had transitioned from a consolidated democracy to a semi-consolidated one, according to Freedom House (2016), and by 2019, it had regressed further to a transitional hybrid regime (Freedom House, 2020). Viktor Orbán, Fidesz's founding member and subsequent leader, played a crucial role in driving this transformation, firmly establishing himself as a populist force within Hungarian politics.

In 1988, a group of university students in Budapest founded the liberal Alliance of Young Democrats *(Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége,* Fidesz) to counter the state party's youth organization and challenge the entrenched dictatorship. Viktor Orbán, a law student from a humble rural background, emerged as a critical figure during protests and negotiations surrounding the democratic transition. Following the first free election in 1990, the movement transitioned into a political party and secured parliamentary representation. Orbán assumed the role of party chairman in 1993, holding the position for three years (Batory, 2016).

However, in 1994, Fidesz's liberal faction split from the party and joined the Alliance of Free Democrats *(Szabad Demokraták Szövetsége,* SZDSZ), leading to Fidesz's electoral defeat that year. The conservative Hungarian Democratic Forum (*Magyar*

Demokrata Párt, MDF) formed the first government of post-communist Hungary in 1990, followed by the Hungarian Socialist Party *(Magyar Szocialista Párt,* MSZP) winning the subsequent general election in 1994. To maintain domestic and international legitimacy, MSZP formed a coalition with the liberal SZDSZ.

Meanwhile, Fidesz's share of the vote dropped to a mere 5.2% (NVI, 1994), relegating it to the role of the smallest opposition party in parliament. This electoral setback prompted Fidesz to shift towards the political right under Orbán's leadership, transforming from a liberal to a conservative catch-all party (Batory, 2016). Embracing populist rhetoric, Orbán challenged the coalition's legitimacy and claimed the right to represent the people, contributing to a rise in elite polarization (Batory, 2016; Palonen, 2018). This populist strategy proved successful in the 1998 election, where Fidesz secured 38.34% of the vote (NVI, 1998) and formed a coalition government with two other conservative parties.

The 2002 general election dealt another significant blow to Fidesz. Despite intense and polarized campaigning, the first in post-communist history, coalition members won again: MSZP secured 46.11%, SZDSZ 4.92%, while Fidesz obtained 48.70% of the vote (NVI, 2002), and Orbán resigned as party leader. The defeat prompted Fidesz to adopt a populist stance, framing the election as fraudulent and the government as illegitimate (Rupnik, 2012; Minkenberg, 2013; Krekó & Mayer, 2015). With the electoral system featuring two rounds at the time, the party and its media suggested electoral fraud after the first round, mobilizing citizens to report suspected irregularities to the National Electoral Office (Rényi, 2022). They collected signatures for a recount and submitted a bill to preserve ballot papers. Additionally, Orbán boycotted parliamentary sessions until 2005 (Partizán, 2019c). Two weeks after the second round, Orbán initiated the Civic Circles movement, believed by many to have paved the way for their landslide victory in 2010 (Greskovits, 2020).

Orbán's impassioned declaration, "The homeland cannot be in opposition" *("A haza nem lehet ellenzékben"),* evoked the Civic Circles movements after the 2002 electoral loss. With a remarkable emergence of 11,000 Civic Circles and 136,000 members organizing 4,800 events between 2002 and 2006, the movement cultivated a robust network spanning civil society organizations, churches, and businesses. Their focus on local issues and charitable endeavors served as a conduit for conveying conservative, religious, and even irredentist ideas to citizens while facilitating electoral mobilization and garnering support

for Fidesz candidates (Greskovits, 2020). Orbán, at the helm of this movement, integrated its network into Fidesz, consolidating his leadership and expanding his influence within the party during the 2003 party congress (Partizán, 2019c).

In the same year, in a strategic shift, Orbán embraced new populist tactics, initiating direct democratic actions such as the *National Petition (Nemzeti Petíció)* and *National Consultation (Nemzeti Konzultáció)* in 2005. These initiatives, which later became standard strategies of the Fidesz government, circumvented traditional governmental and parliamentary channels. Orbán's mobilization efforts, including collecting signatures for an alternative budget and economic policy purportedly representing 'the majority will' (Partizán, 2020), underscored the shift in populist tactics.

The subsequent launch of the National Consultation in 2005, comprising a blend of questionnaires and campaign mail aimed at gauging citizens' perspectives on various issues, further underscored Fidesz's commitment to grassroots engagement (Huszár, 2022). Over the span of one month, these initiatives reached 700 settlements and engaged 1.6 million individuals, echoing the participatory nature of village forums *(faluparlament)* across 176 constituencies (Huszár, 2022). Despite these concerted efforts, the victory eluded Fidesz as the leftist government won once again the general election of April 2006, highlighting the enduring challenges faced by the party.

In September 2006, Hungary was cast into a political crisis due to corruption scandals within the MSZP government. Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's admission of dishonesty to citizens and advocacy for austerity measures, even if it meant risking defeat in the upcoming local election, was revealed in a leaked audio recording (Batory, 2016). This sparked mass protests and rioting, resulting in injuries to numerous civilians and police officers.

In 2006, Fidesz launched referendums against healthcare privatization and for extending citizenship to Hungarian minorities abroad (van Eeden, 2019). The advocacy of the Status Law, granting dual citizenship to ethnic Hungarians, resonating with post-World War I sentiments, meant an ideological shift towards the radical right (Mudde, 2007; Minkenberg, 2013). The referendum also brought visibility to a non-partisan politician, István Tarlós. Tarlós managed the referendum campaign and became Fidesz's candidate for the Mayor of Budapest in the same year. Ultimately, the referendum brought success to Fidesz (NVI, 2008) but not to Tarlós. Although, due to political turmoil, Fidesz won the

local elections in autumn, Tarlós narrowly lost the Budapest mayoral election to Gábor Demszky (SZDSZ) by a margin of 1.66% (NVI, 2006).

At the onset of the 2008 economic crisis, the MSZP government implemented austerity measures to curb escalating debts. However, despite these efforts, the economy shrank by 6.6% in 2009 (World Bank, 2022). Citizens who had taken out loans in foreign currency faced the threat of bankruptcy due to the depreciation of the forint. The government sought loans from the IMF, World Bank, and EU to address the crisis, promising further austerity measures in return. This included cuts to wages, including the 13-month salary for pensioners and officers, to meet the demands of creditors. Following the resignation of PM Gyurcsány amid the financial turmoil, former economy minister Gordon Bajnai assumed office.

Subsequently, Fidesz capitalized on the economic turmoil and emerged victorious in the 2010 general and local elections, running on an 'economic ticket.' Orbán secured a sweeping victory with 67.88%, granting Fidesz a parliamentary supermajority and the ability to overhaul Hungary's political landscape. Under Orbán's leadership, Fidesz launched what he termed the 'economic war of independence' *(gazdasági szabadságharc),* targeting international financial institutions allegedly colluding with the leftist government, whom they accused of being disguised old communists. The government pursued financial nationalism, reducing the influence of foreign banks and currencies, enhancing monetary sovereignty, curbing the independence of the Central Bank, and halting negotiations with the IMF (Johnson & Barnes, 2015). Despite initial challenges, the economy began to recover from 2010 onwards, experiencing setbacks in 2012 but ultimately showing growth until 2020 (World Bank, 2022).

The significance of the 2010 election and the subsequent period lies in Fidesz's struggle against the far-right Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary *(Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom,* Jobbik). While Fidesz had always had some radical members, the political landscape's left-right polarization since 2002 had marginalized the far right (Mudde, 2007). However, this changed in 2010, as Jobbik gained significant electoral support, capturing 12.18% of the vote (NVI, 2010). Jobbik's ideology was characterized by antisemitism, anti-Roma sentiment, and anti-establishment politics, primarily focusing on economic issues (Karácsony & Róna, 2011; Varga, 2014).

Researchers have noted that Jobbik utilized communication and media innovations, including online violent language, previously unknown to Hungarian political parties. To appease the rising radical sentiment, Fidesz shifted its stance towards the extreme right (Bozóki, 2015), increasingly addressing themes of sovereignty, opposition to financial elites, and labor issues (Hegedüs, 2021), and even adopting several of Jobbik's policies (Karl, 2017). Consequently, Jobbik had a discernible transformative effect on Fidesz, which evolved into a populist incumbent (Krekó & Mayer, 2015).

Upon assuming power, Fidesz implemented laws to restructure Hungary's political framework. The party introduced a new constitution in 2012, followed by unilateral amendments in 2013 (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018). In 2012, the government established the National Judicial Office to oversee the courts, appointing a prominent politician's spouse as its head. Similar measures were implemented in subsequent years, including stacking the Constitutional Court with partisan judges and increasing the interdependence of judicial bodies (Freedom House, 2022). In 2013, the government altered political party funding regulations, favoring the ruling party (Freedom House, 2015).

Additionally, Fidesz introduced a new electoral system the same year, which Tóka and Popescu (2021) assert to be the party's cornerstone in maintaining power. This mixed electoral system combined first-past-the-post and list voting with district boundaries drawn to favor certain parties. New electoral regulations enabled the strongest party to secure a parliamentary supermajority with just a 13-14% advantage (Tóka & Popescu, 2021).

Some argue that the EU played a crucial role in legitimizing and financing Fidesz's consolidation of power (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018). Fidesz continuously changes the rules of business and politics (Enyedi & Whitefield, 2020), openly directing European cohesion funds to the ruling elite and their relatives (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018). Hungary currently ranks as the most corrupt state in the EU, with reports indicating that 70% of public procurement is tainted by corruption, primarily linked to pro-government patronage networks (Transparency International, 2023; Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018). However, escalating corruption has led to discontent among EU policymakers.

Amid mounting criticism from the EU, the year 2015 and the refugee crisis marked a pivotal moment in Fidesz's populism. The government launched an anti-immigration campaign, bolstered border patrols, and erected a border fence. In response to the crisis, Orbán proposed a six-point plan in 2015. Business magnate George Soros criticized Orbán's

approach and called on the EU to devise a comprehensive asylum-seeking plan (Soros, 2015). Orbán, in turn, blamed Soros and civil society organizations supported by the Soros Fund for facilitating immigrant trafficking into and within the EU.

In anticipation of the 2018 general election, Fidesz initiated the Stop Soros campaign in 2017. The campaign centered on the alleged Soros Plan, accusing Soros and the European Commission of conspiring to 'flood Hungary with illegal migrants' (Enyedi, 2018). Subsequent years saw attacks on NGOs, universities, and other government critics accused of serving foreign interests (Enyedi, 2018). Since 2017, the Soros Plan has dominated the government's political discourse, portraying Fidesz as the sole defender of Hungarians against collusion involving the EU, George Soros, civil society organizations, and opposition politicians. This narrative resonated with voters, as evidenced by Fidesz's victory in the 2018 general election, securing 66.83% of parliamentary seats once again (NVI, 2018).

Over the years, Fidesz's adoption of financial nationalism (Johnson & Barnes, 2015) and its escalating anti-immigration and nationalist rhetoric have played significant roles in maintaining electoral support (Bohle & Regan, 2021). The outbreak of the immigration crisis in 2015 provided new impetus to populist rhetoric (Bene, 2021; Bocskor, 2018), instilling a sense of fear that persisted until the next general elections (Bíró-Nagy, 2022). In the first year of the anti-immigration campaign, the issue's salience surged from 3% to 34% (Bíró-Nagy, 2022, p. 421). By 2018, immigration, rather than the economy, had become the most salient issue for Fidesz, significantly contributing to their victory as it became a major concern among supporters of all parties (Bíró-Nagy, 2022).

Since 2010, Fidesz has systematically reshaped Hungary's media landscape, consolidating control over independent outlets without resorting to overt violence. Under governmental pressure, foreign media entities were coerced into selling their Hungarian subsidiaries, leading to the acquisition of top commercial channels like TV2 in 2013 and the Origo news portal in 2015 by pro-government businesses (Griffen, 2020). This trend intensified during Fidesz's second term, marked by the closure of leading publications such as the leftist Népszabadság and the conservative Magyar Nemzet, followed by the takeover of the independent news portal Index, which was the country's most popular news source in 2020.

In 2018, Fidesz orchestrated the consolidation of 470 pro-government media outlets into a single conglomerate, the Central European Press and Media Foundation *(Közép-Európai Sajtó és Média Alapítvány,* KESMA), effectively placing most county outlets under loyalist control (Freedom House, 2022). This centralized control extends to content, with outlets publishing identical narratives across regions. As a result, Hungary's media landscape has become overwhelmingly dominated by pro-government entities, channeling resources to reinforce clientelist ties and serving as government megaphones on key issues such as immigration and nationalism (Schnyder et al., 2023; Bajomi-Lázár, 2013; Vegetti, 2019). The resulting polarization has left politically neutral news outlets virtually nonexistent (Tóth et al., 2023), further solidifying Fidesz's grip on the narrative.

4.5 Fidesz and municipal politics

In Hungary, local government operates on two tiers: county and settlement levels, each with its own assemblies. The number of electoral districts is determined by settlement size, with smaller towns electing councilors through a plurality-at-large vote. The electoral cycle for local elections was changed from four to five years by the Fidesz government in 2010.

Local officials, including mayors and councilors, are elected through various electoral systems based on municipality size and office type. Mayors are directly elected using a first-past-the-post system. In contrast, councilors in larger settlements are elected in a mixed electoral system combining first-past-the-post and party-list voting. County councilors, elected through proportional representation, represent the nineteen counties in Hungary. Notably, residents of cities with county rights do not participate in county elections.

Fidesz's victory in the 2006 local elections marked a crucial turning point amidst Hungary's financial integration into global markets, accompanied by a surge in state debt (Medve-Bálint & Bohle, 2016). The authors argue that, pressured by the EU to curb spending, municipalities turned to increased borrowing, with Fidesz-led regions notably accumulating substantial debt. Post-2010, revelations emerged regarding Fidesz's strategic maneuvering. Mayors, anticipating national government intervention to clear their debts, invested heavily in high-visibility projects to showcase Fidesz's competency (Partizán, 2020). Furthermore, these mayors directed public procurement towards loyal private businesses, some of which gained control over media outlets (Partizán, 2020). Concurrently,

municipalities engaged policy institutes associated with Fidesz, such as Századvég and Nézőpont, to shape and control public opinion, thus consolidating the party's influence (Partizán, 2020).

Fidesz initiated reforms to local government laws in 2010, citing municipalities' mounting debt and reckless spending, actions they themselves had encouraged (Hegedüs & Péteri, 2015; Medve-Bálint & Bohle, 2016). These decisions stripped municipalities of their administrative autonomy, financial independence, and control over social services and utilities. Additionally, Fidesz centralized municipal assets and nationalized schools, hospitals, and local utilities, consolidating their control under the central government (Hegedüs & Péteri, 2015). This curtailed municipal autonomy, rendering mayors dependent on the central government for funding, often facilitated by their parliamentary representatives (Jakli & Stenberg, 2020). EU cohesion funds also fell under Fidesz's sway, with the creation of local development councils chaired by loyal party members. Evidence suggests that opposition municipalities receive fewer state and EU funds and face restrictions on accessing credit, while clientelism in service delivery has surged (Vasvári, 2022). Simultaneously, Fidesz circumvented municipalities by establishing a district-level administrative system, providing positions to loyalists with significant influence over job allocation, procurement, and permits (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022).

However, the legislation also consolidated power in the hands of mayors, granting them excessive control over council proceedings, municipal staffing, and budget allocation (Heinelt et al., 2018; Dobos & Papp, 2017). Serving as "local presidents," mayors emerged as prominent political figures, often the last bastions capable of challenging the government's authority. This is particularly evident in Budapest, Hungary's largest electoral district, where over 1.3 million citizens elect the mayor. Despite the 2010 law diminishing its economic and political autonomy, the Budapest mayor remains the country's most influential democratically elected official.

4.6 Mayoral elections in Budapest

Budapest, Hungary's capital, holds significant economic and political importance, contributing 37% to the nation's GDP and hosting 1.67 million residents (KSH, n.d.). With a budget currently exceeding one billion dollars, it stands as the largest city in the country (24.hu, 2022). Budapest's governance structure involves direct mayoral elections in a first-

past-the-post system, comprising twenty-three districts, each with its mayor and local government. Notably, Gábor Demszky, from the liberal SZDSZ, served as Budapest's mayor for five terms (1990-2010) following the first democratic election in 1990. He maintained his position even during the first Fidesz government between 1998 and 2002.

In 2006, István Tarlós, an independent politician backed by Fidesz, lost the mayoral race to Demszky by a small margin. Nevertheless, the party fielded him again in 2010 - this time with a sweeping success. Tarlós secured 53.37% of the vote, defeating Csaba Horváth of the MSZP, who gained only 29.47% (NVI, 2019). In 2014, Tarlós was reelected as the Mayor of Budapest, gaining 49.06% of the vote, while his major opponent, Lajos Bokros from the liberal-conservative Modern Hungary Movement *(Modern Magyarország Mozgalom*, MOMA), garnered only36.04% (NVI, 2014). In 2019, amidst an emerging opposition alliance, Tarlós accepted the nomination from Viktor Orbán for the mayoral election, citing his significant popularity in Budapest compared to other candidates or political parties (Nagy, 2018).

Budapest, often regarded as the 'crown jewel,' held significant sway in Hungary's political landscape. While Fidesz's initial success largely stemmed from rural municipalities, the capital city remained elusive to the party until 2010, maintaining a stronghold under liberal-left control for a considerable period. However, István Tarlós, an independent figure with right-wing inclinations, emerged as an optimal candidate for Fidesz's mayoral bid in Budapest. Tarlós's non-partisan identity gave him dual advantages: it prevented him from overshadowing other Fidesz members within the party while bolstering his popularity among voters. His successful election as Budapest's mayor for two consecutive terms signaled the city's pivotal role in Fidesz's political agenda. Under Tarlós's leadership, Budapest became a significant hub of power and influence over public resources and EU funds, solidifying its status as a cornerstone of Fidesz's rule (Jakli & Stenberg, 2021; Kovarek & Dobos, 2023). Therefore, it was a clear and natural decision for Fidesz to nominate him again in 2010 (Chapter 5).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ascent and consolidation of the AKP in Turkey and Fidesz in Hungary, shedding light on their populist strategies and impacts on national and municipal

politics. While similarities between these governments emerge, differences in their historical trajectories are also apparent.

The AKP's rise to prominence was marked by the adept use of populist rhetoric, exploiting societal divisions and historical grievances. Initially, the party's tenure witnessed notable economic and democratic advancements fueled by pledges of reform and EU accession. However, this era led to a slowdown in progress, characterized by political turmoil, crackdowns on dissent, and the centralization of power within the presidency.

Municipal politics, particularly in metropolitan areas, played a crucial role in the AKP's ascent. Rooted in the National Outlook Movement, the party inherited a range of clientelist strategies (Yıldırım, 2023) and established networks ensuring electoral success (Esen & Gumuscu, 2021) in these regions. Subsequently, the AKP employed strategic tactics to maintain its municipal dominance, including electoral system manipulation and resource allocation. Istanbul, the nation's largest city, emerged as an AKP stronghold, fortified by clientelist networks and strategic appointments. Local politics remains integral to the party's national support base (Eder, 2010; Aytaç, 2014; Marschall et al., 2015; Kemahlıoğlu & Özdemir, 2018).

In contrast, Fidesz's rise in Hungary was a complex journey marked by strategic maneuvers and populist rhetoric. Originating as a liberal youth movement in the late 1980s, the party underwent ideological shifts under Viktor Orbán's leadership, evolving into a conservative force grounded in populist strategies.

Fidesz's trajectory featured electoral setbacks, strategic alliances, and adept use of populist tactics. Notably, the party's electoral defeat in 2002 spurred structural reorganizations, including Orbán's mobilization of the Civic Circles movement. Expanding influence across rural areas and employing populist tactics paved the path for Fidesz's resounding victory in the 2006 local elections.

Capitalizing on societal discontent and economic challenges, Fidesz secured a supermajority in the 2010 general election. Orbán's leadership during this period witnessed the systematic erosion of Hungary's democratic institutions, raising concerns about democratic norms and power concentration. Leveraging societal fears and grievances, such as economic woes in 2010 and immigration concerns post-2015, further bolstered Fidesz's dominance. Additionally, Fidesz's influence extended to Budapest, where it clinched

mayoral victories through strategic alliances and cultivating a right-leaning but non-partisan candidate.

In sum, both parties have entrenched themselves in power by restructuring political systems. Their removal from power has proven challenging due to the uneven playing field they have created for opposition (Levitsky & Way, 2010). With quasi-monopolistic control over the media (Schnyder et al., 2023) and various legal and financial obstacles for rival parties, populists have maintained a firm grip. While losses in key municipalities have dented clientelist ties and electoral advantages, these parties remain resilient. Nevertheless, disrupting these ties meant incomprehensible advantages for opposition parties, which have been unsuccessful in their attempts to remove populists from power. The subsequent chapter delves deeper into parties' strategic calculations and electoral campaign constructions for the critical ballots of 2019.

Chapter 5

THE CONTEXTS OF THE 2019 MAYORAL ELECTIONS

5.1 Windows of opportunity

In 2019, Turkey's party system was composed of six major parties. Following Turkey's transition to a presidential system and preceding the first elections under this new system, two alliances were forged in 2018. The ruling conservative and pro-Islamist AKP established the People's Alliance *(Cumhur İttifakı)* in partnership with the far-right Nationalist Action Party *(Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi,* MHP). As their candidate for Istanbul mayor, the parties selected Binali Yıldırım, a prominent figure in Turkish politics and a close ally of President Erdoğan.

In contrast, the primary opposition party, the social democratic and secularist CHP, formed the Nation Alliance *(Millet İttifakı)* with the nationalist Good Party *(İyi Parti,* IYIP) and the pro-Islamist Felicity Party *(Saadet Partisi,* SP) for the 2018 elections. However, following disappointing outcomes, the SP withdrew from the coalition and fielded its own candidate for the 2019 Istanbul election. The sixth major party, the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party *(Halkların Demokratik Partisi,* HDP), did not nominate any candidate for the post. Ultimately, the CHP and IYIP jointly fielded Ekrem İmamoğlu for the 2019 Istanbul election.

The AKP headed to the 2019 local elections under a very unfavorable climate, starkly different from its earlier years of success. The decision to call for an early election in 2018 hinted at looming economic troubles, setting the stage for a potential crisis (Öniş, 2019). The appointment of Berat Albayrak, the president's son-in-law, as the Minister of Economy increased the existing financial turmoil. Furthermore, the government's reluctance to raise interest rates underscored the Central Bank's perceived lack of autonomy (Öniş, 2019). By 2018, annual inflation had surged past 20%, with unemployment rates hitting 11%. Subsequently, inflation continued to rise, pushing nationwide unemployment to 13.7% and reaching 15% in Istanbul (Figure 5.1). At the year's onset, annual food inflation spiked

to a staggering 30.9% (World Bank, 2019), contributing to a significant deterioration in living standards (Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

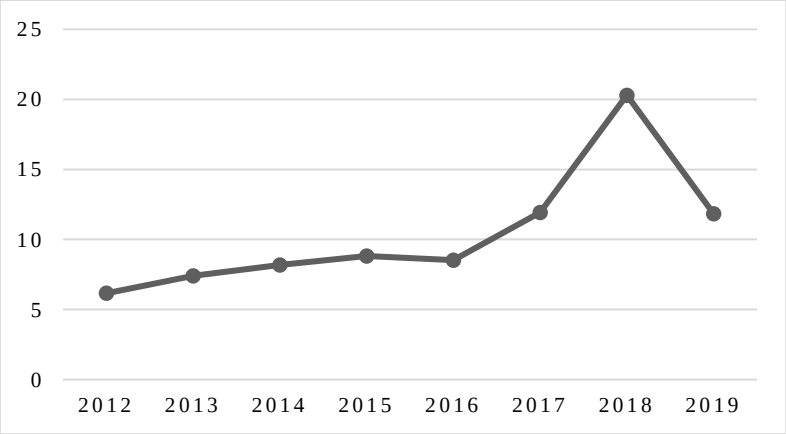


Figure 5.1: Unemployment (%) in Turkey and Istanbul (TÜİK, 2023a).

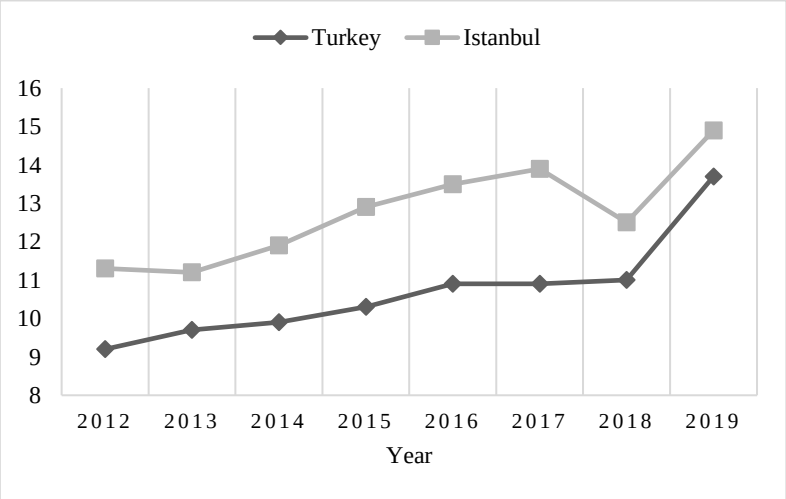


Figure 5.2: Annual inflation (%) in Turkey and Istanbul (TÜİK, 2020b).

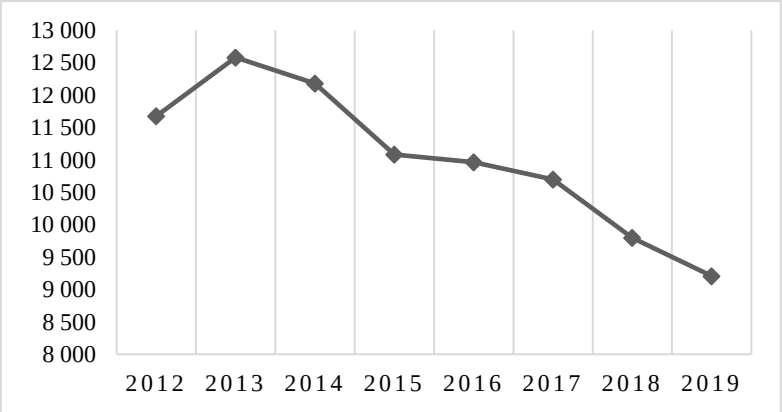


Figure 5.3: GDP per capita (current value in USD) in Turkey (TÜİK, 2023b).

The surge in economic challenges and unemployment underscored the significance of economic issues in the lead-up to the 2019 local election. Despite public surveys highlighting concerns such as unemployment and traffic among Istanbul residents (Tokyay, 2019), the government, constrained by its tenure and wary of potential electoral backlash, did not address these matters. This strategic issue selection by the AKP inadvertently provided an opportunity for the opposition to prioritize and advocate for salient issues. In this highly polarized environment, the task of articulating these messages to the electorate fell upon Ekrem İmamoğlu, the mayor of Beylikdüzü.

Following the 2018 general election and the subsequent 2019 European Parliament (EP) elections, Hungary's political landscape became increasingly fragmented, characterized by the dominance of the ruling Fidesz party and a diverse array of smaller opposition parties. Fidesz, in alliance with the Christian Democratic People's Party *(Keresztényidemokrata Néppárt,* KDNP) since 2006, maintained its position as the foremost political force. The ruling coalition opted to nominate the incumbent Budapest mayor, István Tarlós, who, despite his non-partisan status, had been a significant ally to them.

However, the 2019 EP elections saw the emergence of the Democratic Coalition *(Demokratikus Koalíció,* DK), led by former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, as a prominent opposition party. Other significant opposition parties included the liberal Momentum Movement *(Momentum Mozgalom*, Momentum), MSZP, and the far-right Jobbik. The MSZP, once a dominant force in Hungarian politics, formed an alliance with the green, new-left Dialogue *(Párbeszéd)* in 2018, while the green liberal Politics Can Be Different *(Lehet Más a Politika*, LMP) also retained representation in the national assembly. While opposition voters in Budapest outnumbered Fidesz supporters in 2018, their fragmentation across various partisan identities posed a challenge (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022). Consequently, opposition parties sought to consolidate their support behind a single candidate. Following two rounds of primaries, Gergely Karácsony emerged as the opposition's nominee for Budapest mayor.

After coming into power amid economic and financial crises, Fidesz managed to sustain economic growth until 2018. However, the economy began showing signs of a slowdown in 2019. After a record-high annual GDP growth of 5.1% in 2018, this figure dropped to 4.9% in 2019 (KSH, 2019). Nevertheless, the underlying issues were not immediately apparent. Employment increased across all regions, notably 1.4% in Budapest

(KSH, 2019), while unemployment fell to 3.3%, ranking among the lowest in the EU (KSH, 2019). However, Fidesz's economic achievements were primarily attributed to external factors such as foreign direct investment (Bohle et al., 2021) and EU funds (Csaba, 2022) rather than substantive policy reforms. Independent media reports in 2018 highlighted disparities between economic performance and regional standards, with low unemployment figures masking the prevalence of casual and public work employment in labor statistics (Büttle, 2018). Hungarian wages also lagged behind the EU average, reaching only 70% (KSH, 2019), sustaining economic anxieties among citizens (Boros & Laki, 2018). Consequently, although there were no explicit signs of a crisis, touting good economic performance in campaigning could easily backfire and become fodder for government criticism.

Public opinion surveys conducted before the 2019 local elections highlighted citizens' increasing concerns about welfare, particularly healthcare, poverty, and the environment (Boros & Laki, 2018). Additionally, residents of Budapest expressed worries about housing prices and public transport (Publicus, 2019). However, despite these pressing concerns, immigration remained a significant issue for Budapest residents across different political affiliations (Boros & Laki, 2018). This ambiguity in survey results suggests that Fidesz had the opportunity to amplify fears about immigration, like before 2018, leveraging its influence to make security matters salient among voters (Bíró-Nagy, 2022).

The inconclusive nature of this context underscores the significance of strategic campaigning (Petrocik, 1996). Being constrained by its issue reputation stemming from prolonged incumbency, Fidesz could not address welfare concerns. Instead, it aimed to shift perceived issue salience towards notions of popular sovereignty and immigration. However, this strategy inadvertently created an opportunity for the opposition. The task then fell to Gergely Karácsony, the joint candidate of the Budapest alliance, which included MSZP-Dialogue, DK, Momentum, LMP, Liberals *(Liberálisok),* and even Jobbik. Similarly to Istanbul, the 2019 local elections in Budapest saw the emergence of quasi-two-party configurations within an otherwise multi-party system, intensifying the competition between the two leading candidates.

5.2 Candidate selection

The Turkish Supreme Election Council (YSK) officially declared the start of the local election campaign in Turkey on January 1, 2019 (YSK, 2019), with candidates being nominated as early as December 2018. İmamoğlu's campaign in Istanbul kicked off in February, coinciding with the launch of his YouTube channel, while Erdoğan initiated the AKP campaign in January with the release of their first video on Facebook. In Budapest, Tarlós's rerun was announced in October 2018, and Karácsony secured the opposition's candidacy in June 2019. A decree then defined the campaign period from August 24 to October 13, aligning with Hungary's lifting of election silence regulations in 2013 (Ministry of Justice, Decree 19/2019), effectively restricting campaign analysis to a concise 51-day window in both contexts.

Before the 2019 election, Istanbul was governed by Mevlüt Uysal from the ruling AKP. Uysal came to power in 2017 when Kadir Topbaş resigned upon President Erdoğan's request due to his son-in-law's arrest. However, rather than nominating Uysal for reelection, Erdoğan chose to field Binali Yıldırım, his essential ally since 1994. Throughout his career, Yıldırım held various significant roles, including as a Member of Parliament, minister, presidential advisor, mayoral candidate for Izmir, prime minister, party leader, and speaker of parliament. Erdoğan emphasized that Istanbul deserved a candidate with a "world-renowned brand," positioning Yıldırım for the mayoral race (Sayın, 2018; T24, 2018). Rumors circulated suggesting Yıldırım's reluctance to enter the race, possibly influenced by his prior defeat in the city of Izmir in 2014 (Sayın, 2018; T24, 2018). Nevertheless, he eventually became the candidate of the People's Alliance of the AKP and the far-right MHP.

Despite his nomination, Yıldırım remained somewhat sidelined in the race for Istanbul. Instead, Erdoğan himself took on much of the campaigning and canvassing efforts in the municipality. By the end of the campaign period, he claimed to have held 102 rallies in 50 days across 59 cities and provinces (Erdoğan, No. 277, hereafter, speeches are referred to by their number), with 31 of them taking place in Istanbul. In contrast, Yıldırım did not participate in many major rallies, aside from the campaign finale, and only gave a handful of interviews in controlled environments.

The opposition Nation's Alliance, consisting of the CHP and IYIP, nominated Ekrem İmamoğlu for Istanbul mayor. In his book, Necati Özkan, İmamoğlu's campaign manager, provides an extensive account of the candidate selection and campaign preparations (Özkan,

2019). İmamoğlu joined the CHP in 2008 and rose to head the party's Beylikdüzü chapter in 2020 (Özkan, 2019). His political journey took a significant turn when he was elected as the mayor of Beylikdüzü in 2014, defeating the incumbent AKP candidate by a margin of 8% (Özkan, 2019).

Following the resignation of Istanbul's mayor, Topbaş, in 2017, CHP chair Kılıçdaroğlu urged İmamoğlu to run for the prestigious position (Özkan, 2019, p. 53-54). İmamoğlu and his campaign team immediately commenced preparations for the mayoral race. According to Özkan, İmamoğlu's profile perfectly aligned with the ideal candidate revealed through their research: an educated and experienced individual of Black Sea origin who respected the country's fundamental values and conservative traditions. His identity played a crucial role in appealing to the government's voter base and attempting to 'depolarize' the electorate (Özkan, 2019, p. 65). Indeed, the campaign adopted a personalized approach, showcasing İmamoğlu as a family-oriented figure, with his parents, wife, Dilek İmamoğlu, and children actively participating in campaign events (p. 119).

Fidesz's candidate for mayor of Budapest solidified in 2018 when Viktor Orbán decided to nominate István Tarlós, who had been governing the capital since 2010. Tarlós said he initially hesitated but ultimately accepted the nomination after 'a serious inner struggle' (Kiss, 2018). Tarlós's nomination was expected, given that his popularity surpassed that of Fidesz or any other politician in 2018 (Nagy, 2018), and despite not being a party member, he had long been a significant ally of Viktor Orbán.

Tarlós's political journey began in Budapest's District 3 (Óbuda-Békásmegyer), where he served as mayor from 1990 to 2006. While gradually aligning with Fidesz, he contested the general elections in 2002 under its banner without success (Magyari, 2010). His involvement with the party became more pronounced in 2006 when he managed its campaign for the Status Law referendum and concurrently ran as their candidate for mayor of Budapest. Despite narrowly losing this election to incumbent Gábor Demszky (NVI, 2006), he was once again nominated in 2010 and secured a resounding victory against the socialist Csaba Horváth (53.37% to 29.47%; NVI, 2019), subsequently winning re-election in 2014.

Interestingly, despite Tarlós's status as a non-partisan figure and presumed popularity, he remained largely absent from the campaign. In contrast to the situation in Istanbul, Prime Minister Orbán opted to maintain a background role rather than taking a

leading position. Instead, the Fidesz party conducted a centralized campaign with the Budapest campaign embedded. A diverse array of politicians, ranging from members of the European Parliament to local councilors, supported Tarlós's reelection bid, often attempting to downplay his affiliation with Fidesz while paradoxically emphasizing his goof ties with the central government.

Opposition parties conducted two-round primaries in February and June 2019 to select their mayoral candidate for Budapest. Despite low turnout, the primaries increased publicity for opposition parties, facilitated policy debates, and brought transparency to candidate selection. Gergely Karácsony emerged as the joint candidate for the allied opposition after winning both rounds of primaries against other contenders like Csaba Horváth and Olga Kálmán.

Karácsony, originally from the small northeastern town of Fehérgyarmat, began his political journey in the green LMP. As an MP from the party's list in 2010, he departed LMP in 2013 alongside other members due to their support for electoral coordination among opposition parties. Serving as Dialogue's co-chair alongside Tímea Szabó from 2014 to 2022, Karácsony emerged as the most popular opposition figure (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022) despite the party's limited electoral traction. Additionally, he served as the mayor of District 14 and ran as MSZP-Dialogue's joint candidate for prime minister in 2018, securing only 11.91% of the vote (NVI, 2018).

Like İmamoğlu, Karácsony initiated his campaign early, utilizing online platforms and increasing his street presence. However, unlike his Turkish counterpart, Karácsony's campaign strategy involved a wide array of politicians from various parties and civilians in his promotional videos. This approach aimed to bolster the perception of alliance solidarity among voters while rallying support behind a single candidate. Despite the diverse participation, Karácsony maintained a prominent leadership role throughout the campaign.

5.3 Rallies in Istanbul, press briefings in Budapest

The election strategies in Istanbul and Budapest diverged notably, especially regarding the primary campaign events. In Istanbul, the opposition embraced citywide rallies, mirroring the AKP's approach, albeit with localized variations. Despite the avoidance of the term "rally" by İmamoğlu's campaign manager, Necati Özkan (2019), the opposition organized grassroots "neighborhood gatherings" to pursue their agenda and counter Erdoğan's

speeches. These events not only provided a platform for street-level engagement but also complemented the party's online presence with live-streaming on social media platforms.

Meanwhile, in Budapest, the opposition opted for a different tactic, leveraging press briefings to challenge the government's dominant communication strategy. Since coming to power, Fidesz's communication strategy has heavily relied on press briefings in controlled environments like the parliamentary press room. These settings limit challenges or critical questions, with participation usually restricted to pro-government outlets. Opposition journalists are often barred from asking questions, maintaining a one-sided narrative. This dynamic persisted throughout the 2019 campaign. Adopting the genre associated with ruling party communication, the opposition could proactively shape the narrative and garner media visibility. This shift allowed Karácsony to tour Budapest, endorse local candidates, and engage directly with voters while maintaining a proactive stance throughout the campaign.

Despite the evolving landscape of political communication (Norris, 2000; Dalton, 2002; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002; Farrell & Webb, 2002), rallies persist as essential direct engagement tools with the electorate (de Vreese & Semetko, 2004; Vergeer et al., 2013). Their functions in party politics vary, from bolstering vote share (Çarkoğlu & Yıldırım, 2023) to serving as conduits for information dissemination within a party's clientelist network (Szwarcberg, 2014). Szwarcberg (2014) contends that meetings serve as indicators of the strength of clientelist connections, including the role of brokers in mobilizing attendees for such events.

In illiberal regimes such as Turkey and Hungary, ruling parties have shown reluctance to engage in televised debates, possibly to avoid policy-based challenges, undermine the opposition, and maintain their political dominance. While televised debates were commonplace in Turkey in the 1980s, they have been notably absent since 2002, with Erdoğan often opting for interviews with open-ended questions instead (Ünan Göktan, 2022). Similarly, Hungary saw regular televised debates until 2010, when Viktor Orbán declined to participate, fearing potential defeat against other candidates (Fábián, 2018).

In contrast to debates, rallies have emerged as a significant aspect of Turkish politics under the AKP's rule, with Erdoğan's speeches frequently aired on major channels (Aydın-Düzgit, 2017). As noted by Norris (2000), rallies serve as a tool to secure television coverage, which remains the primary source of political information in Turkey (Andı et al., 2020). Following the 2013 Gezi protests, Erdoğan introduced "public will rallies" *(milli*

irade mitingleri) to mobilize support for and "defend" the government (Özen, 2020; Gümrükçü, 2022). Through these rallies, Erdoğan reinvigorated the central-periphery cleavage, redefined the notion of the people and their adversaries, and imbued national sovereignty with new significance (Özen, 2020; Gümrükçü, 2022). These rallies also play a crucial role in revitalizing local party organizations (Baykan, 2018) and reinforcing clientelist ties, with businesses facilitating participation (Esen & Gumuscu, 2016). The AKP stands out for its mobilization capacity compared to other parties (Baykan, 2018), a point frequently emphasized by Erdoğan during the 2019 campaign (e.g., Erdoğan, No. 240). Thus, over time, rallies have become a cornerstone of the AKP's campaign strategy and a reflection of Erdoğan's leadership style (Gürsoy, 2021), underscoring the party's reliance on popular support during elections and challenging times (Baykan, 2018; Castaldo, 2018; Özen, 2020; Gümrükçü, 2022).

Clientelism's sway was evident during the AKP's 2019 rallies, with Erdoğan frequently targeting women, often offering incentives like 200g packs of black tea and urging them to rally family support, notably in Istanbul and rural regions (e.g., Erdoğan, No. 265). The AKP's success is partly credited to its network of brokers and activists, inherited from the Welfare Party (RP) era (White, 2002; Wuthrich, 2021; Çavdar, 2022; Yıldırım, 2023). Women's roles in organizing meetings, house visits, and influencing swing voters, particularly in metropolitan areas, are vital (Yıldırım, 2023), underscoring their significance in rallies and mobilization efforts, especially during fiercely contested races like the 2019 mayoral election in Istanbul.

While the government's investment in rallies may be clear, the rationale behind the opposition's participation warrants clarification. Necati Özkan, İmamoğlu's campaign strategist, sheds light on this, revealing that the strategic decision to increase İmamoğlu's presence on both the streets and the internet was deliberate (Özkan, 2019, p. 75). İmamoğlu's approach involved walking through streets, engaging with citizens at street markets, and subsequently holding neighborhood rallies. These events diverged from Erdoğan's style, with İmamoğlu appearing on a small stage among the audience, accompanied by local candidates and family members. This facilitated direct interaction with voters and served as a challenge to Erdoğan's preferred campaign format. By adopting strategies reminiscent of the AKP's approach, İmamoğlu could effectively appeal to demotivated and swing voters while also potentially swaying the government's core supporters.

Fidesz has wielded significant influence over rallying in Hungarian politics in recent decades, with the party's prominence in large-scale gatherings becoming particularly notable after its defeat in the 2002 general elections. This trend was exemplified by the initiation of the Civil Cooperation Forum *(Civil Összefogás Fórum,* CÖF) in 2012, a partisan-led effort aimed at countering protests against the government in Budapest. CÖF marches have since become a precursor to Fidesz's election rallies and national holiday gatherings, with participants often arriving via organized transport (Susánszky et al., 2016; Metz & Várnagy, 2021). During these events, Prime Minister Orbán typically addresses key Fidesz priorities, including immigration, the so-called "Soros Plan," national sovereignty, and criticism of the opposition.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has a history of actively canvassing for candidates, a strategy he notably employed during the critical 2002 election. Following the first round, Orbán embarked on a nationwide tour to mobilize voters, delivering speeches in 25 electoral districts and visiting 26 counties within a week (Fábián, 2019; M. László, 2014). This approach persisted in subsequent campaigns, with Orbán campaigning for candidates across various cities during the 2014 local elections, including Békéscsaba, Bicske, Dunaújváros, Makó, Miskolc, Nagyatád, Nyíregyháza, Paks, Salgótarján, and Szeged (Fábián, 2019; M. László, 2014). However, in preparing for the 2019 elections, Fidesz had to divert from its usual strategy and minimize its presence in Budapest and other urban areas.

Fidesz minimized its visibility during the 2019 election, a move attributed to its desire to avoid framing the local election as a 'national plebiscite' amid the formation of the opposition alliance (Fábián, 2019). This strategic decision followed the alarming 2018 election results in Budapest, where Fidesz garnered only 38% of the vote (NVI, 2018), prompting them to prepare for potential losses and minimize damage. Their campaign strategy aimed to demobilize and demoralize opposition voters while appealing to loyal partisans and those concerned about popular sovereignty and immigration. This was executed through press briefings, interviews on pro-government television channels, and localized forums with limited audience access.

The opposition's campaign in Budapest diverged from traditional mass events, focusing primarily on press briefings instead of large rallies. This strategic shift can be attributed to financial constraints and the absence of a robust party organization behind the Budapest opposition, unlike İmamoğlu's case. While mass events were costly and lacked

guaranteed popular support, press briefings offered a more cost-effective approach. Analysis of Facebook advertising spending revealed a significant difference between opposition and Fidesz expenditures, with Karácsony investing the most (Sarkadi Nagy, 2019). This underscores the opposition's reliance on digital platforms and press briefings to mobilize voters and respond swiftly to government actions efficiently.

Hence, the opposition in Budapest mirrored the government's approach not only due to financial and organizational limitations but also to effectively respond to government actions and proactively shape the agenda through press briefings. Similarly to İmamoğlu's strategy in Istanbul, though motivated by different rationales, Karácsony aimed to enhance his visibility both on the streets and online, achieved through live-streaming joint press briefings, policy debates, and discussions with fellow opposition members.

5.3.1 Number and length of speeches

In the Istanbul mayoral election campaign, 119 speeches totaling over 43.5 hours were collected, while Budapest amassed 242 speeches amounting to less than 24.5 hours, reflecting differing campaign structures. The opposition surpassed the government's efforts in both cities, with the Turkish government delivering 45 speeches over 21 hours compared to the opposition's at least 74 speeches, totaling almost 22.5 hours. In Budapest, the opposition's intensive campaign included 178 speeches totaling nearly 18.5 hours, contrasting sharply with the government's 64 speeches totaling only 6 hours.

Istanbul featured numerous rallies, with the AKP holding 31 and the opposition 51 rallies. In Istanbul, the AKP held 31 rallies, while the opposition organized 51. Among these, President Erdoğan led 29 AKP rallies, while İmamoğlu hosted 34 exclusive events, which were, on average, 6 minutes shorter than the president's rallies. Conversely, Budapest's campaign strategies centered around press briefings, with the opposition holding 36 briefings averaging 15 minutes and 50 seconds, while the government's 38 briefings averaged 4 minutes and 9 seconds. Additionally, the Budapest opposition organized two major rallies, including the campaign opening on August 31 and the finale on October 11.

Table 5.1: Campaign length per city.

Istanbul		*Budapest*	
Government	21:07:52	Government	06:00:18
Opposition	22:24:54	Opposition	18:21:43
Total	43:32:46	Total	24:22:01

5.3.2 Participants

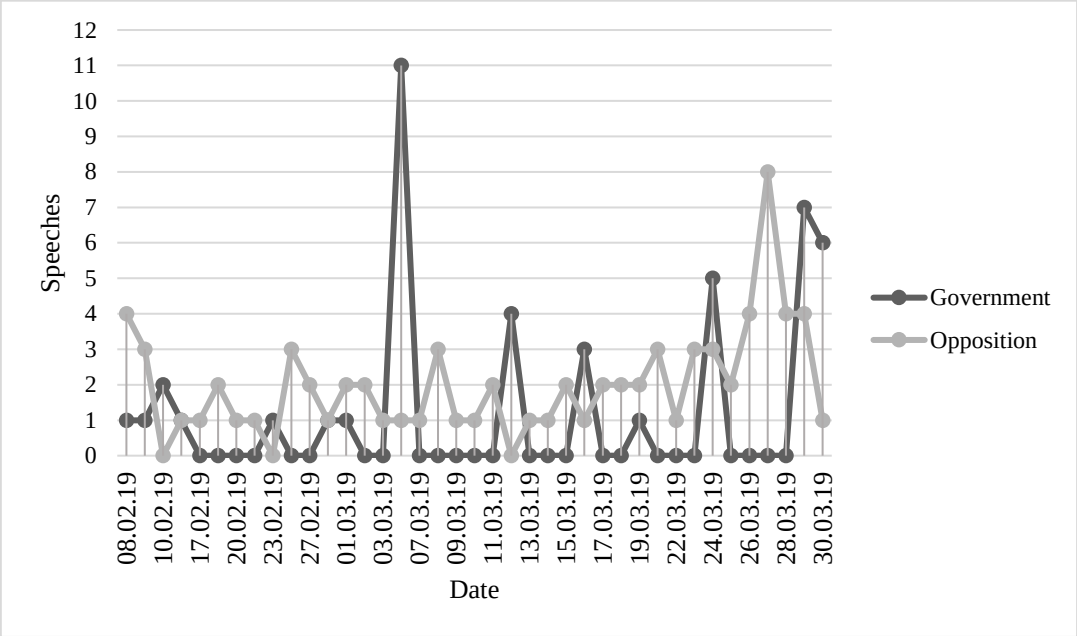
Appendix 3 contains the list of campaign participants. The Istanbul campaigns were characterized by a personalized approach, with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan leading the government side and Ekrem İmamoğlu leading the opposition. In the AKP campaign, Erdoğan dominated, speaking 31 times, while Binali Yıldırım, the candidate, spoke only four times. Other participants included Mevlüt Uysal, Devlet Bahçeli, and various AKP and MHP politicians, all men except Nihal Yıldırım. Despite appearing on stage, Yıldırım and other district candidates played minor roles. The opposition campaign, with nine speakers, saw İmamoğlu speaking 55 times, followed by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu (8) and Meral Akşener (2). İmamoğlu actively supported candidates like Mehmet Murat Çalık and Emel Bilenoğlu, whereas Akşener campaigned for others twice. Fidesz's campaign lacked a central figure, with 30 politicians participating, predominantly national figures. In contrast, the opposition campaign featured 56 individuals, including civil society representatives and public figures, endorsing Karácsony in Facebook videos. Karácsony spoke 84 times, ensuring a personalized touch to the opposition's efforts.

In Budapest, Fidesz's campaign was characterized by a decentralized approach with no central protagonist. Thirty politicians participated, with notable attention given to the capital in their speeches. The campaign primarily highlighted the party's achievements and vision for the country. On the other hand, the opposition campaign in Budapest featured 56 individuals, including civil society representatives and public figures, endorsing Karácsony in Facebook videos. Karácsony himself was actively involved, speaking 84 times and ensuring a personalized touch to the opposition's efforts.

5.3.2 Dates

Figure 5.3 illustrates the frequency of speeches in government and opposition campaigns in Istanbul. Erdoğan led the majority of the campaign, with 31 rallies, including a significant event at Yenikapı Square, which holds symbolic importance for the AKP due to its historical

significance as a gathering place for mass protests, particularly after the failed coup in 2016. The event at Yenikapı Square included speeches from notable party figures, including Erdoğan, Yıldırım, MHP chair Bahçeli, former Istanbul mayor Mevlüt Uysal, and Bayram Şenocak, head of the AKP Istanbul chapter. Yıldırım's presence was minimal, with only two minor rallies identified. Erdoğan's busiest days were the last two before the election, during which he held a total of 13 rallies.

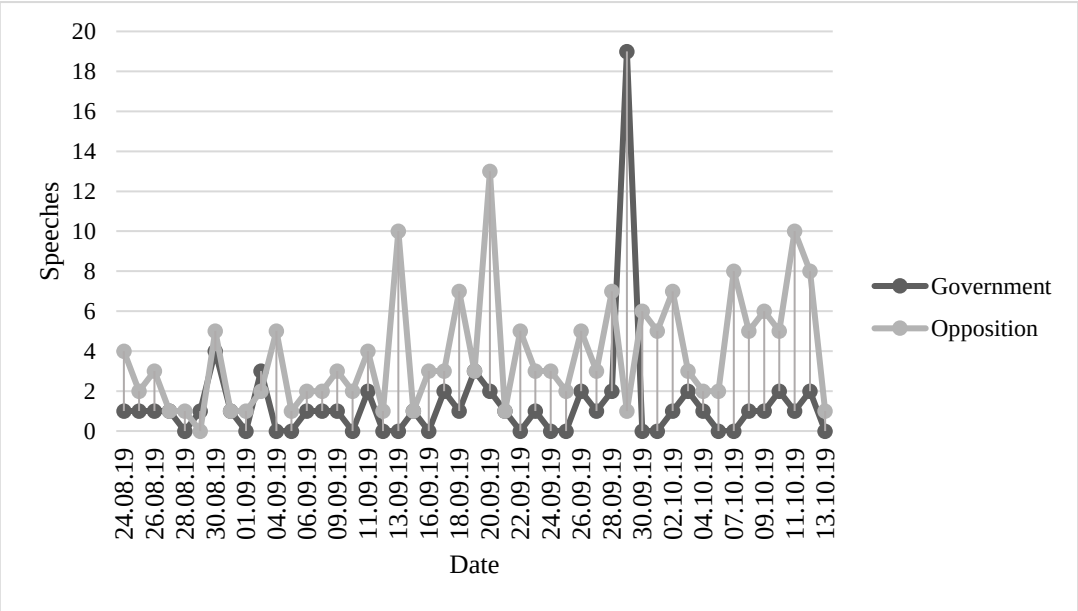


5.4: Number of speeches per day in Istanbul.

Figure 5.3 illustrates the opposition's consistent and stable campaign presence throughout the election period. There were only two days when the government held rallies but not the opposition. Towards the end of the campaign, İmamoğlu intensified his presence in Istanbul, with notable speeches on March 27 in multiple districts, including appearances by CHP chair Kılıçdaroğlu and İmamoğlu's intended successor, Mehmet Murat Çalık. The campaign's final week saw increased activity, with key speeches on March 26, 28, 29, and eight on March 27. Despite this, the opposition maintained a steady presence across all 51 days. İmamoğlu concluded his campaign with a 40-minute speech in Beşiktaş on March 30.

In Budapest, Fidesz held an average of one press briefing per day, as depicted in Figure 5.4. The busiest day was September 29, coinciding with the party's annual congress, which heavily emphasized the upcoming local elections. At the congress, 19 speakers, including town, village, and district mayors, highlighted the importance of electing Fidesz

candidates for maintaining close ties with the government and securing funding for local development projects. This sentiment was echoed by many who thanked Viktor Orbán and MPs for their past efforts in securing funding (see No. 34-52). Interestingly, Fidesz did not ramp up its activities in the lead-up to election day, indicating a lack of intention to mobilize the masses.



5.5: Number of speeches per day in Budapest.

The opposition averaged four videos per day, with an uptick in the final week, as shown in Figure 5.4. Crowded days coincided with protests during the election period. On September 13, opposition and civil society members protested in District 8 against a politically motivated police raid on their campaign office. Máté Kocsis, head of the parliamentary group and former District 8 mayor, called for a police investigation into potential electoral fraud, citing a Facebook photo. The opposition responded with a solidarity protest for candidate András Pikó. A week later, opposition politicians submitted a petition to President János Áder for UN climate emergency measures compliance. The opposition's finale on October 11 featured 10 speakers from various parties, except Jobbik and the Liberals. In short, the opposition campaign was clearly event-driven, with a focus on responding to and leveraging everyday events to mobilize support and shape the narrative.

5.3.3 Locations

Figure 5.5 illustrates the distribution of AKP campaign locations in Istanbul. Out of 45 speeches, only one occurred in a closed venue at an undisclosed location. The majority of speeches, 43 in total, took place in various districts, with Erdoğan leading 31 rallies across the city. Notably, Fatih and Şişli districts stood out, hosting 8 and 5 speeches, respectively, albeit at single events. Fatih's significance lies in Yenikapı Square, where the campaign finale attracted many speakers, while Şişli featured a unique rally video with Binali Yıldırım in support of AKP's mayoral candidate. Overall, each location typically hosted a single event, with limited return visits by AKP politicians.

The AKP omitted campaigning in 9 of the 39 districts in Istanbul, including Adalar, Arnavutköy, Başakşehir, Beşiktaş, Esenler, Kadıköy, Sarıyer, Şile, and Silivri. Despite mentioning Adalar district 28 times during the campaign, Erdoğan did not attend any events there. The decision not to campaign in certain districts, such as Arnavutköy, Başakşehir, Esenler, and Şile, was likely due to their status as AKP strongholds, as evidenced by their high vote shares in the 2014 election (Table A.4.1). Similarly, neglecting Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, Sarıyer, and Silivri, which are opposition strongholds, may have been a strategic choice based on past election results (Table A.4.1).

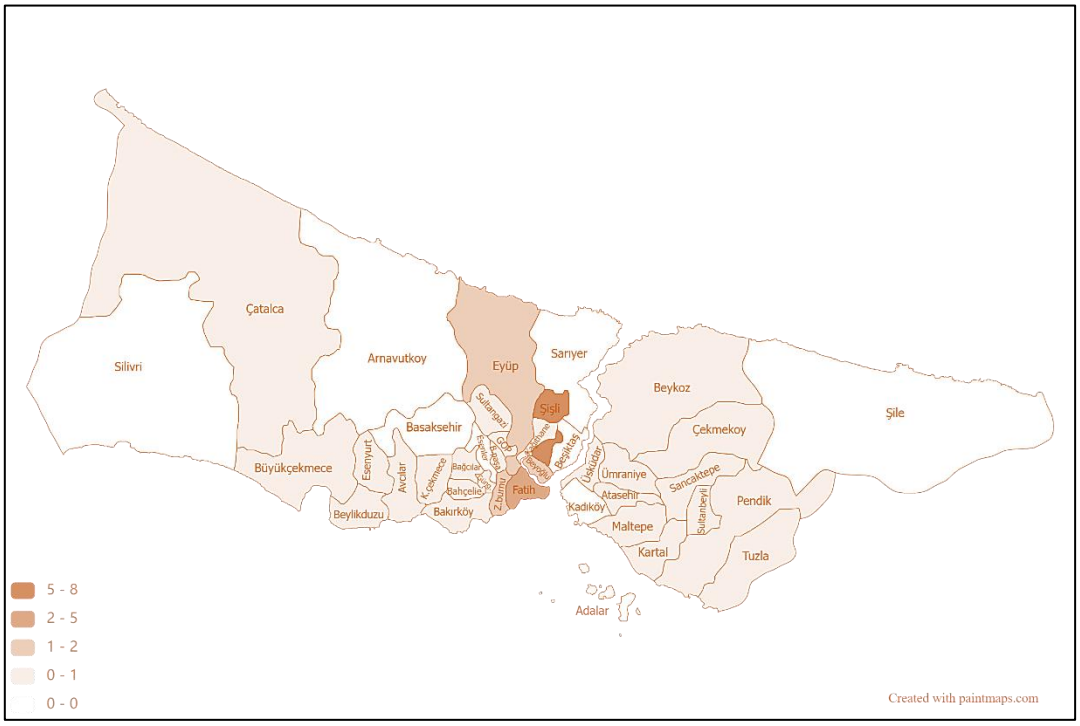


Figure 5.6: Government campaign locations in Istanbul.

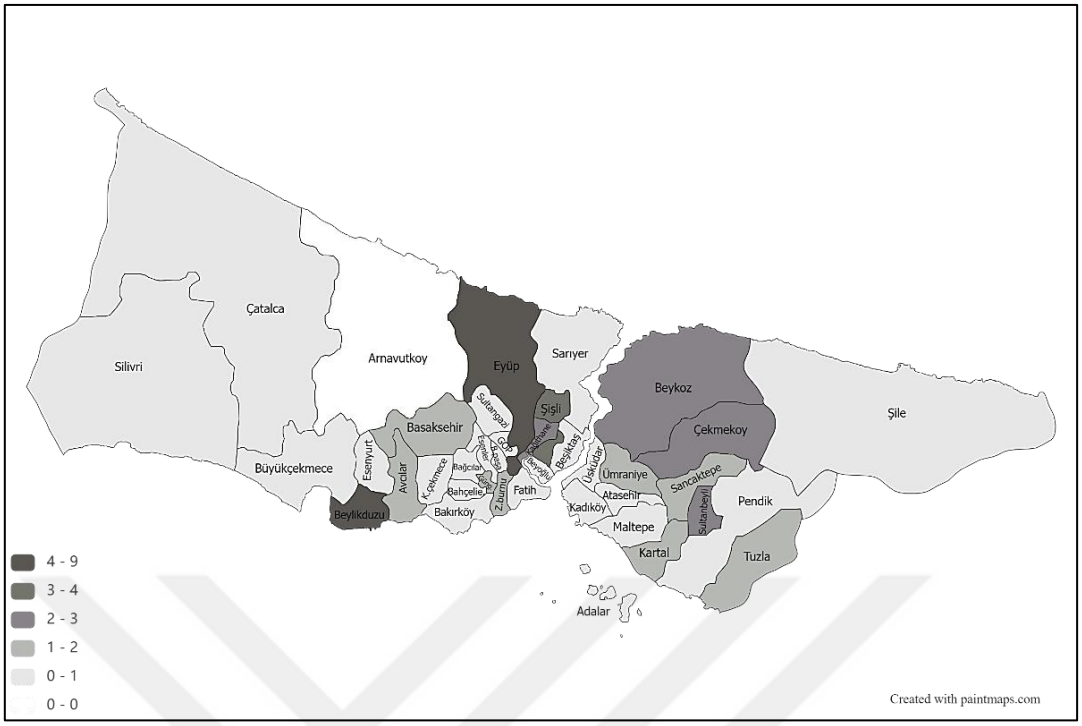


Figure 5.7: Opposition campaign locations in Istanbul.

Figure 5.6 shows opposition campaign locations. Only omitting Arnavutköy, İmamoğlu put more emphasis on Beylikdüzü and Eyüpsultan where he intesely canvassed for their candidates. In Beylikdüzü, he canvassed for Mehmet Murat Çalık, his intended successor, while in Eyüp, for Emel Bilenoğlu. CHP chair Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu often showed support in these events. While the CHP wanted to ensure its continuity in Beylikdüzü, Eyüpsultan was presumably important, being an investment and property development area. Additionally, IYIP chair Meral Akşener campaigned with İmamoğlu in Kağıthane and Çekmeköy districts, as she mostly focused on the countryside instead of Istanbul.

Fidesz conducted a low-key and centralized campaign, opting for controlled press briefings in a familiar setting, likely the parliamentary pressroom, totaling 48 speeches. However, an additional 16 speeches were delivered in outdoor locations across Budapest, with District 14 (Zugló) being the most visited, where Karácsony was incumbent mayor. Here, Fidesz members, including representatives from the youth organization Fidelitas, criticized opposition candidate Karácsony's managerial capabilities and suitability for office. Beyond District 14, nine speeches were held in Districts 4, 16, and 21, situated on the city's outskirts. In these locations, district mayors highlighted government cooperation and emphasized Fidesz's role in resolving legal and financial roadblocks hindering road renovation projects.

Although not analyzed in this study, Karácsony and the opposition extensively covered all Budapest districts twice during the campaign. Alongside the 178 press briefings and speeches, Karácsony's Facebook page live-streamed approximately 90 discussions with local candidates and civil society groups. Karácsony and his party's spokesperson, Richárd Barabás, engaged with local politicians and activists on neighborhood-specific issues, often addressing government negligence or flawed policies while advocating opposition solutions. Towards the campaign's end, Karácsony intensified his efforts, revisiting all 23 districts on the final day to connect with allies, deliver brief speeches, and engage with supporters and activists.

Figure 5.8 illustrates 144 of the 178 opposition speeches held at district-level locations, covering 15 of the 23 districts. The most frequented district was District 5, Budapest Downtown, with 28 speeches, where the opposition countered Fidesz's *"Budapest Is No Circus"* campaign with *"Budapest Is No Puppet Show,"* symbolized by a giant figure of Orbán holding Tarlós as a puppet. Other significant locations included Districts 1, 14, 2, 7, and 8, each hosting multiple speeches and featuring joint appearances by Karácsony and essential allies like Gergely Őrsi, Tamás Soproni, and András Pikó. In District 14, where Karácsony was the incumbent mayor, speeches highlighted successful policies and rebutted government accusations of mismanagement and lack of transparency.

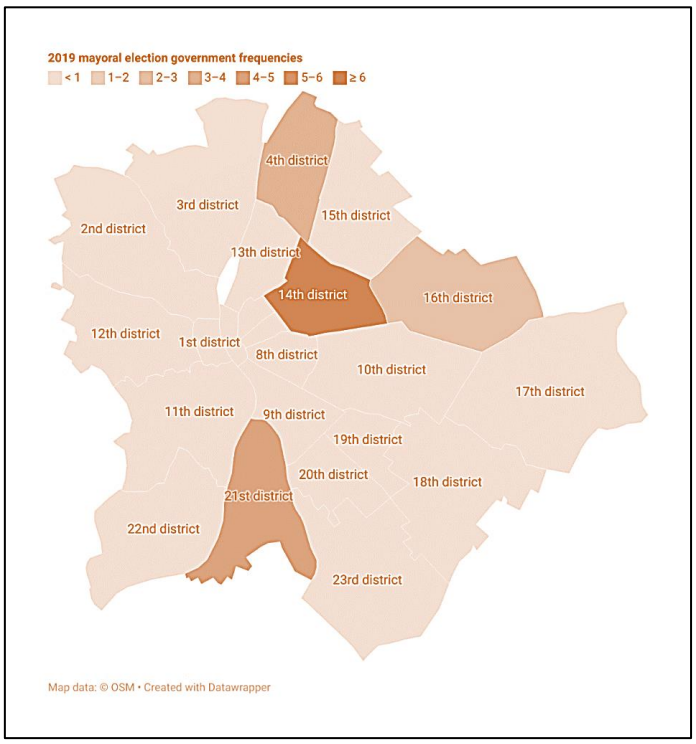


Figure 5.8: Government campaign locations in Budapest.

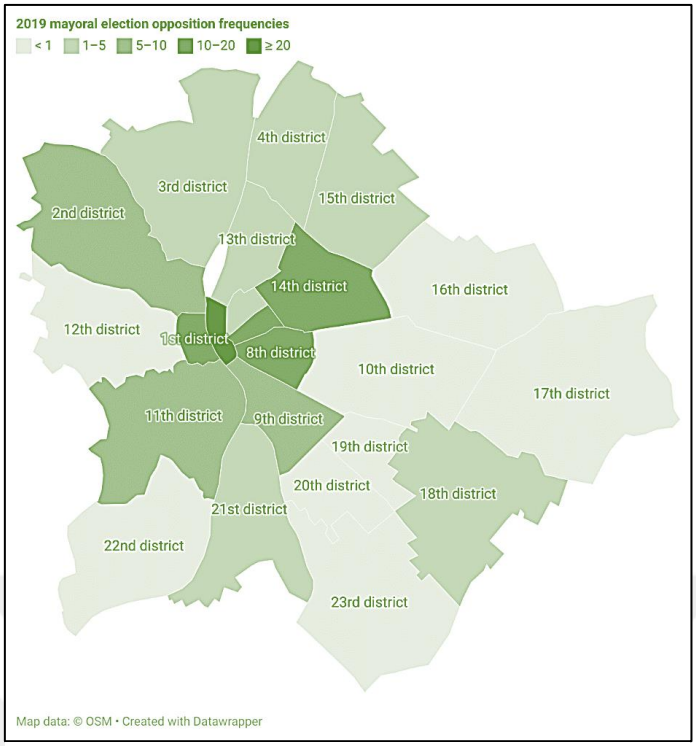


Figure 5.9: Opposition campaign locations in Budapest.

5.4 Polling and results

The reliability of polls predicting the election results came under scrutiny, as Özkan (2019) noted a consistent 2-3-point advantage for İmamoğlu in the week leading up to the election. However, these findings were met with skepticism from governmental quarters, alleging manipulation (p. 133). As the election drew closer, media reports presented conflicting results, with some companies favoring İmamoğlu while others leaned towards Yıldırım. For instance, Themis and Pollmark projected a narrow advantage for İmamoğlu, while Konsensus and ORC indicated a significant lead for Yıldırım (Euronews, 2019). This discrepancy in poll results added to existing doubts about their reliability, especially within the highly polarized Turkish context. Here, the partisan divide became evident, with government supporters more inclined to trust poll predictions while opposition backers turned to alternative sources like social media for information (Dawson, 2023). This underscores the pervasive partisan bias shaping perceptions and interpretations of electoral forecasts in Turkey.

Leading up to the Budapest election, opinion polls predominantly favored Tarlós, mirroring the trend seen in Istanbul. Nézőpont, a pro-government polling agency, projected

a significant lead for Tarlós with 53% support compared to Karácsony's 40% three weeks prior to the election. As the election drew closer, various polling companies, including Medián, Nézőpont, Publicus, Republikon, Századvég, and Závecz, continued to predict Tarlós's victory, with pro-government institutes suggesting a considerable margin between the candidates (Jámbor, 2019). However, in the days leading up to the election, a shift occurred, with polls by Iránytű, Publicus, and Medián indicating a narrow victory for Karácsony (Király, 2019). This variation in polling outcomes underscores the uncertainty surrounding electoral forecasts and highlights the potential for manipulation or bias within the polling process.

The March 31, 2019, local election in Istanbul saw a turnout of 83.94%, marking it as a first-order election. İmamoğlu secured 48.77% of the vote, narrowly edging out Yıldırım, who garnered 48.61% (YSK, 2019). Compared to the 2014 election, both the AKP and the opposition saw an increase in their vote shares, with the AKP gaining by 1.01% and the opposition by 8.67% citywide. This trend was reflected across the European and Asian sides of Istanbul, with the AKP winning by a narrow margin on the European side (1.10%) and the opposition gaining ground on the Asian side (2.33%). Notably, the difference between the parties was a mere 0.16%, equivalent to 13,729 votes out of 8.94 million (Table A.4.1).

İmamoğlu's success extended to all districts, where he managed to increase the opposition's vote share compared to 2014. Additionally, he secured victories in two additional municipalities, Esenyurt and Küçükçekmece. While Yıldırım also saw an increase in votes, particularly moderate, the AKP experienced losses in several districts, including Gaziosmanpaşa, Sultangazi, Çekmeköy, Kadıköy, Pendik, Sancaktepe, and Sultanbeyli. Notably, Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi, Sancaktepe, Gaziosmanpaşa, and Pendik are among the poorest in Istanbul, with Cekmeköy ranking 24th out of 39 districts in terms of annual household income.

The introduction already outlined the circumstances of canceling the Istanbul mayoral election results. Despite initial objections, however, the election results were upheld in other municipalities. While the People's Alliance garnered the majority of the vote with 51.6%, the AKP's share declined compared to 2014. As a result, they lost crucial municipalities, relegating them to the socioeconomic periphery (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019). The People's Alliance secured 16 metropolitan and 34 provincial municipalities, while the

opposition claimed 11 metropolitan and 10 provincial municipalities. This included critical cities like Adana, Antalya, Mersin, and Hatay, consolidating their control over the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Additionally, they made gains in the northern and Central Anatolian regions, securing municipalities such as Sinop, Artvin, Ardahan, Bolu, Bilecik, and Ankara.

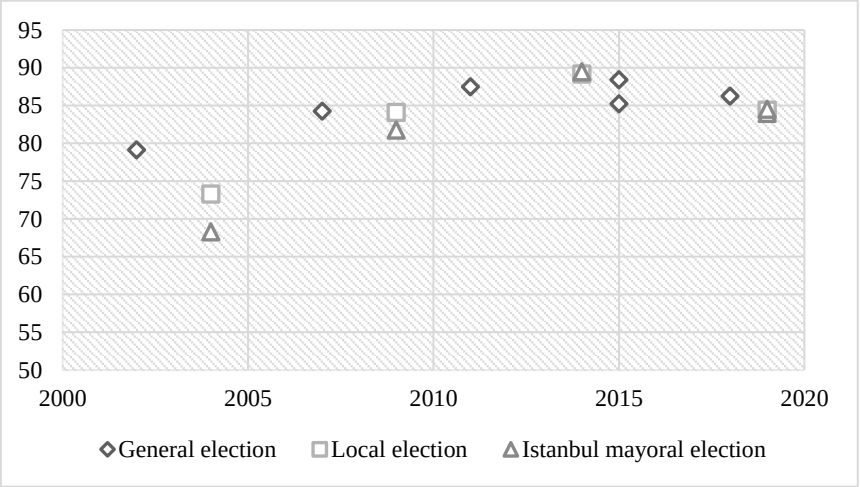


Figure 5.10: Voter turnout in Turkey since 2002.

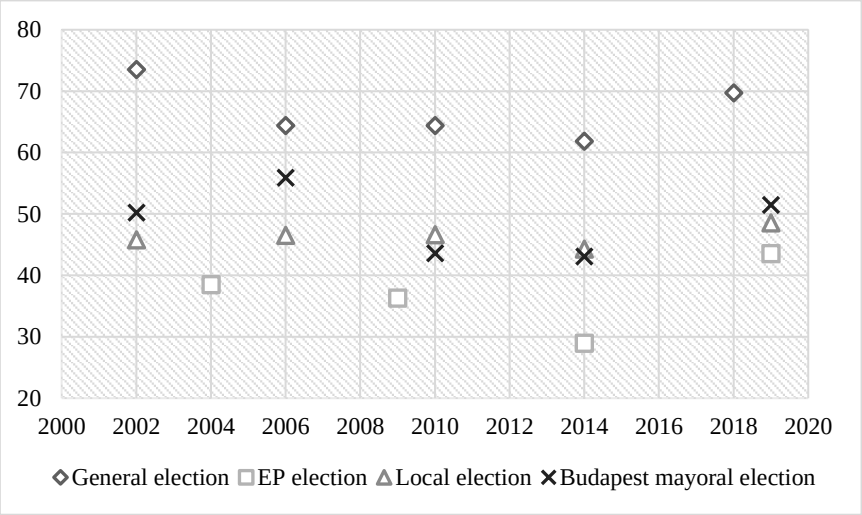


Figure 5.11: Voter turnout in Hungary since 2002.

In the June 23 Istanbul mayoral election rerun, Ekrem İmamoğlu secured victory for the second time with 53.13% of the vote, defeating Binali Yıldırım, who received 44.10%. İmamoğlu maintained his campaign strategies, emphasizing consistency and staying true to his original program. Voter turnout was significant, with İmamoğlu increasing his support across all districts and winning additional ones. Yıldırım, on the other hand, experienced losses in all districts. Despite attempts by the AKP to personalize the campaign, introduce

new slogans, and employ strategic tactics like publishing a letter attributed to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan (Özkan, 2019), İmamoğlu's victory remained unchallenged. The margin of victory, with a 9% difference and 806,014 more votes, underscored İmamoğlu's strong position and the effectiveness of his campaign (Table A.4.2).

The Budapest mayoral election in 2019 marked a notable moment in the city's political landscape, with a turnout of 51.47%, the highest since 2006. Karácsony won 50.86% of the vote, defeating the incumbent Fidesz-KDNP candidate, who received only 44.10% (NVI, 2019). Compared to the 2014 election, Karácsony significantly increased his vote share in every district, while the incumbent saw losses across the board.

In 2014, Bokros was the leading opposition candidate, but Karácsony surpassed his performance, gaining substantial support in each district. While Karácsony lost a few districts to the incumbent, including traditionally right-leaning District 12 in Buda, he secured victories in key districts previously dominated by Fidesz. The 2019 election marked a significant shift, with both Pest and Buda sides siding with the opposition.

Despite Fidesz remaining a dominant political force, the opposition made undeniable gains in the municipal election. Fidesz won only seven of the 23 Budapest districts, with the alliance securing victories in 14. This success extended beyond the capital, with the opposition winning 10 out of 23 cities with county rights, including economically significant cities like Pécs and Szeged. Additionally, they secured 56 mayoral offices in settlements with over 10,000 residents (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022).

5.5 Conclusion

The 2019 direct mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest were far from ordinary second-order ballots. This chapter provided ample evidence of parties' investments and efforts in campaigning. While the Istanbul mayoral election can be considered a first-order ballot based on turnout, the Budapest election falls within the spectrum of solid middle-salience votes. Many have already argued the significance of local campaigns (Elklit, 1991; Whiteley & Seyd, 1994; Pattie et al., 1995; Carty & Eagles, 1999; Harrison & McSweeney, 2008) and the payoff for parties from increased investments (Benoit & Marsh, 2003; Lefevere & van Aelst, 2014; Put et al., 2015). This chapter demonstrates that, with the exception of Fidesz's interest in a low turnout, all parties put considerable effort into electioneering.

Notably, opposition parties outperformed the incumbents in campaigning. In Istanbul, İmamoğlu's presence was more visible due to his numerous events in the city. Similarly, Karácsony's visibility in Budapest contrasted with Fidesz's virtual absence from the streets. This highlights a common strategy of opposition parties: simultaneously increasing their presence on the city streets and online. Another notable similarity lies in their choice of a dominant campaign event. Both chose to mimic the government, likely aiming to redefine these campaign genres and highlight their contrast with the incumbents. This also aligns with their key strategies. While İmamoğlu aimed to avoid confrontation with the government and focused on his program and persona during rally speeches, Karácsony utilized press briefings to react to the government's actions quickly.

Governments, on the other hand, exhibited several differences. Erdoğan's significant role in conducting the campaign in Istanbul underscores the AKP's efforts in mobilization and reinvigorating the party organization. Facing contentious polls, the AKP hoped to tilt the scale in their favor through increased mobilization. In contrast, Fidesz, facing an allied opposition for the first time, opted for moderate campaigning in Budapest. Through press briefings from controlled environments, it sought to frame the mayoral election as part of the local elections, emphasizing the loss of popular sovereignty at stake. While both governments focused on the same overarching campaign theme concerning popular sovereignty and security, Fidesz recognized that opposition voters outnumbered their supporters and aimed to demobilize the opposition through constant attacks.

Research suggests that opposition candidates in Istanbul and Budapest effectively tapped into their intended voter bases. Before the March election in Istanbul, 9.3% of AKP and 25.8% of MHP supporters were inclined towards İmamoğlu. These figures rose to 18.4% and 40.4% by the June rerun (Andı et al., 2023). Although similar data is unavailable for Budapest, analysis suggests that voters of different opposition identities were inclined to vote for Karácsony, except for Jobbik and LMP supporters (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022).

In summary, while both governments aimed to appeal to core and swing voters, the AKP could expect a higher vote share than Fidesz, primarily interested in demobilizing the opposition by discouraging turnout. This chapter shed light on the opposition's increased mobilization efforts in Istanbul and Budapest, which arguably paid off as they secured electoral victory in these crucial contests. The following chapter complements these findings on campaign structures by presenting their content. Four extensive qualitative

accounts follow, featuring excerpts from original texts to provide a comprehensive picture of the 2019 mayoral campaigns.

Chapter 6

QUALITATIVE STUDIES ON MAYORAL ELECTIONS

The preceding chapter delineated the structure and participants of the 2019 mayoral election campaigns in Istanbul and Budapest. It posited that opposition parties mirrored the strategies of incumbent governments in choosing dominant campaign events. Notably, the Istanbul opposition cast a wider net, aiming to appeal to core government voters, while the Budapest opposition focused on consolidating polarized opposition supporters. Conversely, ruling parties mobilized both core and swing voters by addressing topics most resonant with these electoral segments and employing corresponding tones to motivate them.

This chapter provides qualitative evidence to corroborate these findings, offering insights into campaigns that are often challenging to assess due to language barriers. Comprising four qualitative studies on the 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest, each section unveils the predominant tones and their associated key messages. Speeches are referenced by their identification numbers in Appendix 2 to ensure clarity. Where necessary, excerpts from speeches have been translated from their original languages for extended comprehension. While the speeches themselves are not included in the appendices, they are accessible in a format compatible with Atlas.ti, the content analysis program utilized for coding.

The initial section outlines the most prominent messages of the AKP campaign, succeeded by an examination of the Istanbul opposition campaign. Subsequently, the focus shifts to the campaigns of Fidesz and the Budapest opposition. Importantly, the objective of this chapter is not to juxtapose campaigns and actors, as that has been extensively covered in preceding chapters. Instead, this chapter provides an in-depth analysis of campaigns making up for data necessarily lost due to quantitative analyses.

6.1 The government campaign in Istanbul

The AKP commenced its local election campaign on January 31, 2019, although its first election video was not posted until February 8. Notably, the campaign was led by the

Turkish president, who conducted a total of 31 rallies across Istanbul. Binali Yıldırım, the party's candidate, had a minimal presence, with only four speeches available during the data collection period. No reports indicated that he held any significant rallies comparable to those led by Erdoğan. Other politicians within the party contributed minimally, each delivering only one speech throughout the campaign. Consequently, this account primarily relies on the speeches delivered by Erdoğan, who emerged as the central figure of the AKP campaign.

6.1.1 Positivity

Competence emerged as the primary message of the Turkish government's campaign, constituting 19.30% of its overall messaging. During rallies, Erdoğan lauded the AKP for its 'politics of work' *(eser siyaseti)* and 'service' *(hizmet siyaseti),* frequently juxtaposing it with the 'politics of exploitation' *(istismar siyaseti)* attributed to the main opposition CHP (e.g., Erdoğan, No. 240). The concept of *eser siyaseti* depicted tangible outcomes of the party's governance, including infrastructure, construction projects, investments, and other initiatives that have transformed Turkey and Istanbul. Erdoğan claimed to have accelerated development since 1994, making up for a century's worth of progress (Erdoğan, No. 240), with aspirations extending to the year 2071 (Erdoğan, No. 250). Municipal governance was characterized as the 'work of vision, project,' and the 'work of the heart,' necessitating 'accumulation, dynamism, and the ability to come together' while blending 'experience and excitement' (Erdoğan, No. 254). According to Erdoğan, only the AKP embodied these values, positioning it as the sole capable party in municipal governance.

Erdoğan typically commenced his speeches by expressing gratitude to the audience for their support, emphasizing the party's robust campaigning efforts and its close ties to the populace:

> "In the last 50 days, we held 59 provincial rallies starting from Sıvas and ending in Uşak. Together with our last rally in Bağcılar, we held rallies in 28 districts of Istanbul and 11 districts of Ankara. In total, we held meetings in 39 districts. Don't stop, keep going! *(Durmak yok, yola devam.)* Because my Lord only provides for the worker. If so, we will work. Thus, we went on our way with 102 rallies and even more television programs, etc., in fifty days. Do you know for what? Because we set out on the way with our nation. The AK Party was founded by the nation. We always walked together with our nation. Arif Nihat Asya says, 'You will walk, and the nation will walk behind you.' And now, again, we will continue to walk towards our goals together with our nation. Thank God for this long walk. Bağcılar has always been with us. On 31 March, we expect from Bağcılar a greater victory this time" (Erdoğan, No. 277).

Erdoğan justified his selection of Binali Yıldırım for Istanbul mayor with his competence, too:

> "These are the things in which my brother, Binali Yıldırım, whom we have appointed as a candidate for Istanbul metropolitan mayor, has great endeavor, great effort. And we said that he would be worthy of Istanbul, we took him from the assembly speakership, and now, God willing, he will serve as Istanbul metropolitan mayor… Our candidate for metropolitan municipality mayor is a name who has spent a lifetime serving Istanbul and the whole of Turkey as a minister, prime minister, and speaker of parliament, Mr. Binali Yıldırım (Erdoğan, No. 240)."

Elsewhere, Erdoğan emphasized the significance of 'skill' and 'worldly knowledge' in managing a city as significant as Istanbul, asserting that Yıldırım possessed the necessary acumen as someone who 'knows the world' (Erdoğan, No. 265). Describing Yıldırım as a 'brand' embodying 'affection, sincerity, and devotion' *(muhabbet, samimiyet, özveri)* (Erdoğan, No. 255), Erdoğan sought to underscore his candidate's virtues.

Morality emerged as the second most prominent issue in the AKP campaign, comprising 13.51% of its messaging. The central slogan of the campaign, *'Memleket işi gönül işi'* (The work of the country is the work of the heart), reiterated by Erdoğan in his speeches, encapsulated the party's ethos. While the opposition emphasized *sevgi*, the term for neighborly love, Erdoğan spoke fervently about his profound affection *(aşk, sevda)* for Istanbul. In a culminating address at Yenikapı Square, he declared the city 'our cause, love, passion, dream, prayer, and everything we are honored to be a servant of' (Erdoğan, No. 264). Subsequently, the party's rally anthem became the pop singer Kayahan's *'Ours Is a Love Story' (Bizimkisi Bir Aşk Hikayesi).*

Erdoğan frequently made autobiographical references during his campaign speeches, emphasizing his personal ties to the districts he visited. For instance, in Eyüpsultan, he highlighted his and Yıldırım's connections to the district (Erdoğan, No. 356), recounting memories of his childhood, school years, football games, and early experiences in small-scale business during a rally and opening ceremony there (Erdoğan, No. 251). Additionally, he claimed roots in the Üsküdar district (Erdoğan, No. 259), stating he was 'half from Çatalca' (Erdoğan, No. 256), and mentioned his early political career in Kağıthane (Erdoğan, No. 274) and Bayrampaşa (Erdoğan, No. 275). Furthermore, he often invoked his Black Sea heritage in speeches, notably when concluding his addresses and distributing tea to women in the crowd in Gaziosmanpaşa, Üsküdar, Çekmeköy, Kağıthane, Bayrampaşa, and Maltepe.

'The people' emerged as the third most salient issue in the AKP's campaign, accounting for 7.12% of its messages. Erdoğan depicted the people as 'enthusiastic' and 'prudent,' underscoring his trust in them (Erdoğan, No. 250). He elucidated that the AKP's 'politics of service' aimed to ensure peace for the people and provide them with affordable, high-quality products (Erdoğan, No. 250), emphasizing that they came to serve the people, not to dominate them (Erdoğan, No. 257). Towards the end of his speeches, Erdoğan appealed to women, distributing packs of black tea and urging them to encourage their relatives to support the government, as 'the fortress is breached from inside' (Erdoğan, No. 265). Chapter 5 underscored the significance of urging women to mobilize hesitant relatives and sway swing voters for the party, a mobilization strategy inherited by the AKP from the National Outlook movement and other preceding political parties.

Several policy issues highlighted the tangible outcomes of the AKP's 'politics of work.' Infrastructure emerged as a key focus of positive campaigning, with 5.40% of the AKP's messages revolving around constructing roads and bridges. These achievements were prominently showcased during rallies on large screens, with President Erdoğan narrating and contrasting them with the CHP's tenure in Istanbul. Moreover, Erdoğan pledged to deliver more such projects, framing issues like healthcare within the context of infrastructural development, consistent with *eser siyaseti* (Erdoğan, No. 241). This approach extended to cultural initiatives as well, with 3.65% of AKP messages pertaining to the construction of cultural centers, libraries, and other facilities, framing them as evidence of the party's labor and commitment to development.

Religion constituted 4.35% of the government's messages, often featuring religious formalities, prayers, and references to religious sites. Erdoğan frequently denounced attacks against Islam, including allegations of mistreatment of muezzins and mockery of holy texts and prayers by the opposition (Erdoğan, No. 255). He also made rare references to current events, such as the Christchurch terrorist attack in New Zealand targeting a mosque (Erdoğan, No. 258). Bahçeli went as far as attributing the Kosovo War and the Christchurch attacks as retribution against Muslims for conquering Istanbul (Bahçeli, No. 263), showcasing the polarizing role of religion in party rhetoric.

Nationalist messages, accounting for 3.79% of total messages, were integral to Erdoğan's speeches, often featuring invitations to the crowd to demonstrate the Rabia hand gesture associated with the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt. Ottoman symbolism was

frequently invoked to evoke nationalist sentiment and elevate the significance of the election. In Zeytinburnu, Yıldırım likened himself and President Erdoğan to Fatih Sultan Mehmet, stating, "Fatih Sultan Mehmet drove ships overland, and his grandchildren, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Binali Yıldırım, drove cars and trains underneath the sea, too" (Yıldırm, No. 242). He reiterated this sentiment in Yenikapı Square, emphasizing Istanbul's historical significance and its modern-day revival under Erdoğan's leadership (Yıldırım, No. 260).

6.1.2 Negativity

The AKP directed its attacks towards various opposition parties and politicians, notably targeting the CHP and its chairman Kılıçdaroğlu, IYIP chair Meral Akşener, the pro-Kurdish HDP, and what they termed the 'gang of four' *(dörtlü çete),* an alleged alliance among these parties. The AKP's narrative framed the opposition as colluding with terrorists, insinuating that if elected, they would cede control of municipalities to these groups, thereby threatening Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, they argued that the incompetence of these opposition figures would hinder development, echoing past setbacks. Additionally, the AKP portrayed vaguely defined foreign entities as seeking to undermine Turkey's economic success by attacking its economy and currency.

Curiously, Ekrem İmamoğlu was notably exempt from the AKP's direct attacks. His surname was mentioned only four times, and his first name just twice in their speeches. Erdoğan referenced his surname in speeches in Gaziosmanpaşa, Maltepe, and Sultangazi districts. In the latter, he dismissed İmamoğlu, referring to him as 'this İmamoğlu or whatever,' suggesting a lack of significance compared to the AKP's political prowess (Erdoğan, No. 270). Conversely, as the main opposition, the CHP was heavily targeted, with Erdoğan referring to its chairman as 'Mr. Kemal' 118 times throughout the campaign. Meral Akşener, the IYIP chair, was mentioned only four times, while HDP co-chair Sezai Temelli and his party were referred to 16 and 45 times, respectively. Erdoğan frequently invoked the names of state-designated terrorist organizations such as FETO (31), YPG (28), PKK (18), and PYD (12). However, interestingly, he referred to the AKP candidate as 'Mr. Binali' 105 times during his campaign speeches.

In the government's discourse, a significant portion of messages regarding competence took on a negative tone. Erdoğan consistently contrasted the AKP's dedication

to hard work with what he depicted as the opposition's exploitative politics. He argued that the opposition consistently hindered developmental endeavors to progress the country, particularly infrastructure projects like roads and bridges. Erdoğan even scrutinized the choice of gift by the CHP during rallies, using it as a symbolic reproach. He asserted that while the AKP distributed tea in environmentally friendly hemp bags, the CHP, branded 'the enemy of nature' by Erdoğan (Erdoğan, No. 271), opted for plastic bags (Erdoğan, No. 267).

For the AKP, sovereignty and survival, particularly the security aspect of popular sovereignty, emerged as the most prominent non-character themes, constituting 10.06% of their overall messaging. Concerns about terrorism provided the rationale for 'sovereignty and survival' (4.25%), with a robust correlation between the two issues ($r = .669$, $p < .001$). The central argument concerning sovereignty often revolved around the perceived threat posed by the opposition, as outlined by Erdoğan in his opening speech:

> "The events in our region and the increasing attacks on our economy have made the March 31 elections no longer local elections. This election is not only a municipal one but, at the same time, an election of survival. These are the elections that will decide how we will enter the 100th year of our republic. While the Abasement Alliance *(Zillet İttifakı),* backed by Kandil and Pennsylvania, is making dirty bargains behind closed doors, we have already set off. While they were eating each other for some mayor's offices in Ankara, we embraced our nation from Aydın to Sıvas, from Kastamonu to Çorum, from all four corners of our country. While they are already suffocating in profit calculations and fights over economic benefits *(rant kavgası),* we have started to tour Turkey. God willing, we will save Ataşehir from the captivity of the CHP together in the March 31 elections" (Erdoğan, No. 240).

This encapsulates the primary election messages of the government: assertions that orchestrated attacks against the Turkish economy originated from both foreign and domestic quarters and warnings that the election of the opposition would lead to a loss of popular sovereignty. In essence, "This issue is not about this party or that party. The issue is the issue of Turkey, Turkey's future, and independence. This is why we call it an election of survival" (Erdoğan, No. 269).

During rallies, videos featuring HDP co-chairs were prominently displayed on large screens, purportedly demonstrating their connections to terrorist organizations and their efforts against territorial integrity, issues which the president repeatedly pledged to address (Erdoğan, No. 241, No. 250, No. 253). Their ties to the opposition alliance were elucidated on March 12 in Beylikdüzü, where İmamoğlu held office.

> "Who is not in this alliance? There are parties under the control of the separatist organization. There are leaders who say that your state is a terrorist. There are unwary people who intend to erect a statue of the baby killer (kept) in İmralı (Abdullah Öcalan). There are party leaders who pose in front of PKK rags. Which woman Mr. Kemal posed within the German parliament, yes? He also came, and he also posed with the woman who had posed with terrorist organization rags. There are juntaists calling for a coup in the Republic Protests (Cumhuriyet Mitingleri). There are marauders who write on the walls of this city that persecution had started in 1453. In the heart of Istanbul, there are shameless people whistling to the ezan and Mohammed,"

in addition to those who burn Turkish flags, beat up muezzins for preaching the selah prayer, and march on Women's Day (Erdoğan, No. 255).

The opposition was repeatedly insinuated to be in league with vaguely defined foreign powers throughout the campaign. These forces were purportedly behind the assaults on Turkey's foreign exchange, interest rates, and inflation (Erdoğan, No. 253). At times, specific figures such as Netanyahu (both senior and junior) and 'George' (Soros) were mentioned. Erdoğan also suggested that "from 6,500 kilometers away, someone wanted to take over Hagia Sophia" as retribution against Turkey for its economic success (Erdoğan, No. 266).

'Waste management and public cleansing,' an aspect of infrastructure, emerged as a prominent theme in the AKP campaign, comprising 4.08% of the discourse. This issue primarily revolved around the tenure of the CHP in local government and its alleged failure to effectively govern Istanbul, particularly in terms of infrastructure. Erdoğan frequently denigrated the CHP as '3 ç', an abbreviation representing garbage, mud, and pit *(çöp, çamur, çukur),* and occasionally criticized its handling of unplanned construction *(çarpık yapılaşma).* In other instances, he attributed '3 y' to the party *(yolsuzluk, yoksulluk, yasaklar,* sometimes *yokluk* and *yalan):* corruption, poverty, prohibitions, dearth, and lies, respectively (Erdoğan, No. 254). These waste management and public cleansing messages were intended to underscore the perceived corruption and incompetence of the CHP, which was held responsible for Istanbul's dire state prior to 1994 when Erdoğan assumed office as mayor.

6.1.3 Defenses

Only 1.99% of the AKP's messages took a defensive stance. In these instances, Erdoğan addressed criticisms from Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu against the government. During rallies, footage of the CHP chair questioning the government's achievements over seventeen years

was showcased. This served as an opportunity to highlight all the infrastructural developments achieved by the AKP in governance (Erdoğan, No. 265).

Interestingly, the president never directly responded to Kılıçdaroğlu or the opposition's corruption allegations against him, except for addressing the Isle of Man issue, which he brought up in Eyüpsultan and Maltepe. In response to opposition claims about the government's inability to address poverty, Erdoğan countered by asserting that people were queuing in 'prosperity lines' at the sales points of controlled-price goods (Erdoğan, No. 241). Additionally, he refuted accusations of neglecting the construction of cultural venues, claiming instead to have provided a venue for the CHP to announce İmamoğlu's candidacy (Erdoğan, No. 264).

6.2 The opposition campaign in Istanbul

Similar to the AKP, İmamoğlu commenced his campaign in February. While fewer politicians were engaged in this campaign compared to the AKP, they made more frequent appearances on stage. Both the CHP and IYIP chairpersons also made significant contributions, so this section includes their arguments as well.

6.2.1 Positivity

Nearly half of the opposition campaign comprised character messages, with discussions about competence (25.03%) and morality (23.98%) prevailing with overwhelmingly positive connotations. Throughout all his speeches, İmamoğlu emphasized the new leadership style he intended to introduce and practice after his election. He pledged to 'speak nicely' to citizens and treat them 'humbly,' 'morally,' 'not arrogantly,' and 'not sullenly but with a smile' (İmamoğlu, No. 64). İmamoğlu characterized himself as 'young,' 'dynamic,' 'hardworking,' 'patient,' part of the 'new generation,' and 'fair,' emphasizing his inclusive approach of embracing everyone, fostering 'peace and love.' He referred to himself as the 'brother' *(abi)* to the people (İmamoğlu, No. 84) and their 'son,' a 'true friend' and 'true comrade,' who 'respectfully listens to the nation,' drawing his morality from Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (İmamoğlu, No. 77).

He often referenced his family life, particularly highlighting female family members. Dilek İmamoğlu, his wife, played an active role in the campaign, appearing in videos and on stage alongside the candidate. In his speeches, İmamoğlu frequently

mentioned his daughter Beren (İmamoğlu, No. 68) and his mother, who instilled in him the value of honesty (İmamoğlu, No. 79). He also evoked his rural upbringing when discussing issues such as poverty (İmamoğlu, No. 64), and made promises 'as a villager' in rural areas on the outskirts of Istanbul, including Çatalca and Şile (İmamoğlu, No. 77). Similar to Erdoğan, he emphasized his connection to the districts he visited, such as Kadıköy, Bahçelievler, Güngören, and Üsküdar.

İmamoğlu was eager to demonstrate his closeness to the people, hence his frequent use of moralizing language. He often spoke from a smaller podium alongside his wife, engaging with the audience by shaking hands. He consistently commenced his speeches with compliments to the residents of the district, praising them as beautiful and precious, as exemplified in the district of Çatalca.

> "Now, inside [backstage], they told me, 'My Mayor, put on your coat. It is cold.' I said there was no need. You really warmed me up right now; I need to remove my jacket. You are so warm, the beauty in your hearts, you are so nice! Thank you, and health to your hearts. Your eyes are shining, which is the most beautiful thing in this world for me!" (İmamoğlu, No. 77).

İmamoğlu's intention, as highlighted by Özkan (2019), was to depolarize the public and foster unity in his campaign. He articulated his vision by proclaiming, 'We are all together regardless of lifestyle, attitude, and clothing. We are one, citizens of the same country, members of this nation', resonating with the principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (İmamoğlu, No. 66). Furthermore, İmamoğlu emphasized the shared patriotism among the 16 million inhabitants of Istanbul, who cherish 'their nation, their land, and the city, their neighbor, their children, and the green (nature)' (İmamoğlu, No. 66). Concurrently, at a rally, he pledged to uphold peace and ensure that all individuals could live freely, irrespective of their values and religious beliefs. İmamoğlu frequently invoked Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a guiding figure in his speeches, highlighting him as the epitome of leadership to emulate (İmamoğlu, No. 77). He kept a picture of Atatürk in his office, capturing a moment where Atatürk listened to a villager's distress with compassion and empathy, pledging to adopt a similar approach in his interactions with citizens. İmamoğlu recounted, "[A] villager's distress, with his eyes smiling and looking with all his sensitivity, with his deep blue eyes… I will look at my citizen with that spirit and listen to my citizen with that spirit" (İmamoğlu, No. 77).

In addition, non-economic demographic groups, comprising 4.51% of the campaign focus, including women, children, and youths, emerged as a prominent policy focus in the campaign. İmamoğlu viewed these groups as representing the voice of 'the people' and pledged to address the social injustices they faced.

> "Once I equalized Ahmed from Kadıköy, Rabia from Ümraniye, Gülşen from Sultanbeyli, Ayşe from Bakırköy, Ahmet from Bağcılar, then I am the best mayor of this city. These children will be equal under all circumstances…" (İmamoğlu, No. 109)

These vulnerable social groups were the target of most of İmamoğlu's proposed welfare policies, accounting for 1.95% of all campaign messages (İmamoğlu, No. 69). His policy proposals included initiatives such as free public transport for children and mothers, increased availability of creches and kindergartens, free courses tailored for women, as well as subsidized milk and other essential goods for families.

Labor and unemployment issues were prominent in İmamoğlu's campaign, constituting 2.94% of his messages, reflecting the public's concerns (İmamoğlu, No. 69). While the government focused on security matters, İmamoğlu pledged to address unemployment by creating job opportunities in Istanbul and providing social assistance to those in need. He humorously recounted a debate with his opponent, Yıldırım, regarding job creation promises, which resonated with the audience (İmamoğlu, No. 69). In response to Yıldırım's dismissal of İmamoğlu's job creation targets, İmamoğlu humorously increased his promise, leading to an exchange where Yıldırım offered an even higher figure, generating laughter from the audience.

Traffic and transportation emerged as a significant concern, comprising 3.82% of the opposition's campaign messages (İmamoğlu, No. 347). İmamoğlu underscored this issue by organizing a thematic conference on traffic management in Istanbul, emphasizing its importance to the city's residents (İmamoğlu, No. 347). He criticized the government's handling of transportation infrastructure, promising to prioritize the completion of unfinished metro lines during his tenure as mayor (İmamoğlu, No. 70; 73).

6.2.2 Negativity

When attacking, the opposition refrained from direct references to government members, framing anti-elitism as a moral issue. Notably, Erdoğan's name appeared sparingly in the opposition campaign, referred to as 'president' nineteen times. Meral Akşener, adopting a

defensive stance, addressed him as 'Recep' in three instances, while in Çekmeköy, she criticized 'Mr. Tayyip' for having his picture displayed on the streets instead of those of actual candidates (Akşener, No. 86). Yıldırım garnered attention in the campaign, mentioned eleven times, with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu referring to him as 'Mr. Binali' four times. İmamoğlu strategically referred to his opponent as 'rival' *(rakip)* thirteen times, a term also used by his campaign manager (Özkan, 2019). He frequently criticized Yıldırım for allegedly lacking awareness of mayoral responsibilities and accused him of mimicking his agenda, a sentiment reiterated at rallies.

İmamoğlu's campaign rhetoric rarely singled out the AKP, preferring to address the party or government using plural verbs instead. He attributed various shortcomings to the government, such as 'forgetting about citizens', 'arrogance,' and 'lack of productivity.' Moreover, he criticized the AKP for exacerbating polarization by labeling opposition voters as 'marauders in the old days, and terrorists today' (İmamoğlu, No. 70). He cautioned against affective polarization, urging the government to refrain from divisive rhetoric and promising not to discriminate against individuals based on their political affiliation (İmamoğlu, No. 63, No. 91).

While occasionally faulting the media for spreading misinformation, İmamoğlu predominantly avoided direct attacks on the government. Urban development emerged as a significant issue in the opposition's discourse, with İmamoğlu highlighting problems related to urban planning and registration, attributing them to government partisanship (İmamoğlu, No. 87). Labor issues, including unemployment, were occasionally addressed negatively, with İmamoğlu accusing the government of growing insensitive to people's problems (İmamoğlu, No. 87). Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu criticized the AKP's economic policies, accusing them of diverting attention from economic issues by emphasizing sovereignty and survival while living in a palace *(saray)* (Kılıçdaroğlu, No. 90).

References to democracy and democratic performance were prominent in the opposition's rhetoric, serving as leverage against the government. İmamoğlu urged the government to uphold democratic principles, secure local elections, and respect the people's will, emphasizing the importance of statesmanship and urging them to focus on governance rather than attacking the opposition (İmamoğlu, No. 88, No. 106, No. 107). While supporting roles, Kılıçdaroğlu and Akşener regularly criticized the government for authoritarian tendencies.

10.2.3 Defenses

In contrast to the overall low defensive tone of opposition messages at 1.38%, Meral Akşener stood out with a defensive rate of 10.20%, compared to İmamoğlu and Kılıçdaroğlu's 1.27% and 1.13%, respectively. While both Akşener and Kılıçdaroğlu rebutted the government's accusations of the opposition's alignment with terrorists, Akşener went further, condemning Erdoğan's disrespectful treatment of herself and Kılıçdaroğlu (Akşener, No. 112).

Occasionally, İmamoğlu addressed allegations of partisan dismissal of municipal employees (İmamoğlu, No. 66) and mismanagement of municipal resources if elected (İmamoğlu, No. 85). Although infrequent, he expressed outrage over media reports suggesting secret negotiations with the pro-Kurdish HDP, yet he never responded to accusations of alignment with terrorist organizations. İmamoğlu addressed these issues in speeches delivered in Sarıyer, Bahçelievler, Sultangazi, and Üsküdar, attributing the dissemination of misinformation to the media.

6.3 The government campaign in Budapest

In a departure from conventional campaign dynamics, the Fidesz campaign notably lacked a singular protagonist. As discussed in prior sections, this strategic decision stemmed from the government's readiness for a potential electoral setback. Simultaneously, it aimed to avoid broad public mobilization, opting for targeted outreach to specific segments instead. Consequently, the campaign operated under a highly centralized structure, featuring participation from various politicians across all levels of governance. Interestingly, while Fidesz sought to diminish the partisan identity of Tarlós and kept Orbán at arm's length, it heavily emphasized the government's track record and stressed the importance of maintaining favorable relations with it.

6.3.1 Positivity

Fidesz's most salient issue was competence, constituting 30.90% of their overall messaging, with morality following closely at 10.97%. Notably, while Fidesz predominantly highlighted the opposition's immorality over its virtues, it equally emphasized its own competence alongside the incompetence of its rivals. Positive messaging from Fidesz primarily stemmed from Viktor Orbán's singular appearance at the party's annual congress,

where he lauded Fidesz's performance in the May European Parliament election and rallied support for the impending local ballot. Orbán's speech, replete with accolades for Fidesz's organizational prowess and resolute agenda, underscored the party's dominance in domestic politics and its staunch defense against external interference.

Orbán exalted Fidesz as 'the greatest, strongest, and the only party capable of governing,' epitomizing a sense of 'comradeship' *(bajtársiasság)* that buoyed their standing while casting the liberal left into obscurity. He extolled the party's robust organization and unwavering agenda, attributing its unparalleled success in domestic politics to these factors. Fidesz's formidable stature, Orbán asserted, compelled international actors to retreat, symbolized by their figurative departure 'covered with plaster from the walls of Buda Castle' (Orbán, No. 34), thereby safeguarding the will of the people against foreign influence.

Like the AKP candidate, István Tarlós refrained from delivering multiple speeches, with other party members occasionally advocating for him in press briefings and interviews. Paradoxically, while emphasizing that Tarlós was not affiliated with Fidesz, Máté Kocsis contended that he had consistently collaborated with the government. This alignment led Kocsis to posit that Tarlós could effectively 'set Budapest in order' after enduring years of left-liberal governance (Kocsis, No. 2). Establishing strong ties with the government remained pivotal for Fidesz, evident in their campaign's emphasis on centralization, which constituted 5.63% of their messaging. Despite criticism from observers and scholars, Fidesz incorporated this strategy into their campaign, asserting that municipalities reliant on Fidesz mayors could secure funding vital for their development.

Additionally, 2.25% of the government's messages focused on technology and infrastructure, marking it their most positively received issue. The inauguration ceremonies for roads on the outskirts of Budapest served as tangible evidence of the successful collaboration between districts and the central government. Participants, including district mayors and Kristóf Szatmáry, vice-chairman of the Enterprise Development Committee, underscored the mayors' competency in fostering development within their districts, securing funding for construction projects, and their resilience in navigating legal obstacles. Expressing gratitude, the mayors acknowledged the government's support for infrastructural advancements in areas long neglected under the previous administration of Budapest mayor Gábor Demszky, attributed to what they referred to as 'the left-liberal government,' and even prior to that, since 1950 (Szatmáry, No. 54).

Labor was among the government's positive messages, albeit constituting a small fragment of their communication. KDNP spokesperson Lőrinc Nacsa highlighted the government's achievements in job creation. He contended that the previous MSZP government had fallen short in generating employment opportunities, resulting in widespread reliance on unemployment benefits. Nacsa emphasized that since 2010, Fidesz had facilitated the creation of 850,000 jobs, which also encompassed public work. (Notably, public work entailed a monthly net wage of approximately 185 USD in 2019.) During the congress, a town mayor from one of the economically disadvantaged counties underscored the transformation of public employment into a source of pride, attributing it to the government's initiatives (Nagy-Majdon, No. 44).

6.3.2 Negativity

The campaign's central theme, highlighting the irreconcilable opposition between war and peace, vividly illustrates Fidesz's Manichaean worldview. In stark contrast to the Istanbul campaign, where the elite often remained unnamed, Fidesz consistently targeted specific individuals in their speeches. While members of Fidesz launched 111 attacks on the opposition as a whole, they directly addressed Karácsony a staggering 157 times. Interestingly, the government referred to itself 105 times, but its candidate, Tarlós, was mentioned only 30 times. George Soros, perceived as the mastermind behind the migration crisis, was a subject of discussion 23 times throughout the campaign. In contrast to the Istanbul dynamic, Fidesz frequently focused on Karácsony, branding him as 'unfit' *(alkalmatlan)* in 53 instances. As Fidesz's campaign manager suggested, Karácsony was 'even unfit for (his name) Gergely,' hence his nickname, Geri (Kósa, No. 42).

Key figures in the campaign, including campaign manager Lajos Kósa, parliamentary faction leader Máté Kocsis, spokesman Zsigmond Barna Pál, and members of Fidelitas, the party's youth organization, launched concerted attacks on Karácsony's competence and morality. Notably, Fidelitas was associated with overseeing the *Budapest Is No Circus* campaign, which portrayed Tarlós's challengers as frivolous, clownish figures unfit for the responsibilities of city governance.

Kósa, Fidesz's vice-chairman and campaign manager, kicked off the campaign on August 24, 2019, with a bold declaration of Fidesz’s imminent ‘landslide triumph.’ He wasted no time in criticizing the opposition for their failure to form an all-party alliance in

any major municipality, branding their electoral prospects as destined for ‘complete and utter failure.’ Similar to the atmosphere in Istanbul, the stakes were high, with the opposition harboring aspirations to ‘overthrow the Orbán regime.’ Kósa drew a sharp contrast between the opposition and the ruling party, invoking symbolism associated with war and peace.

> “We are on the side of building and development that can be reached by not war but cooperation. The road to building and development is definitely not waging war against the government, which is obviously in office until 2022, but cooperating with it in a certain way. Thus, on one side: discord and hatred, and on the other side: building, growth, and development” (Kósa, No. 1).

Máté Kocsis, the parliamentary faction leader, launched scathing attacks on Karácsony's competence and integrity, portraying the opposition as corrupt. He branded Karácsony as 'unfit for Budapest mayor' (Kocsis, No. 10), citing alleged deficiencies in his district achievements and punctuality. According to Kocsis, Karácsony was incapable of fulfilling his duties, often tardy to Budapest general assemblies, and labeled him a liar and a 'toe dipper' *(nyámnyila),* evading accountability to voters. During the party's annual congress, Kocsis escalated his critique, labeling the opposition as 'snaking snakes' who employed provocation, play-acting, and obscenity in Parliament to conceal their intellectual shortcomings and incompetence. He accused them of prioritizing political gain over genuine governance and public welfare (Kocsis, No. 38).

Kocsis also played a crucial role in framing the opposition for corruption, particularly targeting their District 8 campaign team. He alleged that they unlawfully mishandled electoral data obtained through unauthorized means, implicating Karácsony in the process. Expressing concerns about widespread electoral misconduct, Kocsis called for police intervention (Kocsis, No. 16, 2016). Following Fidesz's appeal, the Municipal Electoral Office ruled in favor of election infringement. Subsequently, the police searched the opposition campaign office in District 8, interrogating team members. However, the investigation was abruptly discontinued on October 3 without any explanation provided. Kocsis later derided the mayor of Dialogue, criticizing his convoluted arguments and branding him as a 'lunkhead' *('a Párbeszéd pancser polgármestere')* (Kocsis, No. 32).

Another salient argument put forth by Fidesz was governmental efficiency, comprising 4.16% of their campaign messaging. Figures like MP Máté Kocsis, Budapest spokesperson Barna Pál Zsigmond, and Zoltán Rozgonyi, the candidate for District 14

(Karácsony's district), contended that the municipality teetered on the brink of bankruptcy due to Karácsony's alleged mismanagement and lack of transparency (Zsigmond, No. 61).

This issue served as a distraction from another scandal unfolding in the district. In February 2019, an independent outlet aired a documentary exposing extensive corruption in the parking management systems of several Budapest districts, including District 14 (Ács et al., 2019), where Karácsony served as the incumbent mayor. The report implicated inter-party corruption, with both Fidesz and MSZP supporting an applicant with an unusually high bid in the public procurement process. Notably, Karácsony abstained from the vote in the council (Czinkóczi, 2019), thus escaping direct accusations of corruption by Fidesz, who instead focused on the inefficiency narrative.

The most salient policy issues for the government encompassed sovereignty and survival, constituting 7.05% of all their campaign messages. In contrast, the EU was presented as an ally of the Hungarian opposition, particularly in resettling immigrants (3.82%) within municipalities. According to the narrative of the Stop Soros campaign, Fidesz asserted that migrants received assistance from George Soros and his purported 'pseudo-civil human trafficking organizations' (Halász, No. 6, 2019), which facilitated their transportation to and within the EU. Allegations were made that Soros held meetings with Frans Timmermans, the first vice-president of the European Commission, to instruct him on the details of the so-called Soros Plan. Karácsony, who visited Brussels during the campaign, was accused of implementing the Soros Plan against the will of the people and capitulating to the EU's immigration quota policy (Deutsch, No. 37).

Conversely, the opposition was accused of undermining sovereignty on another front. Former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and his wife, Klára Dobrev, who served as vice president of the European Parliament, were alleged to have conspired with the EU to dismantle the border fence erected by Fidesz amid the immigration crisis (Böröcz, No. 4, 2019). Thus, the true significance of the local election was portrayed as preventing 'pro-immigration mayors' from assuming control of municipalities, as this was deemed to jeopardize 'the peace and security of the people' by forcibly settling immigrants against their will (Halász, No. 19).

6.3.3 Defenses

The most defensive stance was adopted by the incumbent, István Tarlós, who delivered a single speech during the campaign. On the eve of the election, he systematically refuted all accusations levied by the opposition. Emphasizing his status as an independent politician, Tarlós asserted his readiness to oppose the government whenever his convictions dictated. He particularly bristled at corruption allegations related to metro line M3. The opposition had raised concerns regarding a dubious public procurement allegedly involving the family of a Budapest vice-mayor with ties to Russia, alongside insinuations of customs fraud. Tarlós vehemently rejected these accusations, asserting his innocence and integrity in the face of such claims.

6.4 The opposition campaign in Budapest

Despite delivering 84 speeches throughout the campaign, Karácsony consistently integrated other opposition members into his addresses, with a total of 94 appearances on camera. However, none achieved a level of visibility comparable to Karácsony's. This section, akin to the previous one, delineates the distribution of roles among opposition figures.

6.4.1 Positivity

Competence emerged as a significant theme in the opposition campaign, comprising 22.83% of all opposition messages. A substantial majority, 70.06%, of these messages conveyed a positive tone, emphasizing district candidates' expertise and local roots. Echoing the government's narrative, they highlighted their swift collection of candidate recommendations, which Karácsony interpreted as reflecting the people's desire for change (Karácsony, No. 117).

Karácsony's inaugural press briefing set the tone, promising to deliver "the message of change" across every corner of the city. Other campaigners echoed this sentiment, speaking of an "alliance of change" and positioning Karácsony as the embodiment of "freedom, solidarity, and a new moral and cultural purity that Budapest has been lacking, especially in recent weeks" (Kunhalmi, No. 230).

The opposition frequently appealed to the people throughout their campaign, employing populist slogans that resonated in their speeches. Key among these were *"Budapest belongs to everyone" (Budapest mindenkié), "The city is yours" (Tiéd a város),*

"Let's take back Budapest" (Vegyük vissza Budapestet!), and *"We will restore Budapesters' self-esteem" (Visszaszerezzük a budapestiek önbizalmát).* Karácsony emphasized the need to shift from "the people in power to the power of the people" (Karácsony, No. 314). This appeal to the populace comprised 3.18% of opposition messages.

Democracy, representing the performance of the political system, emerged as the second most prominent policy issue in the campaign, accounting for 6.89% of discussions. References to freedom and democracy, encompassing human rights, constitutionalism, transparency, and deliberation, constituted 11.08% of opposition cues. These messages underscored the democratic aspect of popular sovereignty, highlighting concerns about illiberalism and advocating for inclusive and corrective policies.

Within this framework, the opposition conceptualized Budapest as a 'city-state,' envisioned as an 'island of freedom, solidarity, and Europeanness.' Karácsony articulated that the election's essence lay in whether citizens could 'reclaim their self-determination over their municipality, district, and capital to lead better lives' (Karácsony, No. 129) or continue as the government's 'serfs in a fief' (Karácsony, No. 215). Thus, the Budapest election was framed as a battle for popular sovereignty, focusing on reclaiming democracy rather than addressing a security threat.

Furthermore, the opposition proposed various strategies to enhance participatory democracy, including deliberation and citizen engagement in budgetary planning. They advocated for a redefinition of municipal governance and politics (Karácsony, No. 181) and aimed to normalize politics and public life (Karácsony, No. 194). They argued that politics should be synonymous with community service (Karácsony, No. 150) and envisioned Budapest as a catalyst for broader political transformation in the country (Kálmán, No. 220). Karácsony outlined these principles in his program speech.

> "[P]olitics is the conduct of our public affairs. In this sense, the *polis,* the city-state in which we live together, will become our shared home when everyone (of course, according to their own responsibilities) makes a bit of a decision. And the city managers' duty is to open the gates when people want to say their opinion and to demolish those walls that divide politicians from the people" (Karácsony, No. 222).

Welfare emerged as the second most significant political issue, comprising 7.80% of all messages in the Budapest election campaign. The opposition criticized Fidesz for its purported neglect of healthcare, contrasting it with excessive spending on stadiums. In response, they pledged to prioritize healthcare development at the municipal level, focusing

on enhancing outpatient services and general practices (Karácsony, No. 131). Additionally, they addressed the pressing issue of affordable housing, proposing to secure EU funds directly to tackle the housing crisis. Their commitments extended to aiding individuals experiencing homelessness and those economically vulnerable, with a promise to 're-weave the social safety net' (Karácsony, No. 127).

Remarkably, the Budapest opposition dedicated more attention to welfare issues than moral concerns. Nonetheless, 7.3% of their messaging conveyed moral cues, with over half aimed at depolarization. While they frequently criticized Fidesz politicians for dishonesty and mudslinging, they also lauded each other for their personal qualities. This strategy aimed to reassure the public of the alliance's integrity, a departure from previous years where opposition feuds were evident. Messages about the political alliance constituted 4.19%, with mobilization cues making up 3.74% of their speeches.

In alignment with Karácsony's party ideology and the demands of Budapesters, green policies gained prominence, accounting for 3.63% of discussions. This included commitments to develop green areas, forests, riverbanks, and parks in the capital, along with protests against the government's perceived failure to comply with UN climate emergency measures. Karácsony frequently addressed climate change and its health implications, proposing initiatives to address these issues at the municipal level, given the national government's alleged neglect (Karácsony, No. 182).

6.4.2 Negativity

The opposition's anti-elitist stance spared no one from the national establishment, targeting Fidesz, Tarlós, Orbán, and even Orbán's family. Orbán was mentioned 98 times, Tarlós 119 times, and the government 173 times. References to Fidesz and its adjective form appeared 300 times throughout the campaign. Additionally, the allied opposition was mentioned 191 times, with Karácsony receiving 126 mentions.

Political corruption emerged as one of the most prominent opposition messages, comprising 6.60% of their discourse. In lieu of direct accusations of corruption, they frequently highlighted concerns about governmental inefficiency, which accounted for 3.31% of their messaging. The ruling party was criticized for corrupting democracy and

tarnishing politics with dirty election campaigns, as articulated by Karácsony, who remarked on Fidesz's understanding of governance.

> "The election should not be the race of visions, principles, programs, experience, and skills, but a competition in who can lie better, who can batter someone better, who can steal better. They are invincible in such a race. They would be invincible even if we tried to compete with them, but believe me, we are not trying… The world they represent is (about) vanquishing your enemy, lie about them, anything" (Karácsony, No. 314).

They frequently criticized Fidesz's illiberal tendencies, particularly targeting the System of National Cooperation (NER), Viktor Orbán's term for the political system established after 2010. They argued that the NER was neither national nor cooperative, emphasizing its association with corruption, cynicism, manipulation, and misinformation. The goal was to "liberate" Budapest from the grip of the NER, as expressed by Karácsony. In this vein, on September 8, Karácsony and members of Momentum launched the Stadium Stop campaign, highlighting the excessive expenditure on stadium construction at the expense of essential sectors like healthcare. Despite the municipality's inability to influence the central budget or the government's stadium-building plans, this issue symbolized Fidesz's perceived corruption and misplaced priorities.

Many of the opposition's criticisms targeted István Tarlós, portraying him as an aged and worn-out politician who lacked networking skills (Karácsony, No. 191) while representing conservative and anti-development values. However, their primary accusation was his perceived role in relinquishing municipal autonomy to the central government (Barabás, No. 118), given Fidesz's actions of curtailing Budapest's rights and nationalizing its schools and hospitals without encountering any significant resistance from Tarlós. They frequently lambasted the mayor personally, alleging that he spoke disrespectfully and sourly about his opponents (Barabás, No. 118). MSZP co-chair Ágnes Kunhalmi even argued that he was

> "[A]rrogant, intoxicated by the conceit of power…, who from anger, in particular, from fear and helplessness yells in a head voice at anyone, who wants to reckon him for what he has done in the past ten years" (Kunhalmi, No. 212).

Perhaps the harshest attack against Tarlós was the exhibition of a giant-sized puppet in downtown Budapest. The figure depicted Viktor Orbán holding a puppet Tarlós in his hand, symbolizing his lack of autonomy from the central government. Hence, they termed him a 'puppet' or 'steward' of the government. Though the opposition did not accuse Tarlós of

corruption directly, they attacked his vice-mayor and her husband of questionable business interests. They implied that Tarlós had looked the other way from corruption, and Dialogue spokesman Richárd Barabás delivered a Russian cream torte as a gift to the City Hall (Barabás, No. 118).

6.4.3 Defenses

One of the critical moments during the campaign occurred when a voice recording featuring Karácsony was leaked on September 26. In this recording, Karácsony discussed the prospects of oppositional mayoral candidates and delved into the topic of corruption in District 14, where he held the position of incumbent mayor. He expressed frustration over his perceived lack of influence on significant political matters, suggesting that much of the political control lay in the hands of Csaba Tóth, the district's MP from MSZP. Tóth, despite being an ally of Karácsony, allegedly pressured him to turn a blind eye to corruption and reportedly made threats against him and his family on multiple occasions. Karácsony attributed the leak to the ruling party's alleged use of secret service techniques to spy on him, purportedly out of fear of losing the election to him. In response, the opposition organized a joint press conference to reassure the public of their unwavering support for their candidate.

In the face of scandals and accusations, the opposition adopted a strategy of counterattack. This included addressing the police investigation against their campaign team in District 8 and responding to allegations of sexual harassment involving their District 11 candidate, which emerged just two weeks before the election. Rather than directly refuting these accusations, they chose to condemn the government for what they perceived as authoritarian tactics.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented four in-depth qualitative accounts of government and opposition campaigns leading to the 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest. The qualitative data was systematically and rigorously generated during the coding process of conducting quantitative content analysis. The aim of this chapter is to showcase the content of parties' messages rather than to provide a systematic comparison. This approach completes the upcoming quantitative analyses and supports the findings presented later.

Through excerpts from original speeches and translations, this chapter offered insight into campaigning in countries where language barriers often pose challenges for assessment. Major issues were categorized under campaign tones, indicating in- and out-party group construction in elite rhetoric.

Notably, positive issues were more prevalent in the opposition's rhetoric, particularly in İmamoğlu's campaign, while negativity was more apparent in government rhetoric, particularly in the case of Fidesz. I demonstrated the prevalence of messages related to popular sovereignty and security in government campaigns, contrasting with appeals to the people and morality in the AKP's campaign. It is noteworthy that such references were rare in Fidesz's rhetoric but also accumulated in Prime Minister Orbán's speeches, who appeared to give a single speech during the campaign. Governments commonly referenced their achievements in infrastructure, with the AKP exhibiting more systematic messaging in this regard. In contrast to the Turkish government, Fidesz occasionally emphasized its success in stabilizing the economy and creating employment post-2010.

However, their most prominent message remains an alleged elite conspiracy against Turkey and Hungary's sovereignty. The AKP argued that the opposition conspired with state-designated terrorist organizations, such as the PKK, thereby jeopardizing Turkey's sovereignty. Additionally, the president occasionally suggested that foreign powers were responsible for the country's economic grievances, albeit in vague terms. Contrary to this, Fidesz named the alleged perpetrators behind a conspiracy against Hungarian sovereignty. They implicated a collusion between the domestic opposition and the EU elites, mediated by George Soros. This inter-elite collusion aimed nothing but to undermine sovereignty by circumventing Hungarians' expressed will and settling immigrants in municipalities.

Opposition campaigns had different atmospheres, though their major issues centered around welfare. The Istanbul opposition addressed unemployment and vulnerable social groups like women and children due to soaring unemployment and living costs. In Budapest, the opposition focused on healthcare and housing in response to increased discontent concerning welfare services. İmamoğlu's use of moral language was pronounced, contrasting with Karácsony's campaign, which emphasized the corrective aspect of democracy and the opposition's plans to reinvigorate democratic practices in the capital. The most significant contrast lay in the Budapest opposition's direct attacks against the

government, particularly regarding corruption and autocratization. These messages were part of a strategic plan to unite opposition voters and polarize them against the government.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated the marginality of defense in election rhetoric within these contexts. While functional theory consistently finds this the least significant of tones in the US and the UK (e.g., Benoit, 1999; Benoit et al., 2003), political actors seem even more reluctant to refute accusations in non-democratic contexts. As parties attempt to convey different realities to voters, it is essential they try to avoid referring to those of their rivals. Additionally, while governments' lack of defense is consistent with their strategy of avoiding debates, they opposition clearly opted for the same tactic in 2019. While İmamoğlu admittedly avoided reacting to the government not to offend its core constituents (Özkan, 2019), the Budapest opposition conducted counterattacks against the ruling party instead of simply refuting their claims.

Subsequent chapters will delve into the findings of content analysis, including issues, populism, and tone. While this chapter aims to compensate for the loss of rich data that quantification entails and provide insight into the atmosphere of these campaigns, the following chapters will present systematic analyses of campaign rhetoric elements.

Chapter 7

ISSUES IN MAYORAL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

This study's conceptual framework is grounded in the issue salience theory, which suggests that parties compete by promoting different sets of issues during election campaigns (Budge & Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996). Although the theory initially emerged in two-party-system contexts, the mayoral elections in Istanbul and Budapest closely resembled such configurations within multi-party systems. This resemblance arose not only from the first-past-the-post nature of mayoral elections but also from the intense competition between government and top challenger candidates.

In Chapter 2, it was hypothesized that in these contexts, elite confrontations around policy issues would decrease. In illiberal systems like Istanbul and Budapest, policy debates resembling those in consolidated democracies are virtually absent (H1). As ruling parties minimize political contestation across all spheres of politics – or create an uneven playing field (Levitsky & Way, 2010) – elections remain the primary avenues for the opposition to meaningfully challenge incumbents. Consequently, as the stakes of the election increase, populists in power seek to minimize policy debates, which could potentially jeopardize their electoral success. Therefore, in 2019, perhaps the most significant recognition of the opposition in Istanbul and Budapest was that attacking the government's policies was unlikely to ensure victory. In an attempt to sway government voters, the Istanbul opposition recognized that attacking the government's economic policies would alienate core constituents (Özkan, 2019). Similarly, the Budapest opposition understood the impossibility of engaging in policy debates with the government, the lack of opportunity to communicate position cues, and the crucial need to unite opposition voters against the government (Index, 2019).

Despite the divergent contexts, opposition parties found similar solutions. They exploited salient issues over which they claimed credibility and ownership, which the governments had not addressed due to their incumbency constraints. Their most salient issues were also similar. While the Istanbul opposition addressed welfare policies concerning women and children, the most vulnerable demographic groups, it also proposed

employment policies to tackle soaring unemployment in the metropolis. The Budapest opposition built its campaign on welfare as well, albeit focusing on different aspects. Most notably, they addressed the healthcare crisis and proposed local solutions to mitigate the effects of inadequate government policies. Additionally, they addressed green issues, including environmental protection and developing green areas, which were increasingly concerning Budapest residents (see Chapter 5). Consequently, the opposition's issue selection allowed them to run a more positive campaign (H4) and reach out to a broader electorate than the governments.

However, communications from ruling populist parties also resembled one another, as their most salient political issue was the security aspect of popular sovereignty, that is, sovereignty and survival. While populists may be interested in generating a sense of crisis for electoral success (Moffitt, 2015), there is reason to believe that, like any political party, they are also constrained by their incumbency. Parties' issue reputation is dynamic, and their performance in office impacts voters' assessment of their competence and credibility (Petrocik, 1996; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008). Hence, during times of soaring unemployment due to poor economic policies, the AKP could not campaign based on sound economic performance, unlike in its early years in power. Similarly, having been in office for almost a decade, Fidesz could not address the deterioration of healthcare, as it was primarily the result of local government reforms since 2010. There was nothing left but to focus on security, an issue both governments had successfully exploited in the past (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021; Bíró-Nagy, 2022). In this way, with predominance over the mediascape, they hoped to divert the public's attention to an issue of their competence. While pleasing their core constituents with a fundamentally negative issue (Stuckelberger, 2021), they also hoped to sway swing voters (Rohrschneider, 2002).

Perhaps the most important argument of the issue salience literature is that the election context does not automatically translate into votes: parties campaign because they can alter this context by emphasizing different issues, thereby diverting voters' attention (Petrocik, 1996). This chapter offers insights into parties' campaign agendas ahead of the 2019 mayoral elections, demonstrating the prevalence of selective issue emphasis in cases of opposition victories against populist incumbents. It compares campaign agendas in the two cities. Then, it proceeds to compare parties within and across cities for a comprehensive understanding of agenda-setting in the context of opposition victories against populist

incumbents. Additionally, this chapter provides a glimpse of individual-level agenda setting and compares politicians' communication with visualizations. Finally, in the conclusion, the implications of the findings are evaluated.

7.1 Budapest vs. Istanbul

This section compares campaign rhetoric in Istanbul and Budapest, while the following section provides party-level comparisons. Throughout the chapter, Chi-square tests of independence are conducted to evaluate the difference between the frequencies of issue references in campaigns. The Chi-squared test of independence compares the ratio or proportion of specific issue messages to the total number of messages within each campaign (or party's or politician's messages). Therefore, it assesses the percentages of specific issue messages in each campaign rather than comparing the entire distribution of all issues across campaigns. This approach allows for determining whether there are meaningful differences in how parties or politicians conveyed messages and sheds light on distinctions in the overall campaign rhetoric between Istanbul and Budapest.

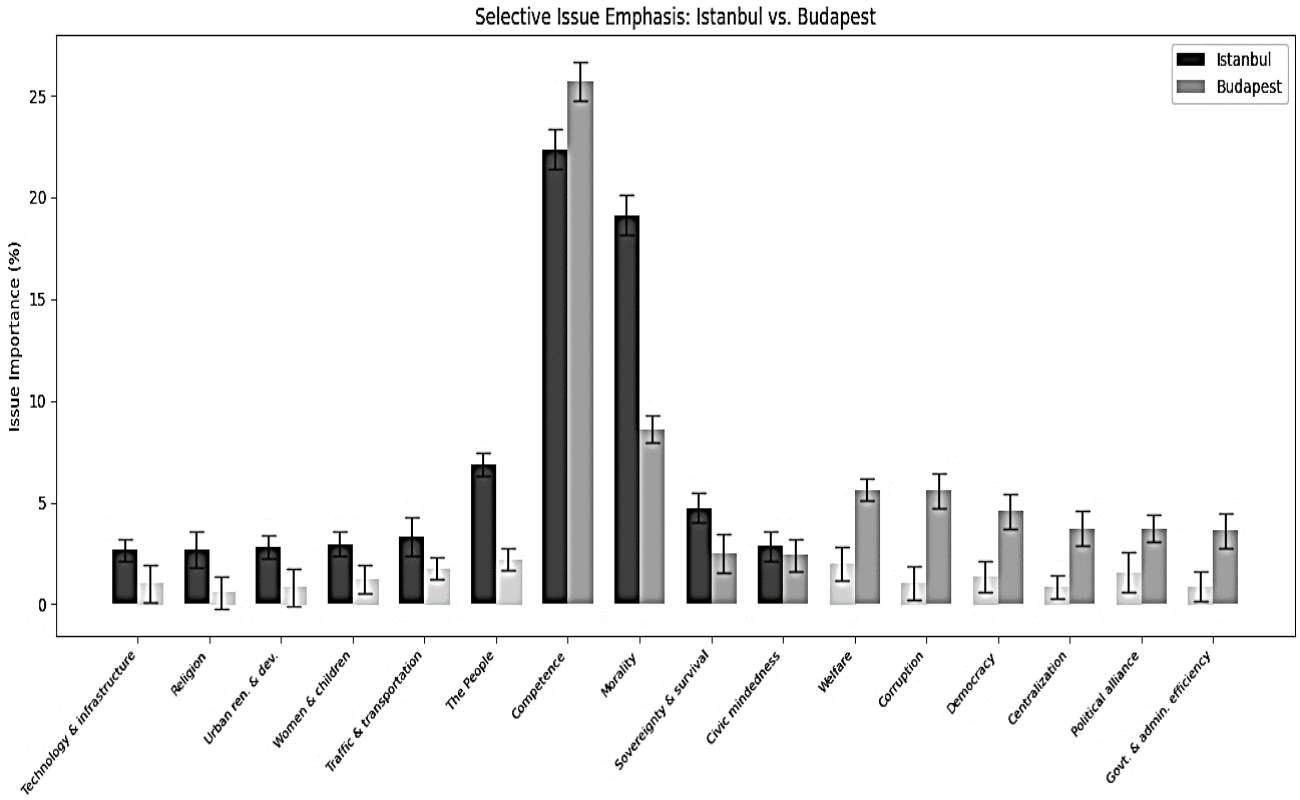


Figure 7.1: Salient issues in Istanbul and Budapest.

Figure 7.1 illustrates the most salient issues in Istanbul and Budapest, with issues predominantly clustered around parties and shared salient themes displayed in the center of the chart. While the chart showcases selective issue emphasis, it also provides cross-references to assess campaigns comprehensively. Even if an issue is salient in one campaign but not in the other, references to it are included and marked with light colors in the chart. This mode of data presentation is repeated throughout the chapter to offer a more accurate understanding of campaigning.

The two cities' election campaigns had only four salient issues in common: competence, morality, sovereignty and survival, and civic-mindedness. The two character issues, competence and morality, comprised the greatest share of campaign messages. Competence was more critical in Budapest (25.68% compared to 22.37%), while morality was more significant in Istanbul (19.13% compared to 8.61%). A Chi-square test of independence with cross-tabulation and a two-proportion z-test confirmed that the difference in morality cues was significant (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,668] = 304.802, $p < .001$, $\phi = - 0.144$). Another pair of Chi-square tests of independence and z-tests showed there was a significant difference in messages about competence (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,668] = 21.174, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.038$).

Regarding non-character issues, sovereignty and survival were shared by governments, while civic-mindedness or mobilization messages predominantly characterized opposition parties. The security aspect of popular sovereignty, that is, sovereignty and survival, was both AKP and Fidesz's most salient political issue, comprising 4.73% of total party cues in Istanbul and 2.49% in Budapest. A Chi-square test of independence and a two-proportion z-test confirmed that the difference in sovereignty and survival was significant (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,668] = 47.588, $p < .001$, $\phi = - 0.057$). Civic-mindedness, on the other hand, reached 2.89% in Istanbul and 2.42% in Budapest. These were mobilization messages exclusively attributed to the opposition in Budapest, while in Istanbul, the opposition encouraged citizens to vote more often than the government. Regarding mobilization messages, the same test showed there was no significant difference between the Istanbul and Budapest campaigns (Chi-square test of independence: χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,668] = 2.480, $p = .115$, $\phi = - 0.013$).

A striking difference between the two campaigns is the emphasis on the people in Istanbul, contrasted with the salience of political corruption in the Budapest campaign,

suggesting that parties emphasized different aspects of populism in 2019. Politicians in Istanbul often appealed directly to the people (6.88%), a tactic less common in Budapest (2.21%), as confirmed by a Chi-square test of independence with cross-tabulation and a two-proportion z-test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,668] = 159.582, $p < .001$, $\phi = -0.104$). One plausible explanation for this difference lies in the dominant campaign event. In Budapest, parties relied on press briefings as a mediated mode of communication. While this method did not necessitate direct appeals to the people, it facilitated more frequent attacks between parties. However, despite Fidesz making virtually no reference to the people, it was the eleventh most salient opposition issue (3.18%), suggesting the opposition's strategic use of appeals regardless of the medium. Their aim was not only to mobilize voters but also to establish credibility and ownership over salient issues despite their lack of experience in government.

7.2 Party-level comparisons

Regarding cross-country comparisons, striking similarities emerge between the governments' rhetoric (Figure 7.2). The AKP and Fidesz shared four salient issues: competence, morality, sovereignty and survival, and nationalism. This finding underscores the strength of the content analysis coding scheme, as it successfully identified the common

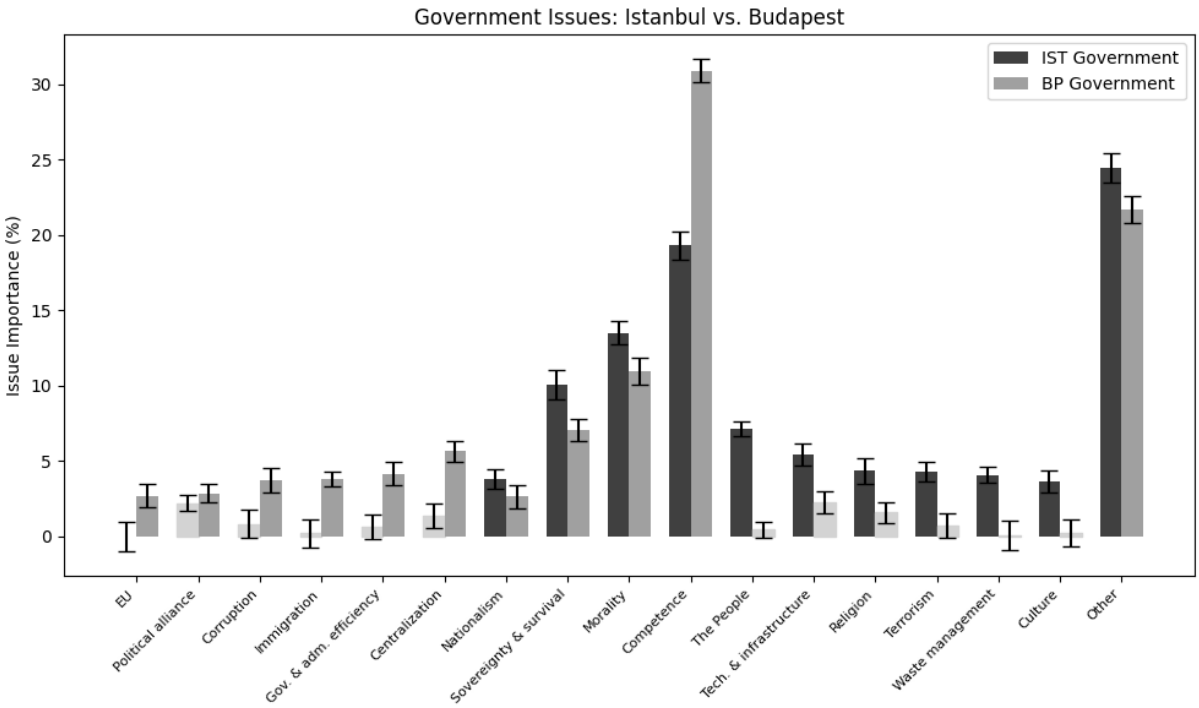


Figure 7.2: Salient issues in government campaigns.

themes in the rhetoric of ruling populists. While both parties prioritized sovereignty and survival as their top non-character issues, the AKP employed these messages more frequently, along with nationalist appeals, as confirmed by two sets of Chi-square tests of independence with cross-tabulation and a two-proportion z-test (sovereignty and survival: χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6156] = 15.013, p < .001, ϕ = - .049; nationalism: χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6156] = 5.453, p < .001, ϕ = - .030).

It is important to note that while the AKP focused on terrorism, Fidesz identified immigration as the major threat to popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, in both campaigns, the opposition was portrayed as the perpetrator of a conspiracy undermining the will of the people. The chart reflects Fidesz's open accusations against the EU and the emerging opposition alliance, alleging collusion to settle immigrants in municipalities while highlighting the opposition's alleged corruption. In contrast, the AKP government appealed directly to the people and emphasized its achievements in developing Istanbul while blaming the opposition for poor infrastructural policies. On the other hand, among Fidesz's salient issues, only centralization was intended to praise the government, emphasizing the importance of electing mayors loyal to the government to secure funds for local development.

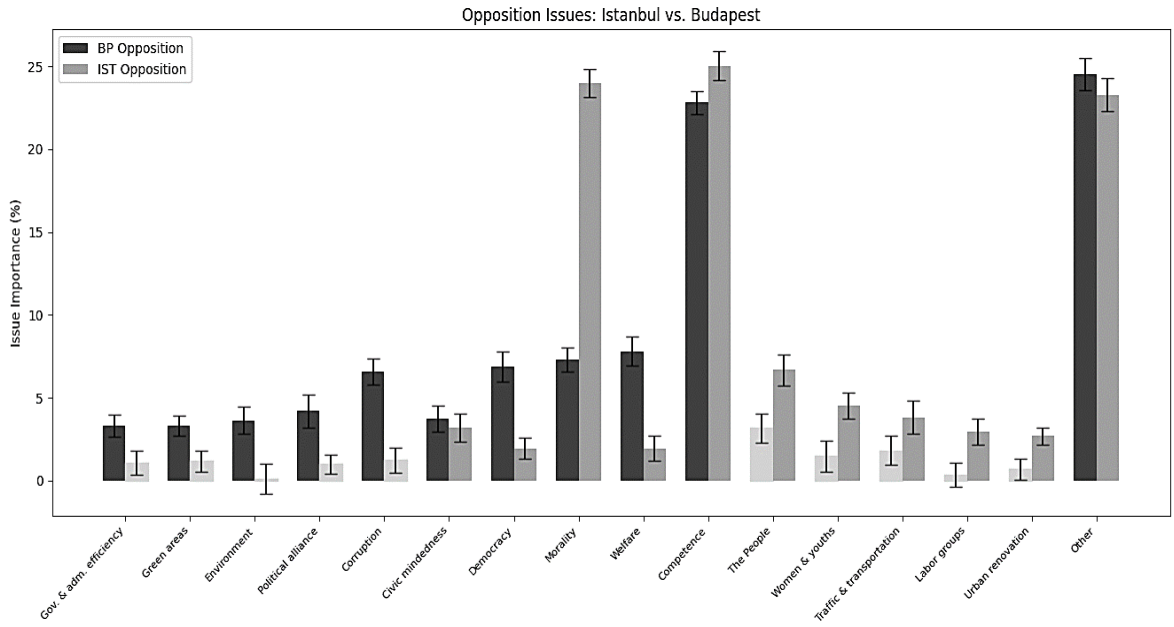


Figure 7.3 Salient issues in opposition campaigns.

Opposition parties in Istanbul and Budapest converged on five key issues: competence, morality, welfare, civic-mindedness, and democracy (Figure 7.3). In addition to

highlighting welfare concerns, both parties discussed democracy and frequently mobilized the public. While competence and morality were central for both, the Istanbul opposition referenced these issues more frequently. Their emphasis on moral messages was particularly noteworthy, comprising 23.98% of their campaign communications, compared to only 7.32% for the Budapest opposition. Conversely, the Budapest opposition addressed democracy, civic-mindedness, and welfare more frequently. Five sets of Chi-square tests of independence, supported by cross-tabulation and two-proportion z-tests, revealed significant differences between the two campaigns regarding messages about morality (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8512] = 419.570, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.222$), welfare (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8512] = 165.988, $p < .001$, $\phi = .140$), democracy (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8512] = 129.368, $p < .001$, $\phi = .123$), competence (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8512] = 5.534, $p = .019$, $\phi = -.025$), and civic-mindedness (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8512] = 1.913, $p = .167$, $\phi = .015$).

The Istanbul opposition focused on specific demographic groups to highlight social inequality and propose welfare reforms while addressing soaring unemployment. In contrast, the Budapest opposition prioritized green issues, influenced not only by environmental concerns but also by the party identity of candidate Karácsony. Another notable disparity between the parties lies in their references to anti-elitism, driven by distinct strategic considerations. While the Istanbul opposition deliberately avoided direct attacks

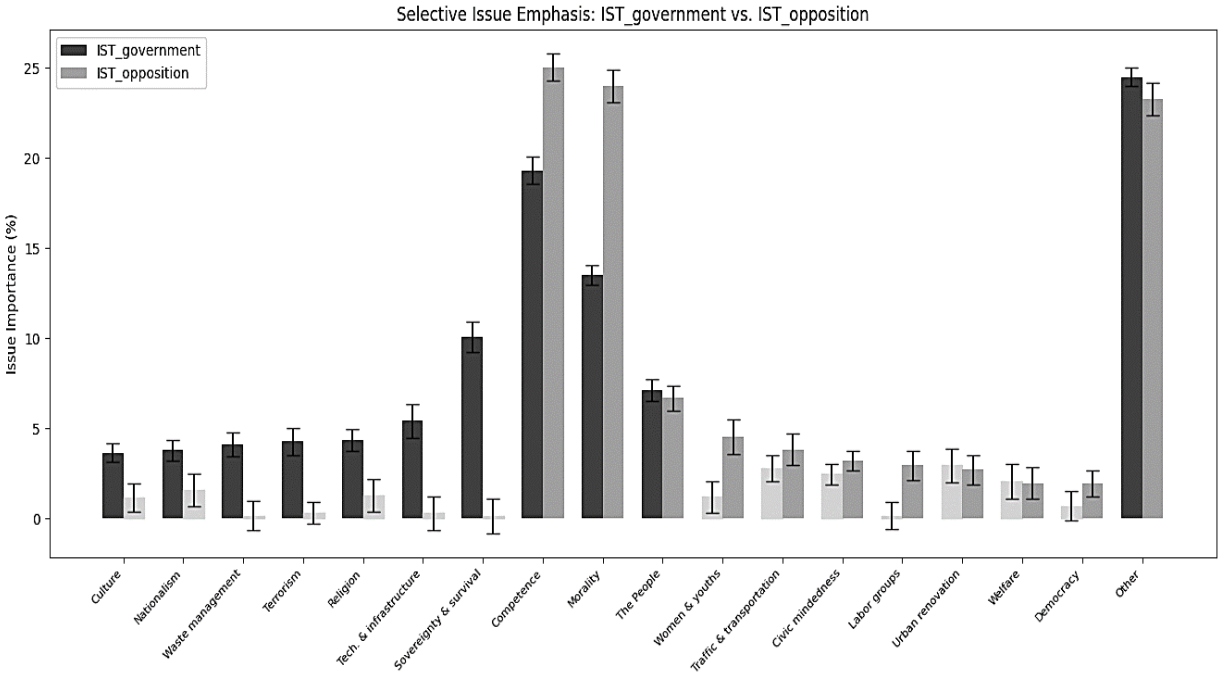


Figure 7.4: Salient issues in party campaigns in Istanbul.

on the government to secure the support of core constituents (Özkan, 2019), the Budapest opposition sought to unite polarized segments of the opposition against a common adversary, the government.

In Istanbul, the government and the opposition shared only three salient issues: competence, morality, and appeals to the people (Figure 7.4). In other words, they shared no conventional policies in their agendas signalling the insignificance of party position cues in this context and conveyed alternative realities to voters. Competence and morality were among the topics they shared, but the opposition talked significantly more about these issues. A Chi-square test of independence with a two-proportion z-test confirmed there was a meaningful difference in cues about competence (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 41.691, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.069$), while another proved that the ratio of moral messages was significantly different in campaigns (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 156.245, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.133$). It is important to note that character issues are communicated at the expense of policy issues. While competence and morality are substantial in the government campaign, almost half of the opposition messages were character references. As the opposition reportedly avoided criticizing government policies (Özkan, 2019), they emphasized especially İmamoğlu's good character, including his morality and competence, and put less emphasis on his policies. A plausible explanation is that character messages aimed to foster his ownership over policy issues, swaying not only opposition but also core government voters.

Additionally, the people were also among the government and opposition's shared salient issues. These messages comprised the people's glorification, complimenting them, and mentions of their wisdom and will. A Chi-square of independence with a two-proportion z-test showed that references to the people were not significantly different in the two campaigns (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = .702, p = .402, ϕ = - .009). Why the people were important for parties equally can be explained by their selection of dominant campaign event. Chapter 5 argued that rallies are central to the AKP's politics and were redefined by President Erdoğan, especially due to events like the Gezi Protests in 2013 and the coup attempt in 2016. In the 2019 election period, the opposition organized smaller and more informal neighborhood meetings, which were also live-streamed online. Thus, not only did they increase their presence on the streets and reach out to people directly, but they also redefined a genre dominated by the government. Appeals to the

people, for both parties, were important to stress their proximity to them and establish credibility over issues.

Besides these three issues, parties focused on different topics. The ruling alliance predominantly discussed sovereignty and survival, followed by infrastructure, religion, terrorism, waste management, nationalism, and culture. Conversely, the opposition exclusively addressed labor, seeking to assert its stance on the most important issue to the public (Chapter 5). Additionally, they placed greater emphasis on transportation and democracy while incorporating more mobilization messages. Although welfare and urban development were not among the top ten AKP priorities, they were discussed as frequently as by the opposition. Due to the opposition's prioritization of character messages at the expense of policies, the government managed to cover more opposition issues than vice versa.

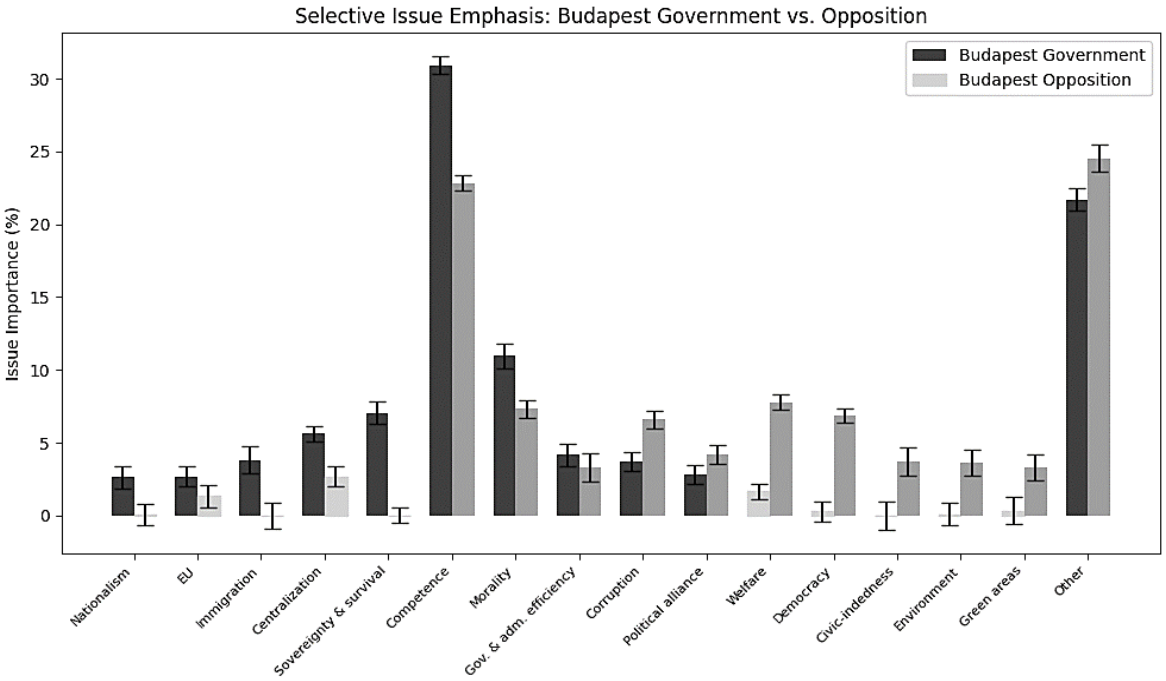


Figure 7.5: Salient issues in party campaigns in Budapest.

In Budapest, parties converged on more issues than in Istanbul, although they did not intend to convey position cues on policies (Figure 7.5). Shared salient issues included competence, morality, political corruption, governmental and administrative efficiency, and political alliance, indicating the prevalence of anti-elitism in election discourse. While character cues were less central to Budapest than in Istanbul, they were salient in both government and opposition campaigns. Here, the government spent more time on competence (30.90%) and

moral messages (10.97%) compared to the challenger (22.83% and 7.32%, respectively). A Chi-square of independence with a two-proportion z-test confirmed the meaningful difference between competence messages in campaigns (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5787] = 45.101, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.088$), and similarly for morality (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5787] = 22.424, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.062$). Hence, the opposition focused more on policy issues. Interestingly, the Hungarian opposition was the only campaign in which welfare (7.80%), i.e., a policy issue, outnumbered moral messages. In addition to welfare, the opposition exclusively covered environmental protection, green areas, democracy, and civic-mindedness (mobilization).

Simultaneously, political corruption, political alliance, and governmental efficiency were salient in both campaigns. The opposition addressed corruption (6.60% vs. 3.72%) and the alliance (4.19% vs. 2.84%) more than the government, while governmental efficiency was discussed less (3.31% vs. 4.16%). Although seemingly distinct policy issues, these themes served as rationales for anti-elitism in parties' rhetoric. Earlier in Chapter 2, corruption was identified as a component of anti-elitism (Section 2.3), with which governmental efficiency moderately correlated ($r = .333$, $p = .017$). Similarly, both parties criticized each other based on governmental efficiency. One of the most salient government messages concerned Karácsony's incompetent financial management of District 14, which they argued bankrupted the municipality. In contrast, the opposition criticized Tarlós for not securing EU funds for the capital. In summary, parties' convergence on specific policy issues does not mean they approached them from diverse ideological angles. On the contrary, these were more zero-sum topics, which parties utilized to fuel anti-elitism against their rivals.

The government's most salient issue was sovereignty and survival. Immigration provided the rationale for the perceived attacks against popular sovereignty. On the other hand, centralization was one of the government's reasons to vote for their candidates. Chapter 4 outlined the importance of municipalities for Fidesz and argued that one of their first steps was to curtail municipal autonomy as of 2010. In the new system of local governments, mayors emerged as local presidents against weak councils, crucially interested in maintaining good ties with the central government to secure vital funds. Hence, electing opposition mayors would mean the loss of resources for municipal development.

7.3 Individual-level comparisons

While conducting one-to-one comparisons in Budapest is nearly impossible due to campaign asymmetries, analyzing politicians' behavior in the Istanbul context can yield meaningful conclusions, given the limited number of participants in this campaign (figures are found under Appendix 5). The central figure in the opposition campaign was İmamoğlu, who can be best compared to Erdoğan, who assumed the leading role in the AKP campaign (Figure A.5.1). The two prominent politicians converged only on issues of competence, morality, and appeals to the people. İmamoğlu surpassed Erdoğan in references to competence and morality. However, both appealed to the people equally, as confirmed by a Chi-square test with cross-tabulation and a two-proportion z-test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 7723] = .035, p = .851, ϕ = - .002).

İmamoğlu exclusively addressed labor and the media. The latter issue is specific to his campaign, as he occasionally criticized the media for spreading false news about his alleged secret alliance with the pro-Kurdish HDP (1.89%). He dominated discussions on topics such as women and children, traffic and transportation, and civic-mindedness but shared the issue of welfare with Erdoğan (2.21 vs. 2.12%). Only the president spoke about sovereignty and survival, terrorism, infrastructure, and waste management. The correlation matrix of issues in Istanbul reveals the dynamics of Erdoğan's discourse. Waste management was highly correlated with infrastructure (r = .729, p < .001), culture (r = .521, p < .001), nationalism (r = .394, p = .004), terrorism (r = .375, p = .007), and issues related to sovereignty and survival (r = .792, p < .001). While surprising at first glance, these correlations were consistent elements of Erdoğan's speeches, where he highlighted areas where the main opposition CHP was deemed incompetent and contrasted them with the AKP's purported superiority in each policy area.

Yıldırım and İmamoğlu (Figure A.5.2) pose a challenge for comparison due to the significant difference in the number of messages from each candidate (179 messages compared to 4038). However, an intriguing observation is that both candidates converged on the issue of traffic and transportation, indicating the recognition of its salience by both campaigns. Similarly, meaningful comparisons between Kılıçdaroğlu and Erdoğan (Figure A.5.3) are hindered by the disparity in their message outputs (444 vs. 3685). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that Kılıçdaroğlu diverged from Erdoğan on more issues than İmamoğlu. Kılıçdaroğlu's campaign was predominantly centered on the economy, addressing issues

such as labor groups (6.98%) and poverty (5.41%), while also touching upon democracy-related concerns (2.25%). In contrast, Erdoğan focused on infrastructure-related issues, sovereignty and survival, terrorism, and culture. Interestingly, Kılıçdaroğlu frequently appealed to religion. A Chi-square test of association with a two-proportion z-test confirmed that both Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu referenced traditional morality in a similar ratio (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4129] = 2.609, p = .106, ϕ = - .025).

Considering the discrepancy in their message volumes, there is notable evidence of İmamoğlu's departure from the core party rhetoric when compared to Kılıçdaroğlu (Figure A.5.4). The party chair addressed labor and related issues more frequently and exhibited a stronger anti-elitist stance compared to the candidate. Kılıçdaroğlu, from his secondary position, politicized corruption, perhaps with less risk than the candidate. Separate Chi-square tests of independence with cross tabulation and a two-proportion z-test confirmed that their disparities in labor groups (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4482] = 26.102, p < .001, ϕ = .076), poverty (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4482] = 35.086, p < .001, ϕ = .088), and corruption (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4482] = 44.715, p < .001, ϕ = .100) appeals were significant.

Due to the campaign asymmetries mentioned earlier, meaningful conclusions can only be drawn from comparing opposition candidates (A.5.5). Competence, morality, welfare, the people, and civic-mindedness ranked among the ten most salient messages for each candidate, with Karácsony scoring higher only in welfare. A series of Chi-square tests of association with z-tests confirmed a significant difference in İmamoğlu and Karácsony's moral messages (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6209] = 298.548, p < .001, ϕ = .219), competence messages (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6209] = 10.296, p = 0.001333, ϕ = .041), appeals to the people (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6209] = 12.087, p < .001, ϕ = .044), and welfare cues (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6209] = 139.546, p < .001, ϕ = - .150). However, they mobilized the electorate equally, as confirmed by another Chi-square test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6209] = .624, p = .430, ϕ = - .010). Finally, labor, women and youths, urban development, and traffic and transportation were of high importance for İmamoğlu but not for Karácsony. Although Karácsony addressed traffic and transportation extensively (2.21%), this category did not make it to his ten most salient issues.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter elucidated the prevalence of issue salience theory in the context of opposition triumph over populist governments. In Chapter 2, it was hypothesized that the opposition's issue selection contributed to its more positive campaign tone. While subsequent chapters will delve deeper into testing this hypothesis, the content analysis already highlights the divergence between party agendas in the Istanbul and Budapest contexts. Specifically, this chapter shows that while parties diverge on policies, populist and character matters are central to their campaigns. This creates the anticipation of populist issues accounting for elite conflict (H2).

One striking finding is the prevalence of character issues, including competence and morality, and the central role of populist components in all campaigns. This finding suggests the potential of political elites to generate affective polarization (Harteveld, 2021; Harteveld et al., 2022; Stefanelli, 2023; Davis et al., 2024; Pérez-Rajó, 2024). Selective emphasis on policy issues likely further contributes to this polarization. By promoting different issues, parties convey distinct realities to voters, influencing their perceptions of political matters (Szabó & Gerő, 2019; Aytaç et al., 2021; Aytaç, 2024). In the absence of clear position cues, voters' decisions are likely based on partisanship, with policy packages selectively attributed to parties. In other words, voters may support a party not solely due to its relative position on policies compared to others, but also because of its ownership over certain policies, facilitated by character and populist cues. While this study cannot directly gauge public perceptions, it sheds light on agenda-setting in these contexts and captures affective polarization's emergence.

Additionally, this chapter uncovers striking similarities between government and opposition strategies in the context of opposition victory over populist incumbents. In challenging the populist right, the opposition exploited salient welfare-related issues in these cities. While the Istanbul opposition stressed more labor policies, challengers in Budapest emphasized green policies. Both sides employed populist appeals, with the Budapest opposition displaying a more pronounced anti-elitist stance due to different strategic considerations. While this chapter cannot account for the public's perceived issue ownership, parties likely exploited their party identity to represent these issues credibly, aided by populist communication.

Another striking similarity regarding government communication also contributed to the opposition's victory. Constrained by their tenure and context, governments were unable to address salient issues, risking accountability for economic downturns or failing systems. Populist governments sought to divert attention to alleged threats against popular sovereignty, with almost monopoly over the media (Schnyder et al., 2023). However, they faced challenges in executing this strategy, as subsequent chapters reveal, including the opposition's strategic use of populist appeals and campaign tonality, resonating with a larger voter base despite an uneven playing field.

Chapter 8

POPULISM IN MAYORAL CAMPAIGNS

This study adopts the ideational approach to populism as its conceptual framework. Previous chapters have characterized populism as fundamentally a moral discourse revolving around the antagonistic clash between "the people" and the elite (Section 2.3). Consistent with the ideational approach, this study assesses populism through two primary dimensions: people-centrism and anti-elitism (Rooduijn & Pauwels, 2011; Ernst et al., 2017; Castanho Silva et al., 2019; 2023). People-centrism is defined by positive references that reinforce the importance of the in-group, while anti-elitism encompasses negative references that accentuate the exclusion of the out-group (Ernst et al., 2017). These categories, akin to much ideational research, are operationalized through components relating to group identity, morality, and popular sovereignty (Table 8.1). However, this study seeks to augment elite-level measurements by integrating survey analysis insights (Akkerman et al., 2014; Aytaç et al., 2021). Its most notable innovation lies in introducing morality as a metric for assessing Manichaeanism in populist discourse, a dimension traditionally evaluated through a single variable in attitude research (see Castanho Silva et al., 2020; Aytaç et al., 2021; Çarkoğlu & Elçi, 2023).

In Chapter 2, the hypothesis was posited that the opposition could effectively challenge a populist incumbent by employing populist rhetoric, albeit focusing on people-centrism rather than anti-elitism (H4). Additionally, it was suggested that in order to overcome a populist incumbent, the opposition would eschew policy criticism, thereby centering elite confrontation around populism during the election campaign (H2). While these hypotheses may appear contradictory, they underscore the Manichaean nature of populism and presume that its components can be utilized to delineate the in-group and out-group simultaneously. However, the question remains: why would the opposition resort to populist strategies while simultaneously emphasizing their distinctiveness from the ruling parties?

While all parties may resort to populist rhetoric during the fervor of election campaigns in democracies (Klinger et al., 2022), I contend that in illiberal contexts,

populism serves as a crucial tool for the opposition to convey its messages and assert credibility and ownership over policy issues. Illiberal governments not only impose legal and financial constraints on their opposition but also exert significant control over the media, thereby dominating much of the public discourse. In such an environment, the opposition struggles to garner publicity comparable to that of the government, while substantive policy debates and preceding elections are virtually nonexistent. Moreover, Turkey and Hungary rank among the most polarized states, with incumbents bearing considerable responsibility for this polarization (Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Arbatli & Rosenberg, 2021). Consequently, populist rhetoric becomes indispensable for the democratic opposition in these countries to appeal to a highly polarized electorate and sway voters despite demonizing campaigns waged against them. Simultaneously, they must unite polarized factions within the electorate and mobilize them against a common adversary: the government.

This chapter thus explores the intricacies of populism in the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest mayoral election campaigns, revealing the deliberate and strategic utilization of populist components by parties. While it identifies similarities in communication strategies employed by ruling parties, it also discerns the key elements the opposition leverages to successfully challenge them. Furthermore, the chapter highlights cross-country disparities elucidated by the targeted voter bases of parties. Similar to the preceding chapter, it juxtaposes populist strategies in cities before transitioning to party-level comparisons across and within countries. Finally, it offers insight into the division of labor among party members concerning populist components and their roles in articulating people-centrism and anti-elitism to the public.

Table 8.1: Populist components in campaigns.

	IST government	*IST opposition*	*BP government*	*BP opposition*
The people +	259	309	8	105
Morality +	324	898	101	140
Popular sovereignty +	125	117	47	252
People-centrism	17.2%	27.8%	7.6%	13.3%
Elite(s) -	85	42	163	240
Morality -	217	224	121	113
Popular sovereignty -	318	64	136	163
Anti-elitism	15.1%	6.9%	20.6%	13.8%

8.1 Istanbul vs. Budapest

This section compares campaign rhetoric in Istanbul and Budapest, followed by party- and individual-level comparisons. Like Chapter 7, Chi-square tests of independence are conducted in this chapter to evaluate differences in the frequencies of issue references in campaigns. The Chi-squared test of independence compares the ratio or proportion of populist messages (or components) to the total number of messages within each campaign (or party's or politician's messages), assessing the percentages of specific populist components rather than the entire distribution of all issues. This approach enables the determination of meaningful differences in parties' strategic use of populist messages in the 2019 mayoral campaigns. Additionally, Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests analyze the distribution of populist components within campaign rhetoric, comparing observed frequencies across political parties to discern significant differences in emphasis.

Figure 8.1 presents the distribution of populist components between the cities. In Istanbul, populism comprised 33.58% of the campaign, whereas in Budapest, it accounted for 27.46%. A Chi-square test of association with a two-proportion z-test confirmed that the Budapest campaign was significantly less populist than the Istanbul one (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,688] = 61.296, $p < .001$, $\phi = -0.065$).

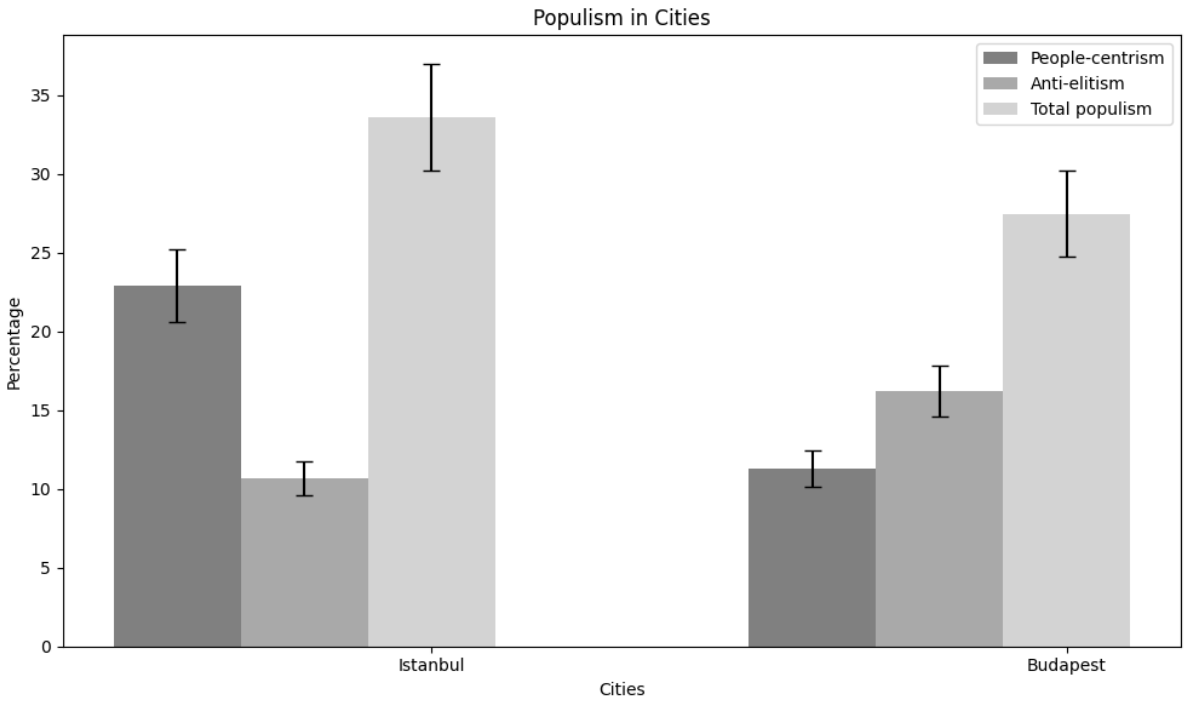


Figure 8.1: Populism in cities.

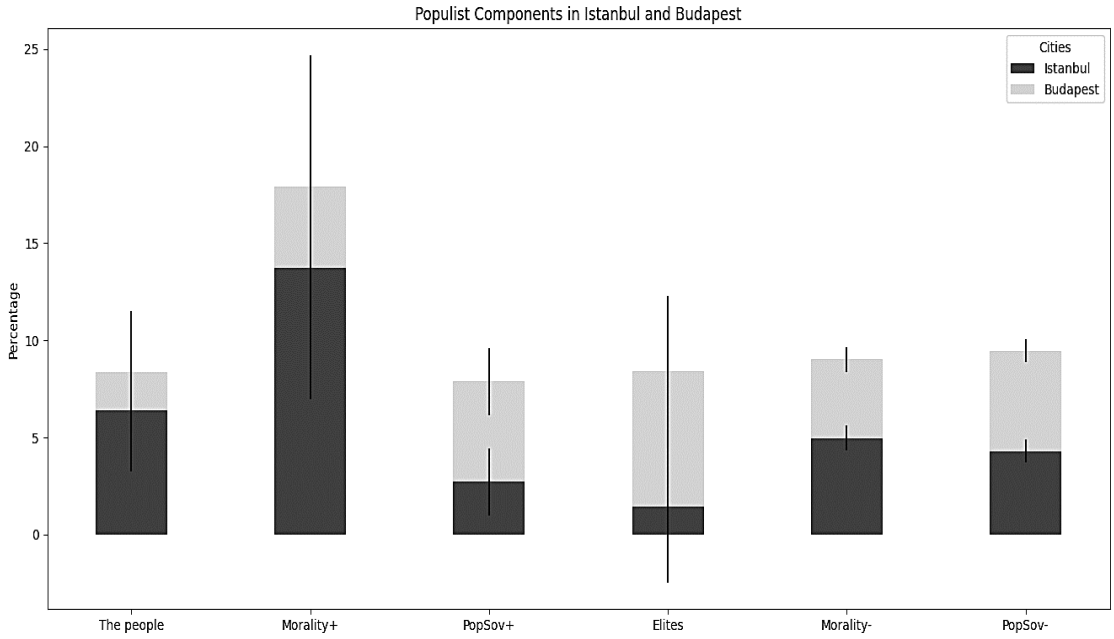
Several reasons can explain these findings. Firstly, rallies served as the backbone of the Istanbul campaign, necessitating direct engagement with the audience more frequently compared to Budapest, where appeals to the public were mediated. In Istanbul, politicians typically addressed the people at the beginning and end of speeches, welcoming and bidding farewell to their audience. Secondly, as outlined in Chapter 5, İmamoğlu's campaign team strategically chose to incorporate populist content to attract votes from the AKP without alienating potential sympathizers from various backgrounds, such as supporters of the pro-Kurdish HDP and the nationalist IYIP. Özkan (2019) argued that by claiming to be the mayor of 16 million – a textbook populist message – İmamoğlu consciously downplayed his party identity, connection to the Nation Alliance, and opposition to the ruling People's Alliance.

In contrast, the Budapest opposition did not face the same compromise. Instead, its priority was to unite opposition voters, who constituted the majority in the capital but were scattered, as an all-party alliance had never been realized. Consequently, they emphasized their opposition identity, but the attempt to appeal to all opposition voters compelled them to criticize the government. The lesser emphasis on populism allowed the Budapest opposition to highlight policies more than its Istanbul counterpart.

Finally, regarding the Turkish government, polls were ambiguous, and perhaps fearing the opposition alliance's potential success, the AKP sought to maximize its leverage to revitalize clientelist ties in Istanbul. This was exemplified by Erdoğan's exclusive presence in the Istanbul campaign. The ruling party aimed to increase turnout. In contrast, Fidesz faced a new challenge in a political system of its own making, as an all-party opposition alliance was realized for the first time in the post-2010 era. The government was uninterested in high turnout and appealed to specific segments of the electorate. Apart from 100,000 activists (Biró, 2019), national politicians likely canvassed for local candidates in district forums (e.g., Kaufmann, 2019).

The content of populist messages reflected the strategic decisions outlined above (Figure 8.2). In the Budapest campaign, anti-elitism dominated, constituting 16.17% of populist content, while only 11.28% was people-centric. Conversely, people-centrism prevailed in the Istanbul campaign, comprising 22.88% of the total content, whereas anti-elitism accounted for 10.70%. Additionally, moral messages (both positive and negative)

and references to the people were characteristic of the Istanbul election period, while popular sovereignty (both positive and negative) and mentions of the elite typified Budapest.



8.2 Populist components in cities.

8.2 Party-level comparisons

Perhaps one of the most intriguing findings is that, in each city, the government and the opposition exhibited nearly the same level of populism (Figure 8.3). A Chi-square test of association with a two-proportion z-test confirmed that there was no significant difference between the two camps' populism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 14,688] = .385, p = .550, ϕ = .005). However, when comparing parties from the same side, significant differences emerged both between the two governments (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,156] = 10.990, p < .001, ϕ = - .042), and between the opposition in Istanbul and Budapest (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,512] = 56.602, p < .001, ϕ = - .082). Hence, the Istanbul opposition was more populist than its Budapest counterpart, and the AKP was more populist than Fidesz, despite both governments and opponents exhibiting similar levels of overall populism.

Although challengers were more people-centric in both cities, the content of their messages differed. İmamoğlu led a moral campaign in which he primarily emphasized his character and goodness, appealing to the people. In contrast, Karácsony and others relied on messages about popular sovereignty and how to address democratic challenges. İmamoğlu's campaign manager claimed that he could not risk polarizing or using anti-elitist messages.

Conversely, Karácsony, aiming to unite opposition voters, employed anti-elitism but balanced it with people-centrism by offering solutions for the democratic crisis.

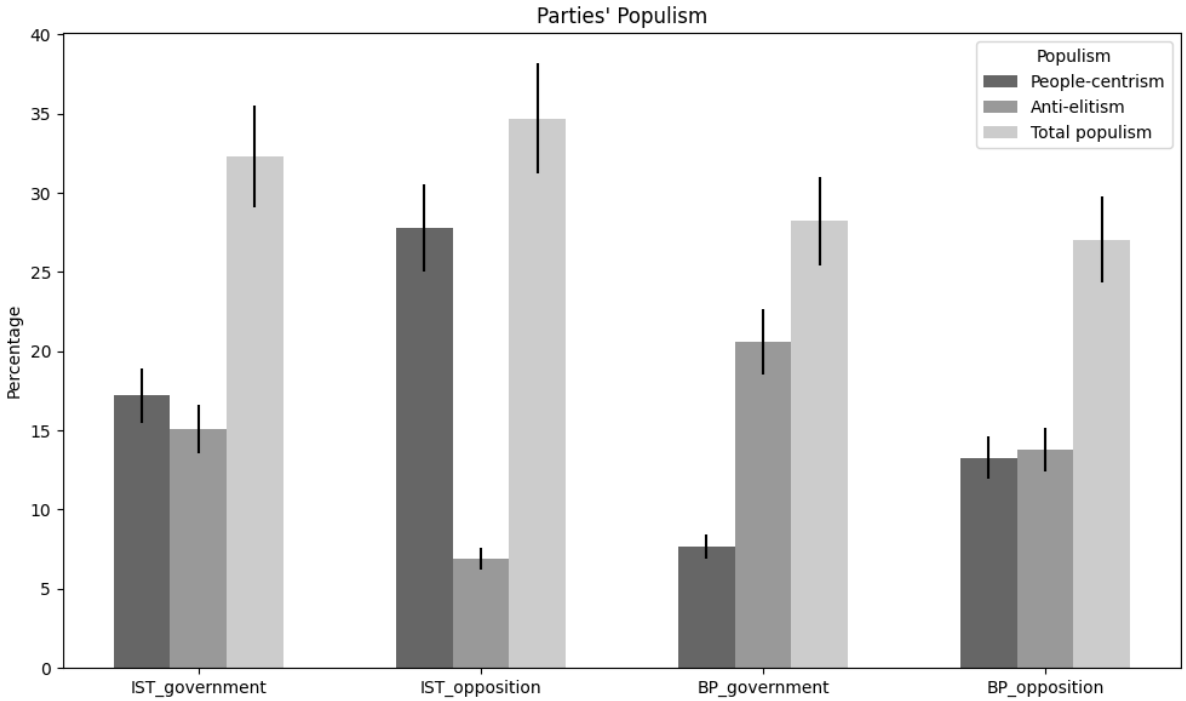


Figure 8.3: Populism in party campaigns.

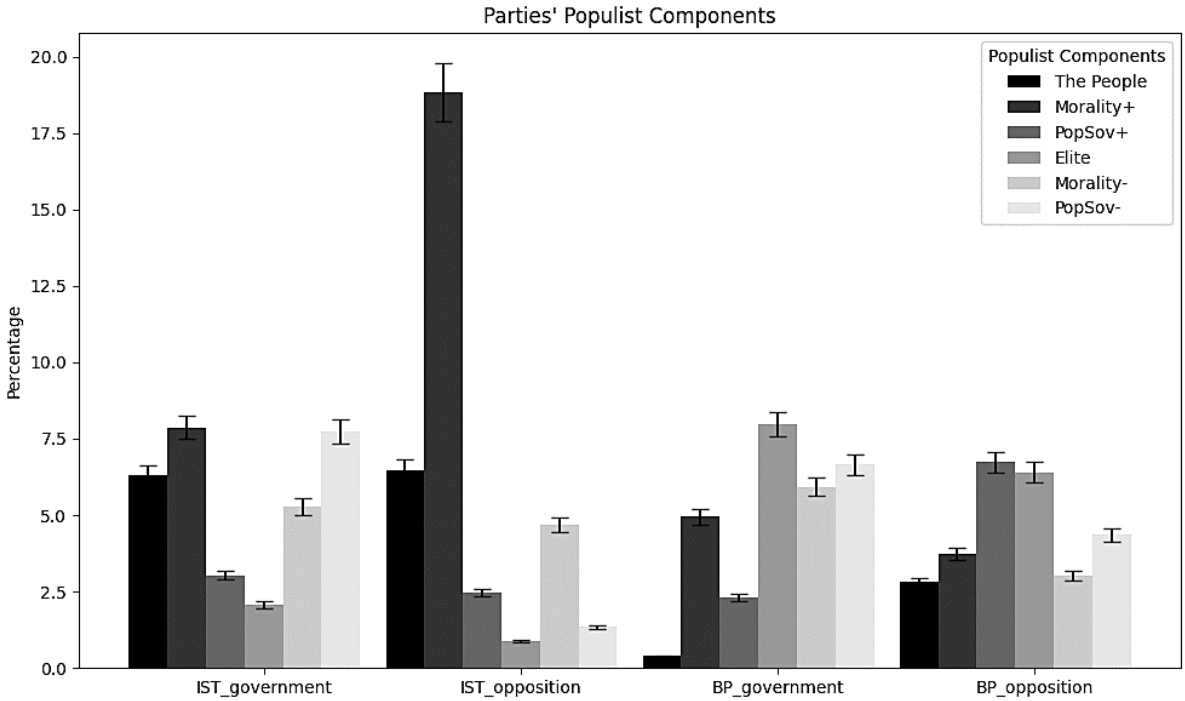


Figure 8.4: Populist components in party campaigns.

Another fascinating finding is that ruling parties, regardless of incumbency, were more anti-elitist than their challengers. Moreover, the AKP and Fidesz exhibited striking similarities. Two sets of Chi-square tests of independence supported that they employed similar ratios of positive (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,156] = 2.727, p = .099, ϕ = - .021) and negative sovereignty messages (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,156] = 2.627, p = .105, ϕ = - .021) compared to their total messages. Although both were more anti-elitist than their challengers, Erdoğan stressed people-centrism through direct appeals and moral cues, while Fidesz frequently attacked elite groups and voiced corruption allegations. In summary, in the context of opposition victory against populist incumbents, parties behave contrary to expectations based on their incumbency status. To successfully challenge the government, the opposition cues more people-centrism than anti-elitism. Conversely, ruling parties exhibit more anti-elitism than their challengers, adopting an approach resembling that of challenger parties despite being in office.

In Istanbul, people-centrism prevailed over anti-elitism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 2,982] = 241.798, p < .001, ϕ = - .285). Figure 8.3 demonstrates that the government leaned over two times more towards anti-elitism compared to the opposition (15.07% vs. 6.92%). Moreover, the opposition exhibited over a 10% higher inclination towards people-centrism than the government, with significant disparities observed in both people-centrism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 139.682, p < .001, ϕ = .125) and anti-elitism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 152.693, p < .001, ϕ = - .131).

The opposition's campaign primarily focused on appealing to the people rather than attacking the elite (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,654] = 597.362, p < .001). Within its campaign, the AKP slightly favored people-centrism over anti-elitism, as confirmed by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,327] = 5.969, p = .015). In summary, the opposition demonstrated a more populist and people-centric approach compared to the government, which, conversely, emphasized anti-elitism. However, both parties underscored people-centrism more prominently than anti-elitism in their campaigns.

Several noteworthy findings emerge concerning people-centric components in Istanbul (Figure 8.4). A Chi-square test of independence with a two-proportion z-test confirmed significant differences in the ratio of moralizing messages between campaigns (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 156.245, p < .001, ϕ = .133), with the opposition employing more moralizing messages than the government. This was primarily achieved through positive

moral messages, emphasizing İmamoğlu and other candidates' personal characteristics and moral integrity. Notably, 18.84% of the opposition's messages centered on positive morality, compared to only 7.88% in the government's case (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 223.631, p < .001, ϕ = .159). Additionally, parties appealed to the people equally (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = .702, p = .402, ϕ = - .009) and did not significantly differ in terms of positive sovereignty (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 2.842, p = .092, ϕ = - .018), with members of the ruling party slightly more inclined towards this theme (3.04%) than the opposition (2.45%).

Furthermore, intriguing findings regarding anti-elitism in the Istanbul campaign are evident. A Chi-square test of independence with a two-proportion z-test revealed no significant differences in attacking rivals on a moral basis between the two campaigns (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 1.551, p = .213, ϕ = - .013). However, the government targeted elite groups more frequently (2.07%) than the opposition (0.88%) (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 22.001, p < .001, ϕ = - .050). Additionally, the AKP emphasized negative popular sovereignty (7.73%) more than the opposition (1.34%) (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 8,881] = 348.319, p < .001, ϕ = - .198), framing the loss of popular sovereignty as a threat to democracy. Negative sovereignty messages were less prevalent in the opposition's campaign compared to the AKP's, with the ruling party employing various anti-elitist messages more frequently, particularly concerning the elites and their perceived threat to popular sovereignty.

In Budapest, while anti-elitist messages dominated, the government displayed an even stronger anti-elitist stance than the opposition. Unlike in Istanbul, both parties leaned more towards anti-elitism, which was particularly significant in Fidesz's case. Notably, while the opposition balanced between people-centrism and anti-elitism, the government emphasized anti-elitism more prominently.

A significant disparity was observed between the government and opposition campaigns regarding the ratio of people-centrism and anti-elitism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,588] = 72.182, p < .001, ϕ = - .213), as well as in the levels of anti-elitism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 43.335, p < .001, ϕ = - .087) and people-centrism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 41.863, p < .001, ϕ = .085). While only 7.64% of government messages were people-centric, a significantly higher percentage (20.57%) was anti-elitist (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 574] = 119.589, p < .001). Conversely, the opposition balanced between people-centrism (13.27%) and anti-elitism (13.78%), with no significant difference observed (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,014] = .394, p = .530).

Regarding moral messages, the government moralized more than the opposition (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 22.424, p < .001, ϕ = - .062), conveying more positive (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 4.830, p = .028, ϕ = - .029) and negative (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 28.163, p < .001, ϕ = -.070) moral messages. While Fidesz made virtually no direct appeals to the people, its people-centrism largely comprised morality. Conversely, the opposition directly appealed to the people more often (2.80%) compared to Fidesz (0.39%) (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 40.155, p < .001, ϕ = .083). Additionally, the opposition emphasized positive popular sovereignty, promising democratic improvements such as deliberation and transparency, more prominently (6.73%) than the government (2.30%) (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 52.863, p < .001, ϕ = .096).

While the Budapest campaign heavily focused on anti-elitism, the analysis revealed nuances in the arguments used by parties. The government referred to elite groups 7.98% of the time, while only 6.41% of opposition messages concerned the same. Although the opposition attacked the government more based on corruption (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 18.302, p < .001, ϕ = .056), Fidesz targeted the allied opposition and the EU, often attacking others on a moral basis (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 28.163, p < .001, ϕ = - .070).

Fidesz's salient issue in the 2019 campaign concerned the security aspect of popular sovereignty, with 6.66% of its messages addressing it. Their key argument was the collusion between international elites and the opposition to settle immigrants against the popular will. The opposition spoke less about losing popular sovereignty (4.35%), framing it as a democratic issue due to the ruling party's authoritarianism. Thus, the two parties significantly differed in voicing the loss of popular sovereignty (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 5,787] = 13.253, p < .001, ϕ = - .048). In short, Fidesz dominated all aspects of anti-elitism but only the moral aspect of people-centrism, while the opposition focused on appeals to the people and corrective democratic arguments.

8.2 Individual-level populism

Chapter 7 delved into comparing salient issues among high-profile politicians in Istanbul. Similarly, this chapter extends the analysis to examine populism among these figures. However, it is essential to address the disparity in the number of speeches given by Erdoğan and İmamoğlu compared to other politicians. Concurrently, while direct one-to-one

comparisons pose challenges within the Budapest context, this section delineates the distribution of populist messaging within parties' campaigns.

Figure A.6.1 in Appendix 6 displays politicians' people-centrism and anti-elitism in Istanbul, while A.6.2 shows populist components in their speeches. Erdoğan, the central figure in the government campaign in Istanbul, exhibited a balanced approach between being people-centric and anti-elitist, as evidenced by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test on populist content in his speeches (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,165] = .193, p = .660). His discourse primarily focused on morality as a people-centric message, while popular sovereignty emerged as the predominant anti-elitist theme. Building on the narrative from Chapter 7, Erdoğan framed popular sovereignty as crucial for the security and survival of Turkey, encompassing threats to its unity, governance, economy, and development.

The opposition candidate, İmamoğlu, adopted a notably people-centric stance, accounting for 29.16% of his messaging, whereas his anti-elitist rhetoric was significantly lower at only 6.06% – a distinction supported by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 1,422] = 613.471, p < .001). His discourse predominantly featured positive moral messages (20.29%), with a portion of his anti-elitist discourse comprising moral judgments directed at the government (4.47%). As previously posited, İmamoğlu strategically refrained from direct attacks on the government, often referring to them in the plural third person. Some analysts suggest that this indirect approach constitutes a form of 'inverted populism' (Demiralp & Balta, 2021), wherein İmamoğlu emphasized his own moral integrity in contrast to perceived government immorality. Essentially, İmamoğlu facilitated voters' comparative assessments by underscoring his moral goodness, implicitly highlighting the government's shortcomings. Chapter 7 highlighted İmamoğlu's discourse, particularly the abundance of moral messaging, as an outlier within the opposition campaign.

Yıldırım, who made only four appearances on stage, predominantly conveyed positive messages (Chapter 9). His discourse was characterized by a people-centric approach, with minimal emphasis on anti-elitism, as confirmed by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 55] = 51.073, p < .001). He appealed to the people and emphasized morality while discussing his party's capacity to safeguard popular sovereignty, with his limited anti-elitist messaging revolving around popular sovereignty.

On the opposition front, CHP chair Kılıçdaroğlu displayed a significantly stronger people-centric inclination compared to anti-elitism (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 160] = 14.400, p < .001), despite addressing concerns about democracy and corruption throughout the campaign. His discourse was marked by positive moral messages (12.61%), often centered on İmamoğlu's character. Additionally, his anti-elitist messaging primarily consisted of moral attacks (6.53%) coupled with expressions of concern regarding corruption (4.05%).

In contrast, CHP's coalition partner, IYIP chair Meral Akşener, employed a distinct populist messaging strategy, exhibiting a significantly stronger anti-elitist orientation than being people-centric (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 39] = 11.308, p < .001). This divergence could be attributed to the party's ideological stance, with Akşener adopting a more right-leaning approach in critiquing the AKP. Consequently, Akşener's discourse targeted government corruption, including instances of factory sales to foreign entities for private gain (9.18%), and denounced authoritarianism (6.12%). Morally condemning Erdoğan for divisive rhetoric and accusations against the opposition, her messaging stood out for its assertive stance against government allegations – a departure from İmamoğlu's more restrained approach.

Campaign asymmetries in Budapest preclude direct comparisons similar to those in Istanbul. Nonetheless, the provided figures aim to offer insights into overarching campaign strategies. For instance, while all members conveyed anti-elitist sentiments within Fidesz, few emphasized people-centric cues (Figures A.6.3 and A.6.4). Notably, Viktor Orbán emerged as an exception, as indicated by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 72] = 18.000, p < .001). Orbán predominantly emphasized people-centrism, particularly highlighting his party's moral integrity (13.62%) and its commitment to safeguarding popular sovereignty against perceived external threats, including the EU and international leftist forces (9.36%). However, given Orbán's limited participation with only one speech during the campaign, meaningful comparisons with other figures are challenging. Incumbent mayor and candidate Tarlós also spoke just once during the election period, adopting a more anti-elitist stance than being people-centric (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 41] = 15.244, p < .001). His discourse frequently featured personal attacks (8.09%) and direct targeting of the opposition (9.25%).

Within the Fidesz campaign, various politicians participated, albeit with limited contributions, making meaningful comparisons difficult. Nevertheless, it is evident from

Figures A.6.3 and A.6.4 that their messaging predominantly revolved around attacking the opposition. Nearly all politicians within the Fidesz camp targeted elites, including the opposition and the EU, while also highlighting perceived threats to popular sovereignty.

Notably, Ádám Borbély from the party's youth organization stood out for exclusively launching personal attacks against Karácsony, particularly questioning his mental capabilities and trustworthiness, often labeling him a liar. Conversely, Máté Kocsis, leader of the parliamentary faction and former Budapest district mayor, focused on corruption allegations against Karácsony and the opposition, thereby intertwining his discourse with references to elites and morality. János Halász, chairing the National Security Committee, prominently propagated the government's conspiracy theory, suggesting that opposition mayors would collude with the EU to dismantle border fences and settle immigrants against the people's will. László Böröcz, president of the youth organization, underscored the purported collusion between the opposition and the EU, particularly highlighting the involvement of former MSZP prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and his wife, Klára Dobrev, vice-president of the European Parliament, in conspiring with opposition candidates to gain control of municipalities.

On the opposition front, Karácsony conveyed both people-centric (13.16%) and anti-elitist (13.30%) messages (Figures A.6.5 and A.6.6). Intriguingly, he struck a balance between these two populist elements, as evidenced by a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 575] = .016, p = .900). Additionally, his discourse encompassed a well-rounded assortment of populist components, with attacks against elites, particularly corruption allegations, and positive messages regarding popular sovereignty scoring above 5%. A primary focus of his populist messaging revolved around democratic inclusion, emphasizing the restoration of popular sovereignty through innovative democratic methods and measures.

Except for Gábor Kerpel-Fronius (Momentum), who proposed participatory democracy and transparency, opposition members predominantly leaned towards anti-elitism rather than being people-centric. Klára Dobrev (DK) stood out for dedicating over a quarter of her messages to exposing Fidesz's corruption. Similarly, Tímea Szabó, co-chair of Karácsony's party, Dialogue, addressed corruption issues, such as potential land acquisitions by pro-government entities. Reflecting the literature's findings, minor figures

in the campaign primarily handled negativity, while Karácsony maintained a balanced approach between people-centric and anti-elitist messaging.

Comparing İmamoğlu and Karácsony's messaging based on message volume yields meaningful insights. A significant discrepancy between the two candidates emerges regarding people-centrism (Chi-square test of independence: χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,209] = 200.571, $p < .001$, $\phi = .180$): İmamoğlu dedicated 29.16% of his messaging to people-centrism, while Karácsony allocated only 13.16% to similar themes. Conversely, Karácsony exhibited a significantly higher inclination towards anti-elitism, accounting for 13.30% of his messages, compared to İmamoğlu's 6.06% (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,209] = 95.073, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.124$). İmamoğlu conveyed significantly more positive moral messages (20.29%) than Karácsony (3.27%) (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,209] = 334.079, $p < .001$, $\phi = .232$). However, Karácsony focused more on promoting popular sovereignty (5.84%), compared to İmamoğlu's lesser emphasis (2.16%) on democratic inclusiveness (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 6,209] = 57.936, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.097$).

Ultimately, Karácsony's messaging exhibited a stronger anti-elitist orientation compared to İmamoğlu's focus on people-centrism and moralizing. In summary, while the Budapest opposition candidate balanced between people-centric and anti-elitist messaging to unify polarized opposition voters, the Istanbul opposition candidate heavily emphasized people-centrism, delegating much of the anti-elitist discourse to CHP and IYIP chairs.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter confirms the hypothesis proposed in Chapter 2, asserting that in the scenario of opposition triumph against a populist incumbent, the opposition must employ populism in its electoral campaign rhetoric, albeit with a greater emphasis on people-centrism over anti-elitism (H4). In contrast to the ruling party, which leans towards anti-elitism regardless of its incumbency status, establishing credibility on policy matters and swaying voters to its side, the opposition can leverage populist communication to its advantage. Essentially, when confronted with a government employing highly polarizing rhetoric, the opposition utilizes populist strategies to unite polarized voter segments and mobilize them against the government. Thus, this chapter unveils that in challenging populists in power, democratic opposition parties resort to populism, albeit while emphasizing their distinctiveness from such parties.

While populism serves as a deliberate communication tool for political parties, this chapter also sheds light on the diverse ways in which they employ such content. Given populism's Manichaean nature, it can simultaneously create a sense of in-group and out-group. However, in Istanbul, it appears that people-centrism emerged as the prevailing form of populism among elite members. Despite rallies being the dominant campaign event in the city, potentially indicating a stronger appeal to the people, I argue that the rationale behind rallying and people-centrism lies within the electorate. President Erdoğan notably redefined rallying after the 2013 and 2016 events, and it is plausible that İmamoğlu sought to appropriate this genre from him, particularly considering his targeting of core AKP supporters during the campaign (Özkan, 2019). Indeed, İmamoğlu's campaign manager suggested that his language choice aimed to reach various opposition factions while potentially swaying government supporters as well. İmamoğlu heavily relied on moralizing and personalized language in his campaign, implicitly highlighting the government's immorality while leaving more direct anti-elitism to opposition party leaders.

In contrast, anti-elitism took precedence in the 2019 election discourse in Budapest. With the 2018 general election results indicating a higher number of opposition voters in the capital, albeit dispersed among minor opposition parties, Karácsony recognized this opportunity and pursued a heavily populist campaign. In his campaign, anti-elitism was equally emphasized alongside people-centrism, indicating his aim to unite voters and establish credibility while also directing attention towards the government. Concurrently, Fidesz adopted a strong anti-elitist rhetoric, potentially resonating with its core supporters but alienating and fragmenting opposition-minded citizens. While Karácsony frequently attacked the government on corruption grounds, he also proposed rebuilding democracy in the capital under his leadership, a theme that İmamoğlu emphasized to a lesser extent.

Furthermore, this chapter highlights the pivotal role of popular sovereignty in governments' anti-elitist rhetoric. While sovereignty and survival, particularly the security aspect of popular sovereignty, were prominent government issues in both cities, a notable difference lies in AKP's balance between people-centrism and anti-elitism. In contrast, Fidesz heavily emphasized anti-elitism and refrained from direct appeals to the people, instead emphasizing its moral proximity to them. Consequently, there are grounds to anticipate governments leading more negative campaigns than their opposition counterparts (H3). The subsequent chapter delves into how parties' issue selection, encompassing

policies, populism, and character issues, influenced their overall tone in the 2019 mayoral campaigns.

Chapter 9

TONE IN MAYORAL CAMPAIGNS

Political parties' communication strategies, particularly their tone, are pivotal in election campaigns and have garnered significant attention in political communication scholarship. However, despite extensive study, the rationale behind adopting negative campaign strategies and their effects remain contentious. While there is no clear consensus in the field, negativity is often attributed to opposition parties, which, lacking experience in government and the prospect of acclaim, frequently resort to criticizing incumbents (Nai, 2020; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter & Van der Brug, 2013; Druckman et al., 2009; Johansson, 2014).

Approaching from a different angle, some scholars argue that negativity is prevalent in voter mobilization efforts. A growing body of literature explores the varying impact of negativity on different voter segments (Krupnikov, 2011), with recent studies suggesting its efficacy in rallying core constituents alongside traditional appeals to swing voters (Rohrschneider, 2002; Stuckelberger, 2021). Despite ongoing debates, it is evident that negativity contributes to affective polarization within the public sphere (Iyengar et al., 2012; Garrett et al., 2014; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). While negativity may serve as a tool for both mobilization and demobilization, its prevalence exacerbates public polarization, presenting challenges for political parties in securing voter support.

This chapter explores the strategic use of tone in electioneering, particularly in the context of opposition victories against populist incumbents in Istanbul and Budapest. Building upon the hypothesis (H4) that opposition parties benefit from positive campaigning due to strategic issue selection, this study seeks to determine whether opposition parties in these cities consistently adopt a more positive tone than ruling parties. While the direct impact of party communication on voter decisions cannot be determined, there are indications that the opposition's positive campaigning may increase voter turnout and broaden appeal, potentially leading to electoral victories in mayoral elections.

Thus, this chapter scrutinizes campaign tones, contrasting strategies across cities, parties, and individual rhetoric. While parties tend to adopt an overall more positive than

negative tone, interpretation should consider the comparative nature of voter choices. Analysis reveals that ruling populists consistently employ more negativity than their challengers, though lesser-known political figures may surpass high-profile politicians in negative campaigning (Dolezal et al., 2017). The relevance of defensive rhetoric in election campaigns is also examined, with the functional theory suggesting its marginalization compared to other tones (Benoit, 1999; 2003; 2016; Benoit et al., 2003), particularly within the context of populists in power, where political debates and discourse may be limited. Like preceding chapters, this one commences by contrasting the overall campaign tones in the two cities before delving into party and individual-level analyses, highlighting the division of labor among members within each camp.

9.1 Istanbul vs. Budapest

Similar to the preceding sections, this one begins by comparing the overall campaign tones between cities, followed by an examination of parties and individuals. The Chi-square tests of independence carried out in this chapter compare the distribution of tones between pairs of political campaigns or speeches. The objective of this analysis is to identify significant differences in the usage of specific tones between the compared campaigns or speakers. Additionally, Cramer's V is computed to gauge the strength of these differences, aiding in the interpretation of which campaign or speaker employed certain tones more prominently. Furthermore, Chi-square tests are employed to compare the frequency of tones between campaigns or individuals, and the results are presented in the usual manner.

Figure 9.1 illustrates the various tones employed by parties in the Istanbul and Budapest campaigns. Participants utilized 9,369 positive messages, constituting 63.87% of the overall tone. Negative messages, numbering 4,644, accounted for 31.66% of the campaign tone. Defensive messages were identified in only 247 instances, comprising a mere 1.68% of the overall tone. The Chi-square test of independence indicated a significant difference between the number of acclaims, attacks, defenses, and 'no function' categories (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14,668] = 15,225.013, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.698$). Positive messages consistently outnumbered negative ones in each campaign, while defensive cues remained low, aligning with earlier findings from functional analyses applied to elite discourse (Benoit, 1999; 2003; 2004; 2016; Benoit et al., 2003).

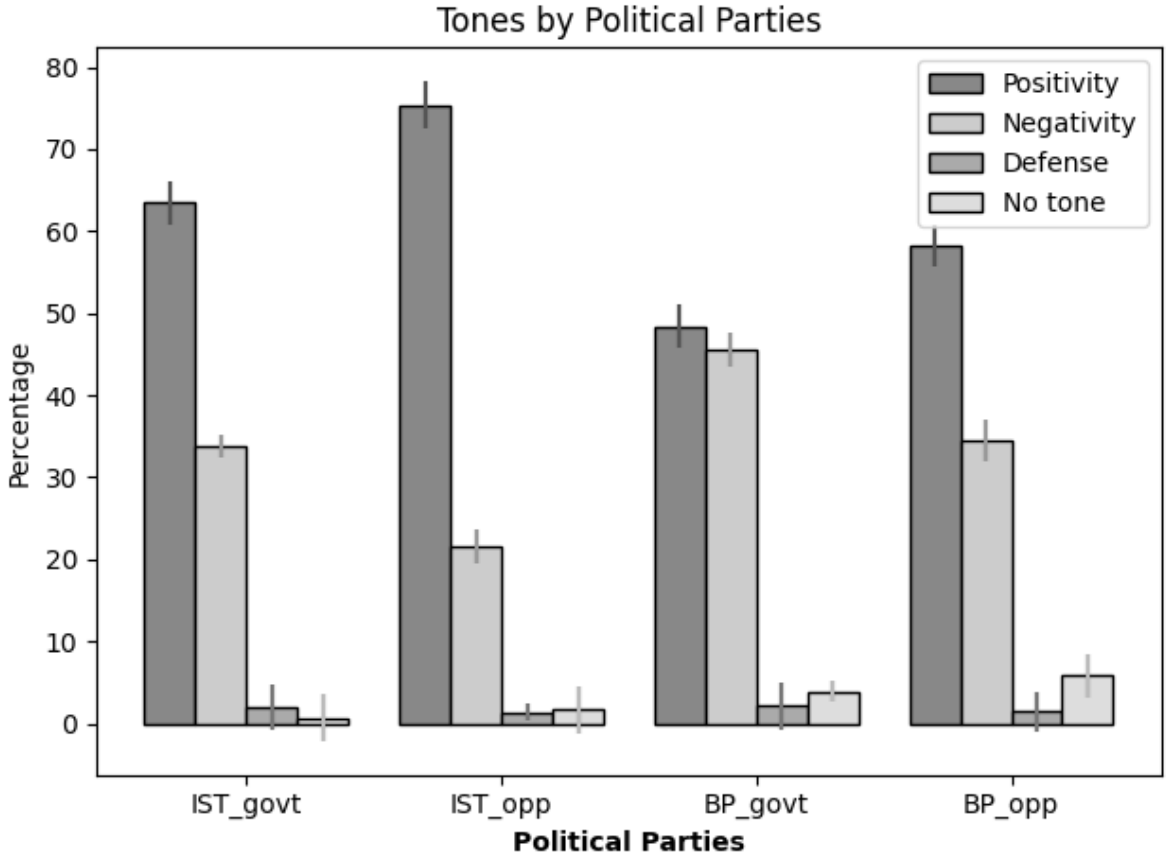


Figure 9.1: Tones in party campaigns.

In the Budapest campaign, positive messages constituted 54.72%, negative messages 38.40%, and defensive messages 1.71% of the overall tone. Similarly, in Istanbul, positive messages prevailed over negative ones (69.87% vs. 27.26%), with defense making up only 1.20%. A Chi-square test of independence with the measurement of Cramer's V confirmed a moderate difference in the tone proportions between Istanbul and Budapest (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14,668] = 461.748, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.205$). Furthermore, when cross-tabulating incumbency with function, a notable difference, albeit of modest strength emerged between the tone of government and opposition in the two cities (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14,668] = 219.629, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.150$).

One of the most striking revelations is parties' pervasive adoption of a positive tone in their communication, irrespective of their characteristics or incumbency, with defensive rhetoric playing a minor role. This pattern persists across various campaign events, indicating a consistent emphasis on positivity. Take, for instance, rally speeches, where the primary aim is to invigorate and mobilize party supporters while fostering unity behind the party's vision and leadership. It is natural for speakers in such settings to highlight their

party's achievements, values, and plans rather than spend considerable time criticizing adversaries. Similarly, press briefings provide parties a platform to engage with the media and shape public perception. During these sessions, parties typically strive to project a positive image, articulate their policy positions, and address queries or concerns from journalists. While instances of critique or rebuttal may arise, the overall tone of press briefings tends to be constructive, focusing on advancing the party's agenda and initiatives.

Maintaining a positive tone also serves a strategic purpose, helping parties cultivate trust and credibility among their supporters and the broader electorate. By accentuating their strengths and vision for the future, parties aim to instill confidence and enthusiasm among voters, thereby bolstering their electoral prospects. Therefore, when evaluating campaign strategies, it is crucial to analyze the tone comparatively, considering the relative tone between contestants. This approach mirrors voters' comparative assessment as they weigh their choices leading up to the election.

9.2 Party-level comparisons

The results of the study yielded significant insights into comparing parties' tones (Figure 9.1). A Chi-square test of independence conducted on campaigns and positivity revealed a notable but modest difference in the proportions of acclaims across campaigns (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14 668] = 538.582, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.236$). Similarly, another Chi-square test of independence indicated a notable but modest difference in the ratio of attacks in campaigns (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14 668] = 428.515, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.218$). Finally, a third test showed no significant difference in the ratio of parties' defensive messages (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 14 668] = 8.741, $p = 0.032945$, $V \approx 0.049$). Hence, parties did not differ regarding the use of defensive tone, which proved to be insignificant throughout campaigns.

The Istanbul opposition campaign stood out as the most positive, with 75.39% of their messages being positive, 21.59% negative, and only 1.38% defensive. In contrast, the AKP campaign leaned significantly more negative, with 63.47% of its messages being positive, 33.84% negative, and 1.99% defensive. A Chi-square test of independence confirmed that the opposition led a notably more positive and less negative campaign than the government and defended themselves less than the incumbents, albeit the difference between tone rations was modest (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 8881] = 187.323, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.145$). However, the AKP still maintained a more positive tone compared to parties in Budapest.

Campaign strategies in Budapest mirrored those in Istanbul, with the opposition running a moderately more positive campaign than the government (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 5787] = 97.065, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.238$). Opposition messages were 58.16% positive, 34.50% negative, and only 1.47% defensive. In contrast, the Fidesz campaign was almost evenly split between positivity and negativity, with 48.43% of their messages being positive, 45.54% negative, and 2.15% defensive.

Most notably, despite having the incumbency advantage, Fidesz and AKP led more negative campaigns than their challengers. Moreover, Fidesz's campaign was nearly as negative as positive. However, a Chi-square test of independence confirmed that the proportion of positivity, negativity, defense, and 'no tone' was significantly different (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 2042] = 1584.245, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.612$). The fact that governments were more negative than their challengers contradicts one of the most consistent findings of the campaign literature. This study suggests that parties' selection of issues directly accounts for their tone, whether they stress the in-party or the out-party identity more in the campaign. However, how parties set their agendas depends on the election context, including the voters they aim to sway in the campaign. Thus, one likely explanation is that, based on past experience, ruling parties were interested in the salience of popular sovereignty and security issues, as such configurations aided their victory (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021; Bíró-Nagy, 2022). Hoping that it would resonate with swing voters but reinvigorate core supporters, the AKP and Fidesz opted for these issues, which, due to their anti-elitist nature, implied the government's pronounced negativity in the 2019 campaign.

9.2 Individual-level tonality

Chapters 7 and 8 delved into parties' campaign issues and their utilization of populist components. As in those chapters, conducting one-to-one comparisons regarding tone proves challenging due to campaign asymmetries. Thus, a more meaningful individual-level comparison is feasible in Istanbul. The following section juxtaposes high-profile politicians with significant contributions to the campaign, including Binali Yıldırım, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, and Meral Akşener (Figure A.7.1 in Appendix 7). As others participated only once, their messages were insufficient for meaningful analysis. Nonetheless, Figures A.7.2 and A.7.3 present the proportion of tones in top figures in both the government and opposition campaigns in Budapest.

Figure A.7.1 illustrates the prominent participants of the Istanbul campaign, encompassing politicians from both the government and opposition. Within the AKP campaign, only two politicians are featured: Erdoğan and Yıldırım. Yıldırım, the candidate for Istanbul mayor, delivered only four speeches, overwhelmingly skewing positive, with 94% of his messages being acclaims, while attacks constituted only 3.35%, with no defensive cues. In contrast, Erdoğan's tone was more balanced, with 61.74% positivity, 35.50% negativity, and 2.23% defensiveness. A Chi-square test of independence confirmed modest differences between Erdoğan and Yıldırım's tones (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 3864] = 78.740, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.101$). Additionally, Yıldırım even surpassed İmamoğlu in positivity, as confirmed by another Chi-test of independence (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4217] = 28.439, $p < .001$, $\phi = -.082$).

Although fewer in number, opposition campaign participants delivered speeches more frequently than their government counterparts. İmamoğlu spearheaded an overwhelmingly positive campaign, with 76.80% of his messages being positive, 20.34% negative, and only 1.27% defensive. Conversely, CHP chair Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, with eight speeches to his credit, maintained a more reserved stance throughout the campaign. While still positive, Kılıçdaroğlu's tone was less so compared to İmamoğlu, with 61.71% of his messages being positive, 34.46% negative, and 1.13% defensive. Modest differences in tonality between İmamoğlu and Kılıçdaroğlu were confirmed by a Chi-square test of independence (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 4482] = 52.275, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.108$). Given Kılıçdaroğlu's more limited role in the campaign, his negativity may stem from a strategic decision to assign attacks to a less prominent figure, thereby mitigating potential backlash while still satisfying core opposition supporters.

Interestingly, Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu, later rivals in the 2023 presidential campaign, exhibited similar tonalities. Both maintained positivity levels around 61.71%, with slight differences in negativity and defensiveness favoring Kılıçdaroğlu. However, three separate chi-square tests of independence revealed no significant differences in positivity (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4129] = 0.000105, $p < .992$, $\phi = -.000160$), negativity (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4129] = 0.185941, $p < 0.666317$, $\phi = -.007$), or defensiveness (χ^2 [df = 1, N = 4129] = 2.321, $p < .128$, $\phi = -.024$) between Erdoğan and Kılıçdaroğlu.

Despite delivering only two speeches, IYIP chair Meral Akşener emerged as an outlier in the Istanbul campaign. Akşener's tone skewed more negative (51.02%) than positive (38.78%), making her the most negative and defensive (10.20%) politician in

Istanbul. As revealed in the subsequent chapter on messages (Chapters 7 and 8), Akşener frequently criticized the government for corruption and authoritarianism, and she also expressed resentment towards Erdoğan's disparaging remarks about her, such as referring to her as 'woman' and by her first name (Akşener, No. 86; 112). Thus, negativity was predominantly assigned to party chairs in the opposition campaign, allowing İmamoğlu to focus more on fostering in-group identity and potentially swaying government supporters.

Figure A.7.2 provides insights into the tone of the six most prominent Fidesz politicians, alongside István Tarlós and Viktor Orbán. Notably, both the candidate and the prime minister delivered only one speech each during the campaign, making direct comparisons between them more feasible. In his address at the annual Fidesz Congress, Orbán projected confidence in the party's performance, emphasizing the stakes of the upcoming local ballot. While outlining Fidesz's central argument, he primarily aimed to motivate fellow partisans, commending the party's discipline and resilience. Orbán's speech skewed heavily positive, with 77.87% positivity and 15.74% negativity. In contrast, incumbent mayor Tarlós struck a more negative and defensive tone in his final speech before election day, with only 26.01% positivity, 53.18% negativity, and 20.81% defensiveness. Although not part of this analysis, Tarlós gave 15 additional television and radio interviews during the campaign period, largely aligning with the content of his speech, either attacking Karácsony or refuting his criticisms.

The partisans overseeing the campaign demonstrated similar levels of negativity, albeit to varying extents. Among them, Ádám Borbély, a political newcomer and member of Fidesz's youth organization, stood out with an overwhelming 96.36% negativity. Borbély spearheaded the Budapest Is No Circus campaign, regularly organizing press briefings to ridicule Karácsony for his perceived incompetence. On the other end of the spectrum, Lőrinc Nacsa, KDNP spokesperson and MP, exhibited the least negativity among government politicians, with 69.12% positivity. Nacsa's role primarily involved assuring the public of KDNP's unwavering support for Fidesz's policies, particularly focusing on successful labor initiatives.

Figure A.7.3 highlights the tone of leading opposition figures' rhetoric, with Gergely Karácsony running a predominantly positive campaign, featuring 58.17% positivity, 35.57% negativity, and 2.02% defensiveness. While Karácsony's campaign involved 56 participants, he rarely appeared alone, with other politicians receiving limited visibility. For instance, Gábor Kerpel-Fronius (Momentum), who later became Karácsony's vice-mayor,

exhibited exceptional positivity at 83.33%, reflecting his advocacy for participatory democracy and transparency. Conversely, Tímea Szabó (Dialogue), Klára Dobrev (DK), and Tamás Soproni (Momentum) adopted a more negative stance, highlighting corruption allegations and the healthcare crisis exacerbated by the government's negligence. Thus, like in Istanbul, negativity was assigned to minor politicians in the Budapest campaign.

Given the campaign's asymmetries in Istanbul and Budapest, meaningful cross-country comparisons are limited. Figure 6.5 showcases the tone of candidates and other high-profile politicians, indicating Turkish politicians' higher positivity compared to their Hungarian counterparts. Notably, Yıldırım emerged as the most positive (93.85%), followed by İmamoğlu (76.80%). Despite similarities in negativity between Erdoğan and Karácsony, a modest difference in their tone was confirmed by a Chi-square test of independence (χ^2 [df = 3, N = 5856] = 99.082, $p < .001$, $V \approx 0.092$). This divergence reflects strategic considerations outlined in preceding chapters, with İmamoğlu targeting a broader electorate, including core government constituents, while Karácsony aimed to rally scattered opposition voters against the government.

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter's most notable discovery challenges a common assumption in campaign literature: incumbency does not necessarily correlate with higher levels of positive campaigning (Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter & Van der Brug, 2013; Druckman et al., 2009; Nai, 2020). Surprisingly, the Turkish and Hungarian governments were more negative than their opposition counterparts, corroborating the earlier posited hypothesis (H3). This suggests that a populist incumbent fundamentally influences parties' roles within political systems. Typically, the opposition's duty is to critique the government and present policy alternatives (König et al., 2023). However, in illiberal systems, defeating the incumbent requires the opposition to adopt a strategy akin to that of incumbents in democratic settings.

Recent research based on expert surveys suggests that populists tend to be more negative regardless of incumbency (Nai & Walter, 2016; Nai, 2020). However, as concluded in the previous chapter, both mayoral campaigns exhibited similar levels of populism among parties, indicating that attributing the AKP and Fidesz's negativity solely to their populist nature is insufficient. Instead, I propose that the specific contexts they faced drove their choice of issues, leading to negative tones.

In Istanbul, opinion polls ahead of the election were contentious, and there was an alliance between the major opposition CHP and the nationalist IYIP, with the pro-Kurdish HDP abstaining from fielding a candidate. The AKP heavily invested in campaigning, with President Erdoğan playing a leading role. Given the economic challenges, the AKP focused on issues within its competency while revitalizing clientelist ties to mobilize voters. This led to a focus on themes like popular sovereignty and terrorism, implying a negative tone due to the perceived elite conspiracy endangering popular will.

Similarly, Fidesz faced a united opposition for the first time, with Chapters 7 and 8 highlighting their emphasis on anti-elitism and attacks against the opposition and the EU. Like the AKP, Fidesz stressed sovereignty and survival, suggesting collusion between domestic and international elites in settling immigrants. As opinion polls in Budapest were contentious, Fidesz opted for issues within its competency, hoping to resonate with voters and potentially demobilize the opposition.

Opposition candidates also strategically utilized tone for mobilization. İmamoğlu and his team aimed to appeal to core government voters by avoiding direct attacks and focusing on presenting their own vision. In contrast, Karácsony and his allies sought to unite polarized opposition voters by employing more negativity and attacking the government, emphasizing anti-elitist themes to challenge Fidesz's dominance.

In conclusion, the opposition in contexts where populists are in power tends to lead more positive campaigns due to their issue selection, fundamentally differing from the government's agenda. However, content analysis alone provides a static assessment, overlooking internal campaign dynamics. Further multivariate analyses can illuminate the role of issues and actors in campaigning, including the function of character and populist issues in elite discourse and the dynamics of affective polarization.

Chapter 10

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES:

THE DYNAMIC POLARIZATION MODEL

Chapter 2 introduced the Dynamic Polarization Model, a framework designed to capture inter-party election campaign rhetoric and the formulation of affective polarization. Building upon the content analysis findings of Chapters 7, 8, and 9, this chapter presents four distinct models illustrating affective polarization at the elite level and explores the role of content and actors in shaping campaigns. After introducing the time series methodology and the specific model used in this study, the chapter moves on to present the results and interpret the findings. Concluding remarks will discuss the implications of these findings for party competition and voting behavior in the context of opposition victory under populism in power.

In Chapter 2, hypotheses were posited regarding the impact of opposition victory under populism on campaign dynamics. Specifically, I hypothesized that intra-party conflict would decrease around policies (H1) but increase around populism (H2). Additionally, contrary to scholarly consensus, it was hypothesized that the opposition's issue selection, including policies and the strategic use of populist cues, would contribute to more positive campaign communication (H3), rendering incumbents more negative. Consequently, this study suggests that instead of attributing negativity to incumbency, it should be understood as a consequence of issue selection determined by the voter bases parties want to reach. In short, negativity has a mobilization function in party rhetoric.

Furthermore, it was proposed that party interactions would contribute to polarization in election campaign rhetoric as parties engage in heightened confrontation and mutual influence, shaping distinct in-party and out-party identities (H5). As a time-series model, the Dynamic Polarization Model supersedes simple tonality assessments of campaign rhetoric by accounting for the interdependencies between parties' messaging over time, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the dynamic interactions within political discourse.

10.1 Methodological overview

Time-series analysis is a widely used method in communication studies and related disciplines. In health communication, it is primarily utilized for forecasting purposes, enabling researchers to predict health trends and outcomes based on historical data (Wyatt et al., 2013; Prati et al., 2016). In political communication, it serves to study time-bound or unfolding phenomena, such as agenda-setting and issue salience, allowing researchers to understand the dynamics of political discourse and public opinion formation (Howlett, 1998; Roberts et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2016). Additionally, time-series analysis is employed for analyzing policy positions and polarization, enabling researchers to examine shifts in political ideologies and party dynamics (Slapin & Proksch, 2008; Jensen et al., 2012), as well as studying campaign tone to understand the strategies and messaging techniques used by political candidates (Krebs & Holian, 2007). Furthermore, it is utilized in political advertising to evaluate the effectiveness of campaign messages (Housholder et al., 2018), to understand patterns of online activism and engagement (Scrivens et al., 2021), and to study the trends and spread of disinformation (Lukito, 2020).

The ARIMA (Box & Jenkins, 1976) model, known as Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average, is a commonly used time series analysis tool to examine and predict data patterns over time. It combines three essential components to understand and forecast time series data. Firstly, the auto-regressive term (AR or p) captures the relationship between current and past values, accounting for any lingering effects from previous data points. Secondly, the integrated term (I or d) addresses seasonality or trends within the data and ensures that any underlying patterns are properly accounted for. Lastly, an ARIMA model's moving average term (MA or q) represents the weighted average of past forecast errors. By incorporating this term, the model can better smooth out short-term fluctuations or noise in the data, improving its ability to capture underlying patterns and forecast future values.

To understand polarization dynamics within election campaigns in Istanbul and Budapest, I construct two sets of ARIMA (1,0,1) or ARMA models for each city's mayoral election campaign, which allows the comparison of campaigns across space and time. One set captures the positive dimension of polarization, which equates to the formation of the in-party group or identity. The other set captures the negative dimension of polarization, focusing on how actors construct the out-party. The model's underlying assumption is that elite members affectively polarize due to specific content and intra-elite interactions. When

constructing in and out-groups, they utilize various cues, as well as push each other in a positive or negative direction.

In the baseline model, with an autoregressive (AR) term of 1, the current polarization value is influenced by its own value at the preceding time step. Simply put, today's polarization is partially predicted by yesterday's polarization. Additionally, the moving average term (MA) with a lag of 1 represents the weighted average of past forecast errors, helping to smooth out short-term fluctuations or noise in the data.

The ARIMA (1,0,1) model assumes that polarization values remain stationary over time, meaning their mean and variance do not change. This implies that the data exhibits no discernible seasonality or consistent patterns. Although speeches did not occur in a regular cadence, polarization (in and out-party) was recoded as a percentage of total messages cued in a day. To confirm the stationarity of polarization data, augmented Dickey-Fuller tests (Dickey & Fuller, 1979) were conducted, yielding significant results ($p < .001$ in all four cases), thereby rejecting the null hypothesis of non-stationarity. In short, as the baseline models were stationary, the data did not require differencing.

10.2 Models and data

In Chapter 5, the election campaign period spanned 51 days in both cities, exceeding the minimum number of data points required for the model (Kim et al., 2016; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). To facilitate analysis, the frequencies of issues and tones were transformed into percentages of total messages per day. This transformation recoded issues into continuous independent variables, addressing the issue of variance in the number of speeches, particularly during critical periods such as nearing election day. Standardizing variables further allowed for meaningful interpretation of coefficients and ensured comparability of their impact.

This study introduces a novel approach, the Dynamic Polarization Model, developed specifically to analyze affective polarization dynamics in elite discourse. Unlike traditional methods, which categorize tones as positive or negative, this model utilizes percentage variables derived from frequency data to capture the nuanced shifts in positivity and negativity over time. By incorporating an autoregressive term, the model reveals the dynamic nature of affective expressions and how elites influence each other's tones. Additionally, by including issue variables, the study explores the role of key issues in

shaping polarization dynamics, shedding light on whether they foster in-group cohesion or out-group differentiation. Thus, the model comprehensively explains affective polarization dynamics in elite discourse.

After establishing the four baseline models for positive and negative polarization in both Istanbul and Budapest (Model 1), additional model specifications were examined to ensure the robustness of the analysis. In Model 2, exogenous independent variables were introduced based on the established hypotheses, with cross-validation performed for the opposing dependent variable. Subsequently, a comprehensive evaluation was conducted by merging the positive and negative models and cross-validating them with both dependent variables, thereby enhancing confidence in the findings. Furthermore, Ljung-Box tests were conducted for each model, totaling 16 tests across all models. The non-significant results of these tests indicate robustness and bolster the validity of the analysis. Finally, the corresponding explained variance for each model is provided below the output tables for further insight into the models' performance.

10.2.1 Positive polarization models

Chapters 6 and 8 have highlighted the alignment of the Istanbul and Budapest mayoral elections with the issue salience theory. In both cities, parties emphasized distinct policy issues while converging on specific populist and character-based themes. Building on the qualitative evidence presented in Chapter 6, this chapter employs time series analysis to test the prevalence of positive communication surrounding policies rigorously.

The underlying hypothesis posits that in contexts of opposition victory against populist incumbents, policies would contribute to positive polarization, shaping the construction of in-party identity. This hypothesis stems from the observed absence of comprehensive policy debates in illiberal regimes, leading parties to rely on selective emphasis rather than position cues. To operationalize this, the positive polarization models incorporate the entirety of the campaign discourse, encompassing all elite cues from various parties. Specifically, the baseline positive models examine government policies, opposition policies (selectively emphasized by each party), and shared policies. Despite differential prioritization by parties, shared policies represent topics occasionally referenced across campaigns, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis. By controlling for selective and shared

issues, these models provide a comprehensive assessment of the role of policies in shaping positive polarization dynamics within the campaign discourse.

In the Istanbul campaign, the positive model includes two government policies, two opposition policies, and a shared issue. The top two policies of the AKP were religion and infrastructure, while traffic and transportation and labor were tested as opposition policies, with urban renovation as a shared issue. Although women and children were the most important campaign topic for the opposition, these references highly correlated with appeals to the people (r = .417, p = .002), as in İmamoğlu's speeches, vulnerable social groups embodied collective injustice and economic grievances (Chapter 6). To test the role of all kinds of populist content, policies concerning demographic groups were omitted from the analysis. Instead, as unemployment was another highly salient issue in the opposition campaign, and economic and labor variables were highly correlated, they were merged into a single variable. Hence, labor and traffic were tested as opposition policies in the positive polarization model for the Istanbul election campaign.

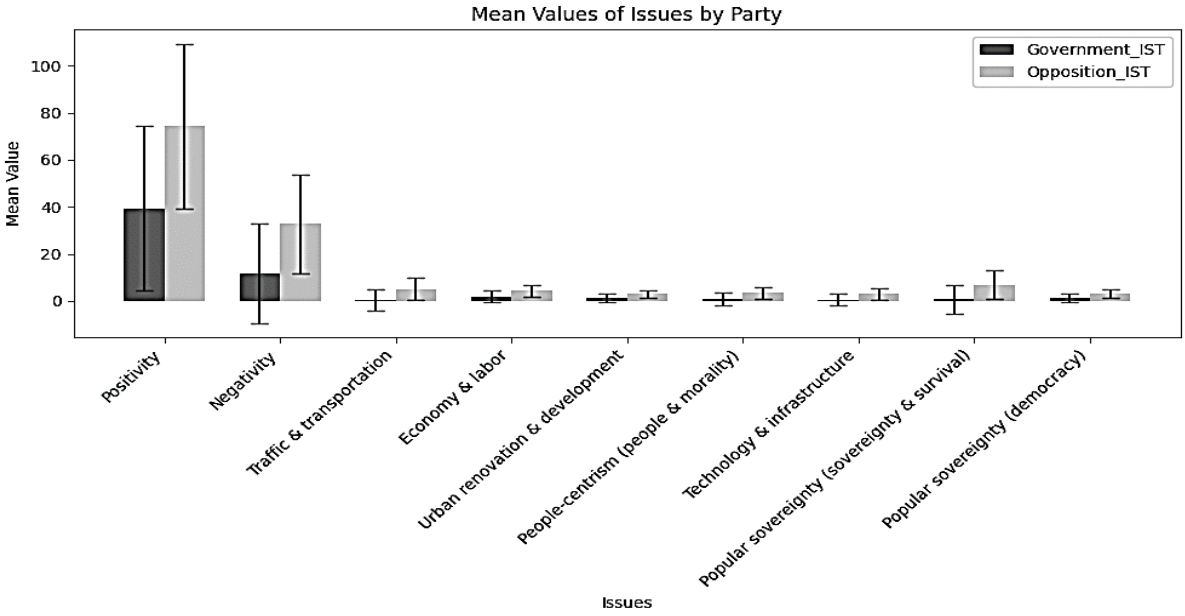


Figure 10.1: Average salience of issues (%) per party in Istanbul, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals.

Modeling the Budapest election posed greater challenges due to the heightened confrontation between parties compared to Istanbul. Parties opted for press briefings as the primary campaign event, enabling them to present more contrasting arguments. To ensure

clarity in attributing policies to specific parties and avoid complicating polarization dynamics, a strategic approach was taken in selecting testable policies.

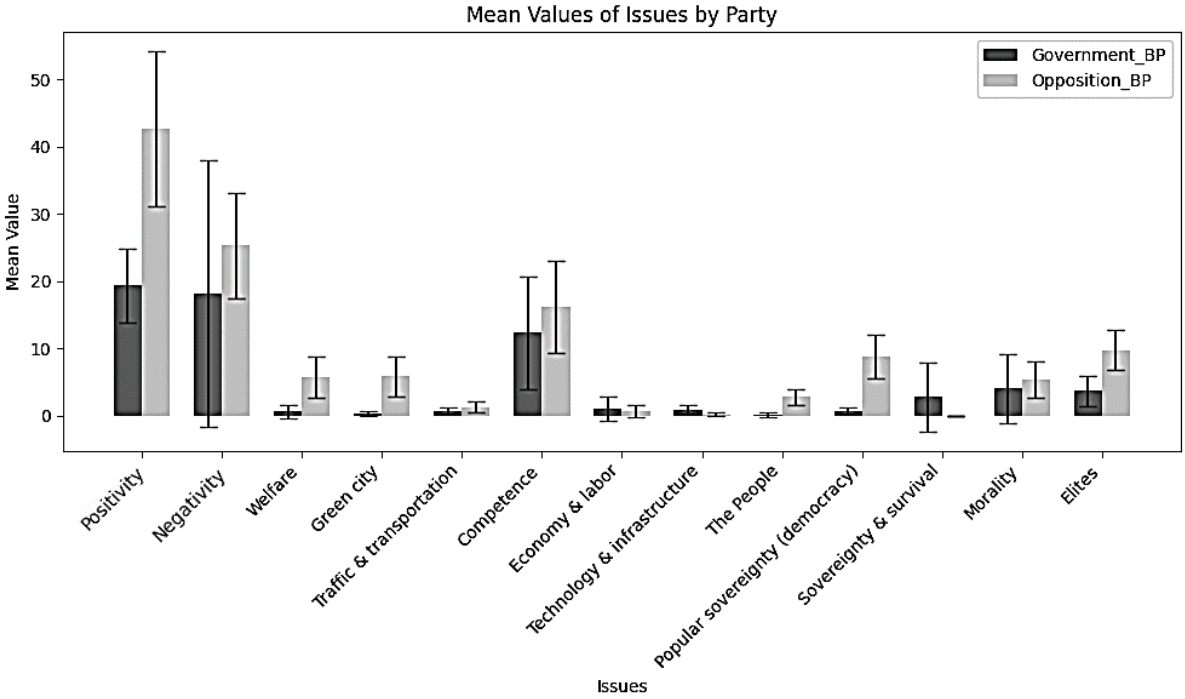


Figure 10.2: Average salience of issues (%) per party in Budapest, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals.

In this context, two opposition and two government policies, a shared policy, and a shared character issue were carefully chosen. The selected government issues included economy and labor, aligning with infrastructure, while welfare and green city were drawn from the opposition's agenda. Additionally, transportation was identified as a shared policy, and competence as a mutual character issue between parties. Regarding opposition policies, the selection process was more straightforward than in the government's case. However, to increase observations, variables such as liveable city, green areas, and environmental protection were amalgamated into a single variable. Additionally, welfare, the second most salient opposition theme after competence, was included in the model.

Including government policies in the model proved to be more challenging. Like the Istanbul model, labor and economic variables were merged into a single variable due to high multicollinearity. Despite infrastructure not being among the most salient messages, it was included in the model due to its expected significant contribution to in-party identity building.

The decision to include two additional, albeit less significant, government policies stemmed from the high multicollinearity observed between potential independent variables. Centralization and administrative efficiency exhibited strong correlations with competence ($r = .517$, $p < .001$ and $r = .387$, $p = .005$ respectively), one of the most salient issues, while immigration interacted with the security aspect of popular sovereignty ($r = .881$, $p < .001$). Although individually less salient, labor and infrastructure were anticipated to enhance the understanding of positive polarization dynamics when considered together. Furthermore, these less relevant issues were less likely to be intertwined with populist rhetoric, facilitating a clearer examination of their independent effects on polarization.

Earlier hypotheses suggested that elite confrontation or polarization increases concerning populist issues (H2). However, Chapter 9 findings indicated that the utilization of such content is in line with populism's Manichaean nature. Consequently, it's reasonable to anticipate that populism would contribute to both positive and negative polarization dynamics. Regarding positive polarization, appeals to the people and morality were expected to play a role in in-party group formation in Istanbul. While these concepts were theoretically distinguished in previous chapters, their strong correlation in the Istanbul case ($r = .733$, $p < .001$) led to their consolidation into a single variable. The excerpts below illustrate the intertwining of these issues in speeches.

> "The people of this city are hungry for goodness, and I see the hope in your eyes; you warm my heart, wherever you are, you warm my heart. Let me tell you something: I promise not to say bad words in your presence for a single day." (İmamoğlu, No. 85)
>
> "The point is to fulfill what you promised in the squares when the nation gives authority. So, the main thing is to be a man of your word. Thank God we achieved this." (Erdoğan, No. 254)

While appeals to the people were expected to contribute to positive polarization in Budapest, due to the high level of anti-elitism showed in Chapter 9, morality was anticipated to be more prevalent in out-party formation. Hence, this variable was added to the negative polarization model in the Budapest context.

Additionally, democracy, representing an aspect of popular sovereignty, was incorporated into the Budapest model based on Chapter 9 findings, which indicated its significant contribution to in-party identity-building. However, content analysis findings suggested that democracy could be crucial for the opposition in constructing their out-party identity. Furthermore, competence, identified as the most salient issue in both cities, was expected to primarily influence positive polarization in Budapest. However, its examination

in Istanbul was hindered by its high correlation with morality ($r = .588$, $p < .001$). As the final step, political ideology and transparency were added as control variables for Istanbul, while youths and media were used for the Budapest model.

10.2.2 Negative polarization models

It was previously hypothesized that in the context of opposition victory against a populist incumbent, populism would serve as the primary source of elite confrontation. Therefore, the remaining populist components were expected to contribute to negative polarization. Sovereignty and survival, particularly the security aspect of popular sovereignty, emerged as the most salient issues for both the AKP and Fidesz governments. However, unlike in the case of the Budapest campaign, democracy was included in the negative polarization model for Istanbul. Here, as policies, morality, and the people were anticipated to account for positive polarization, this populist issue was expected to play a role in constructing the out-party identity for the opposition. Also, unlike in Istanbul, due to the high level of anti-elitism, morality was built in the negative model for Budapest. Additionally, the inclusion of elites in the negative models was deemed appropriate, as references to elite segments and corruption represent a direct manifestation of anti-elitism. Finally, multiculturalism and small-scale business were added as control variables for Istanbul, while culture and decentralization were included in the Budapest model.

10.3 Results

The Dynamic Polarization Model for positive affective polarization sheds light on how populist content and policy messaging contribute to in-party identity formation (Table 10.1) in the Istanbul election campaign. Notably, the opposition's emphasis on these factors, driven by the greater resonance of their policies, underscores their strategic advantage in shaping positive polarization dynamics. However, of particular note is the non-significance of the AR term across all models, implying that parties did not influence each other in positive polarization. This suggests that in-party signals were not contagious, and parties did not participate in in-group identities' reciprocal shaping.

The significance of the constant in the first three models underscores a fundamental level of positive polarization, which remains unexplained by previous polarization levels or exogenous variables. However, its lack of significance in Model 4 indicates that issue

variables successfully accounted for polarization, suggesting a dynamic interplay between issue dynamics and affective polarization.

Opposition policies demonstrated significant influence throughout the models, with Economy and labor emerging as the most impactful variable on in-party formation. In Model 4, a one percent increase in these messages corresponded to a substantial 2.54% increase in positive polarization. Similarly, Traffic and transportation, primarily associated with the opposition, showed consistent significance across all models, contributing to a 1.16% increase in positive polarization in the combined model. In contrast, government policies exhibited weaker performance across different model specifications. While religion did not reach significance, technology and infrastructure showed moderate significance in Model 4, with a one percent increase resulting in a 2.33% increase in positive polarization. Urban renovation and development, a shared issue but more prominent in the opposition agenda, displayed significant impact, particularly in Models 2 and 4. In the final combined model, a one percent increase in this issue translated to a noteworthy 2.46% increase in positive polarization.

Regarding populist contents, neither the government's nor the opposition's popular sovereignty arguments significantly contributed to in-party group construction. Instead, people-centrism, encompassing morality and appeals to the people, showed consistent significance across model specifications. In the final model, a one percent increase in these appeals translated into a notable 1.08% increase in positive polarization. A surprising finding emerged regarding the significance of references to elites in in-party identity building. Despite being relatively few in the Istanbul context, these references were moderately significant. This oddity may be explained by the affirmative tone used by the opposition in discussing their alliance, emphasizing competence in local governance to gain popular support. While the Istanbul election was not devoid of anti-elitism, the government's emphasis on the opposition's alleged threat to popular sovereignty rather than corruption suggests that mentions of the political elite weighed more on in-party identity formation than establishing the out-party identity.

Table 10.2 displays negative polarization models for Istanbul. Following the baseline model, cross-validation was conducted to assess the impact of independent variables from the positive model on negative polarization (Model 2). Subsequently, Model 3 examined populist content variables expected to influence negative polarization, while the

final combined model (Model 4) integrated all independent variables, further validating the results. In contrast to the positive model, previous polarization emerged as highly significant in the baseline model for negative polarization (Model 1). However, the significant Moving Average (MA) term in the same model suggests that the model does not account for specific unexpected shocks. Additionally, after introducing exogenous variables and enhancing explanatory power, the influence of previous negative polarization on current polarization diminished.

Throughout the models, all populist components exhibited significance at various points. In Model 2, despite being anticipated to contribute to positive polarization, people-centrism displayed moderate significance. This suggests a nuanced role where these messages contribute not only to in-group construction but also, to a lesser extent, to out-group formation. Moral messages, in particular, contribute to the construction of the out-group, as elites establish contrasts with their rivals through moral narratives. While elites were found to influence positive polarization in the combined model primarily, they also displayed moderate significance in out-party formation in Model 3. This implies that when considered alongside other populist content, elites play a role in out-group formation in Istanbul, although they predominantly contribute to in-group identity building when all factors are considered.

Furthermore, both popular sovereignty variables – security and democracy aspects – consistently demonstrated significance in negative polarization. While security-related issues were exclusively attributed to the government, democracy-related messages were prominent in the opposition's campaign. This indicates that parties utilize popular sovereignty to construct the out-party identity, albeit focusing on different dimensions. The security dimension weighed more heavily in negative polarization, with a one percentage point increase in this government issue leading to a 1.79% increase in polarization. Conversely, although moderately significant, a one percentage point increase in the democracy issue resulted in a 1.58% increase in negative polarization. These findings align with previous research highlighting the prevalence of popular sovereignty in public attitudes in Turkey (Aytaç et al., 2021). However, while both the government and opposition emphasize popular sovereignty for out-party identity formation, it is more pronounced in the government's discourse. Conversely, the opposition places greater emphasis on positive

polarization, focusing on the formation of in-party identity through populist and policy messages.

The Dynamic Polarization Model for positive affective polarization in Budapest (Table 10.3) reveals significant party interactions. In the baseline model (Model 1), the AR term showed significance, but the inclusion of the significant constant indicated room for model improvement. In the final combined model (Model 4), the AR term emerged as highly significant when controlling for all issue factors. This suggests that a one percent increase in positive rhetoric leads to a 0.78% increase in positive polarization, indicating that elite members influence and sway each other positively in the Budapest context.

These models, encompassing all parties' messages, imply two possible explanations for these findings. Firstly, when parties refrain from direct confrontation, they devote more attention to self-promotion and nurturing their in-group identity. Secondly, qualitative insights suggest that intra-party dynamics also contribute to polarization acceleration. For instance, political allies often publicly praised each other during press briefings, likely reciprocating positive behavior. This pattern was particularly notable in the opposition campaign, where allies strategically bolstered in-party identity to rally public support and secure votes.

> "András Pikó (candidate for District 8 mayor) is a pure and authentic person. (He is) Józsefváros's (District 8) hope, and our hope as well, because this world wants us to believe that politics can only be like rogues do. András Pikó is the proof that it is not. After all, it is not only our candidate and Józsefváros's hope but also our hope that politics can and should be done only with honor." (Donáth, No. 214)
>
> "Gergely Karácsony can simultaneously embody everything that we call Budapest: freedom, solidarity, and the new moral and cultural purity and surplus that Budapest has lost in recent years, especially in recent weeks." (Kunhalmi, No. 230)

Moreover, the majority of policies consistently demonstrated significance across various model specifications. While Economy and labor emerged as moderately significant among government policies in the final model, contributing to a 0.66% increase in positive polarization, Technology and infrastructure exhibited high significance. A one percent increase in this theme resulted in over a 3% increase in positive polarization, highlighting the pivotal role of road construction issues for Fidesz in in-party group construction. However, caution is warranted due to the limited observations (SE = 0.848), indicating the relatively low prevalence of these messages throughout the campaign. Qualitative evidence suggests that infrastructure discussions were sporadic, occurring primarily at thematic events such as road openings.

Welfare and green city policies, associated with the opposition, displayed varying levels of significance. While welfare policies were only moderately significant in the combined model, Green city consistently demonstrated significance across different specifications. Model 4 revealed that a one percent increase in welfare messages led to a 0.85% increase in positive polarization, while the impact of Green city messages was also 0.85%. These findings indicate that press briefings allowed the Budapest opposition to present multifaceted policy arguments, enabling them to both promote their own program and critique the government. Although their impact may be less pronounced than government messages, smaller standard errors suggest the consistent prevalence of these messages throughout the opposition campaign, underscoring their role in identity formation. Furthermore, traffic and transportation, a shared issue but with a more prominent role in the opposition campaign, demonstrated strong significance across various model specifications. In the final model (Model 4), a one percent increase in this issue contributed to a 0.88% increase in positive polarization in Budapest.

In many respects, findings regarding populist components mirror those of the Istanbul context. Despite widespread anti-elitism in elite rhetoric, morality emerged as moderately significant in the combined model for positive polarization (Model 4). A one percentage point increase in moral discourse led to a 1.08% increase in positive polarization, indicating the significant contribution of moral messages to in-party identity construction in Budapest. Additionally, appeals to the people proved strongly significant in in-party identity formation, with a one percent increase in these messages contributing to a 1.94% increase in positive polarization. Unlike in Istanbul, however, it was exclusively the opposition that directly appealed to the people in the Budapest campaign, while this component was virtually absent from Fidesz's rhetoric. Additionally, democracy, one of the major opposition issues showed consistent albeit moderate significance in positive models. Thus, overall, the opposition appears more focused on fostering in-party identity formation through consistent policy and people-centric populist messages.

The Dynamic Polarization Model for negative affective polarization (Table 10.4) highlights the consistent prevalence of party interactions, albeit to a lesser extent compared to positive polarization. Parties demonstrated sensitivity to previous sentiments, effectively swaying each other toward a negative direction. In the combined model, a one percent increase in negative rhetoric resulted in a 0.83% increase in affective polarization. Thus, in

the Budapest context, polarization proved contagious at the elite level, with actors reacting to both negative and positive messages. Notably, while attacks triggered counterattacks and reciprocated out-party animosity, positivity further accelerated in-party identity formation.

Despite 'competence' being included in the positive model, it consistently demonstrated significance in out-party group formation. Rather than morality, parties utilized competence –the rival's perceived lack of leadership skills and experience – to construct the out-party identity. In the final model (Model 4), a one percent increase in these messages led to a 0.92% increase in negative polarization.

In terms of populist content, elites exhibited similar behavior regarding the use of sovereignty and survival – the primary government message in both cities. In Budapest, a one percent increase in these messages resulted in a 1.46% increase in negative polarization. Unlike in Istanbul, references to elites were consistently significant in negative models. In the combined model, a one percent increase in these messages led to a 0.93% increase in negative polarization. Hence, the elite's pronounced anti-elitism in Budapest may contribute to diminished trust, negative partisan identity, and widespread anti-elitism among the general public. Furthermore, unlike in Istanbul, democracy did not significantly impact out-party construction but rather in-party identity formation: a one percent increase in this issue led to a 0.71% increase in positive polarization. Thus, while both parties targeted elites regarding their competence, the government focused more on out-party formation by addressing the perceived threats to popular sovereignty in case of opposition victory.

Table 10.1: Elite-level affective polarization in Istanbul (in-party or positive dimension).

Variable	*Model 1*[1]	*Model 2*[2]	*Model 3*[3]	*Model 4*[4]
Constant	58.166***	6.975*	38.428***	5.951
	(6.767)	(2.977)	(8.595)	(3.236)
AR	.650	-.178	.627	.021
	(.476)	(.201)	(.461)	(.224)
MA	.495	-.994	.419	-.998
	(.546)	(1.840)	(.540)	(5.882)
Traffic and transportation		1.194***		1.162***
		(.168)		(.181)
Economy and labor		2.841***		2.536***
		(.247)		(.254)
Urban renovation and development		1.979***		2.456***
		(.294)		(.348)
Religion		1.299		.106
		(1.139)		(1.552)
Technology and infrastructure		2.714**		2.328*
		(.839)		(1.006)
People-centrism (morality and the people)		1.222***		1.084***
		(.086)		(.104)
Popular sovereignty (democracy)			3.823	-.221
			(1.982)	(.719)
Popular sovereignty (sovereignty and survival)			1.046	.287
			(1.183)	(.431)
Elites			3.541	1.819*
			(2.096)	(.835)
Multiculturalism			13.015	5.183
			(9.269)	(2.983)
Small-scale business			2.048	1.683
			(3.190)	(1.184)
Political ideology		7.612		8.042
		(4.153)		(4.080)
Transparency		.069		2.205
		(2.014)		(2.153)
N	51	51	51	51

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; Standard errors given in parentheses.
[1]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .290, R^2 = .041.
[2]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .833, R^2 = .362.
[3]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .241, R^2 = .282.
[4]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .098, R^2 = .948.

Table 10.2: Elite-level affective polarization in Istanbul (out-party or negative dimension).

Variable	*Model 1*[1]	*Model 2*[2]	*Model 3*[3]	*Model 4*[4]
Constant	18.291	4.205	5.230*	1.838
	(9.108)	(3.486)	(2.268)	(3.096)
AR	.947***	.515	.595	.422
	(.159)	(.577)	(1.768)	(.810)
MA	.798**	.287	.543	.210
	(.233)	(.649)	(1.843)	(.929)
Traffic and transportation		-.013		.067
		(.230)		(.213)
Economy and labor		.301		.131
		(.358)		(.390)
Urban renovation and development		.447		.433
		(.379)		(.346)
Religion		3.009		.518
		(1.527)		(1.671)
Technology and infrastructure		2.065		.581
		(1.274)		(1.285)
People-centrism (morality and the people)		.225*		.184
		(.102)		(.100)
Popular sovereignty (democracy)			2.174**	1.580*
			(.666)	(.735)
Popular sovereignty (sovereignty and survival)			1.964***	1.785**
			(.402)	(.522)
Elites			1.441*	.732
			(.664)	(.891)
Multiculturalism			2.081	1.765
			(2.933)	3.350
Small-scale business			-.243	-.156
			(1.039)	(1.123)
Political ideology		-4.556		-3.948
		(5.251)		(5.924)
Transparency		1.721		1.016
		(2.384)		(2.347)
N	51	51	51	51

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; Standard errors given in parentheses.
[1]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .916, R^2 = .108.
[2]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .216, R^2 = .489.
[3]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .448, R^2 = .563.
[4]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .119, R^2 = .644.

Table 10.3: Elite-level affective polarization in Budapest (in-party or positive dimension).

Variable	*Model 1*[1]	*Model 2*[2]	*Model 3*[3]	*Model 4*[4]
Constant	48.681***	10.314	41.826***	4.961
	(1.528)	(8.475)	(6.402)	(9.063)
AR	.818***	-.437	.435	.777***
	(.158)	(1.562)	(.315)	(.253)
MA	1.000	-.520	.751**	.998
	(12.147)	(1.496)	(.242)	(3.690)
Welfare		.712		.848*
		(.383)		(.395)
Green city		.959**		.851**
		(.300)		(.308)
Traffic and transportation		.918***		.877***
		(.218)		(.221)
Competence		.518*		.342
		(.252)		(.274)
Economy and labor		.534*		.644*
		(.256)		(.245)
Technology and infrastructure		2.706**		3.006**
		(.838)		(.848)
The People		1.815***		1.936***
		(.505)		(.519)
Popular sovereignty (democracy)		.846*		.714*
		(.373)		(.341)
Popular sovereignty (sovereignty and survival)			-.392	-.081
			(.477)	(.414)
Morality			.818	1.083*
			(.536)	(.512)
Elites			.195	.110
			(.441)	(.368)
Culture			-.299	1.073
			(2.352)	(.583)
Decentralization			2.622	1.799
			(3.330)	(.552)
Youths		-.149		-1.335
		(1.922)		(1.975)
Media		.220		.686
		(2.284)		(2.368)
N	51	51	51	51

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; Standard errors given in parentheses.
[1]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .063, R^2 = .064.
[2]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .974, R^2 = .522.
[3]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .114, R^2 = .151.
[4]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .808, R^2 = .623.

Table 10.4: Elite-level affective polarization in Budapest (out-party or negative dimension).

Variable	*Model 1*[1]	*Model 2*[2]	*Model 3*[3]	*Model 4*[4]
Constant	37.225***	22.079	20.484***	-1.206
	(2.328)	(8.642)	(5.250)	(9.376)
AR	.386	.781***	.872***	.828*
	(.569)	(.218)	(.202)	(.334)
MA	.570	.997	.997	.702
	(.508)	(2.111)	(1.889)	(.433)
Welfare		.087		.571
		(.850)		(.354)
Green city		-.232		.051
		(.341)		(.257)
Traffic and transportation		-.076		-.034
		(.250)		(.197)
Competence		.884**		.921***
		(.300)		(.233)
Economy and labor		.174		.431
		(.289)		(.225)
Technology and infrastructure		-.978		-1.477
		(.945)		(.767)
The People		-.286		-.081
		(.566)		(.450)
Popular sovereignty (democracy)		-.218		-.197
		(.381)		(.360)
Popular sovereignty (sovereignty and survival)			.831*	1.462***
			(.409)	(.363)
Morality			.745	.324
			(.517)	(.484)
Elites			.977**	.925**
			(.352)	(.329)
Culture			.379	-.383
			(2.082)	(.826)
Decentralization			.195	-.041
			(3.076)	(.988)
Youths		2.194		1.432
		(2.251)		(1.751)
Media		-.572		1.195
		(2.656)		(2.099)
N	51	51	51	51

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; Standard errors given in parentheses.
[1]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .666, R^2 = .040.
[2]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .525, R^2 = .311.
[3]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .300, R^2 = .122.
[4]ARIMA 1,0,1 model statistics: Ljung-Box r = .822, R^2 = .594.

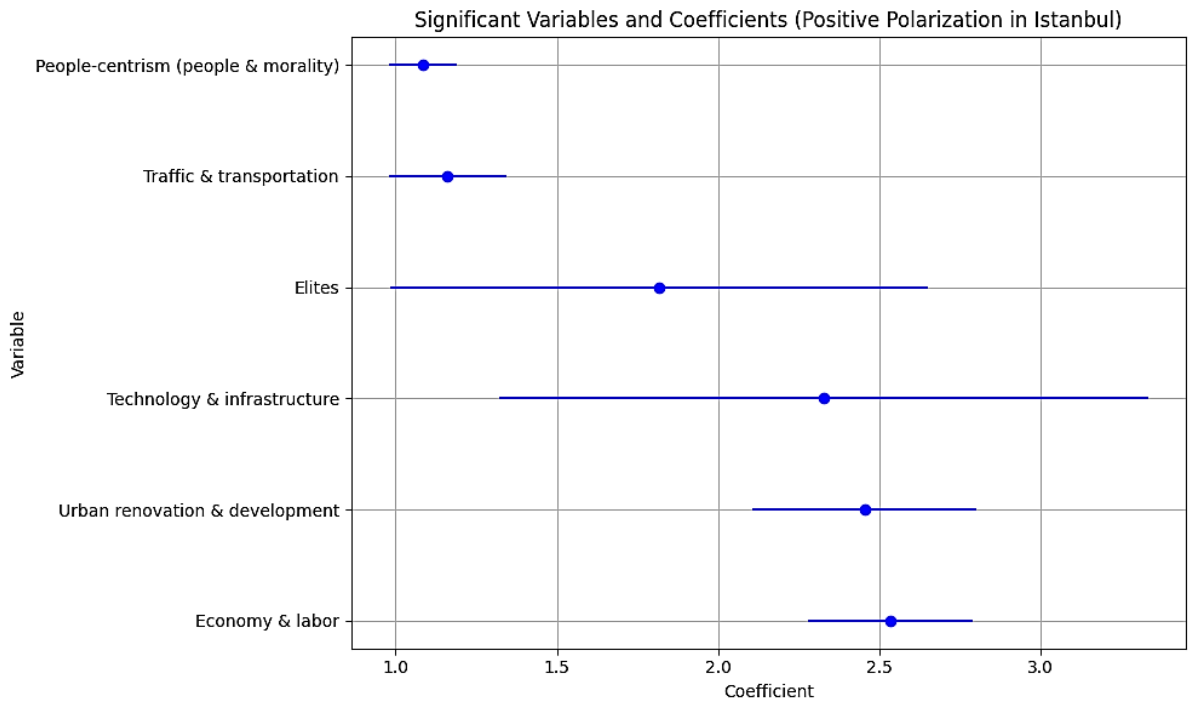


Figure 10.3: Parameter estimates (coefficients) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals from the ARIMA model for positive polarization in Istanbul.

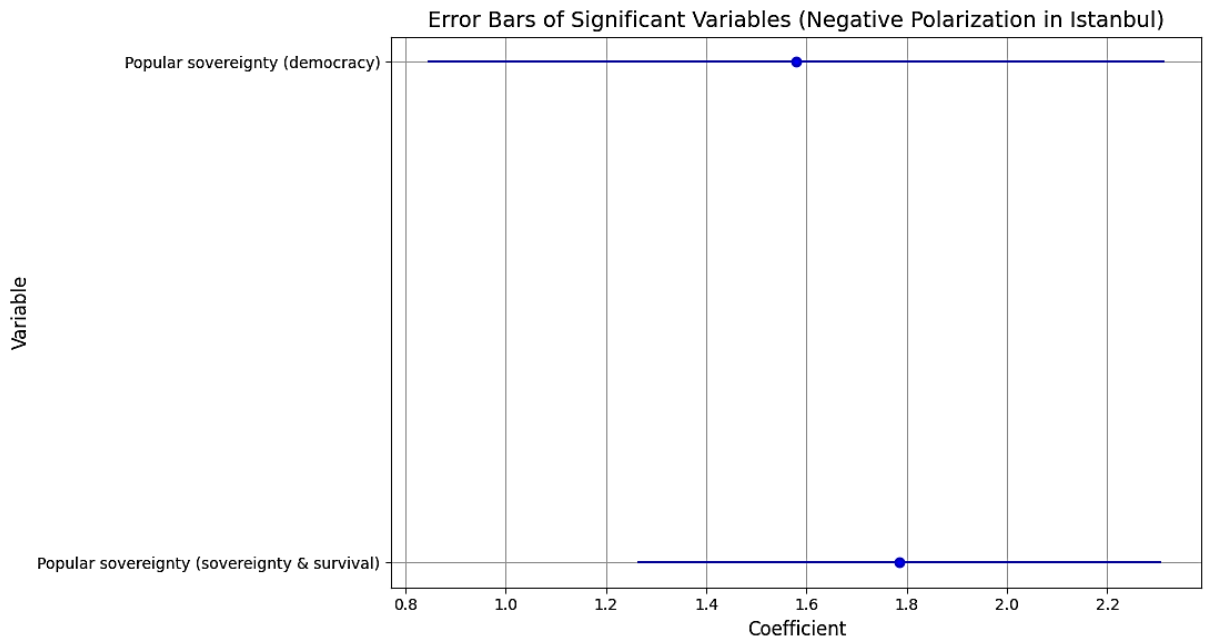


Figure 10.4: Parameter estimates (coefficients) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals from the ARIMA model for negative polarization in Istanbul.

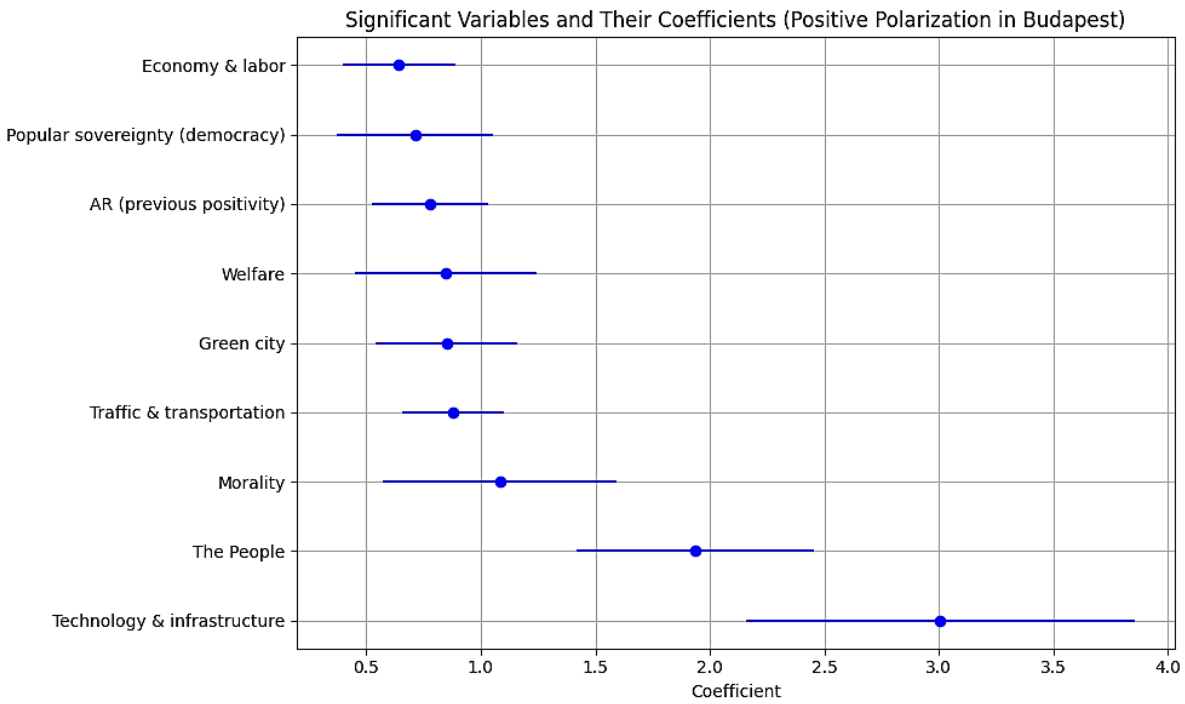


Figure 10.5: Parameter estimates (coefficients) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals from the ARIMA model for positive polarization in Budapest.

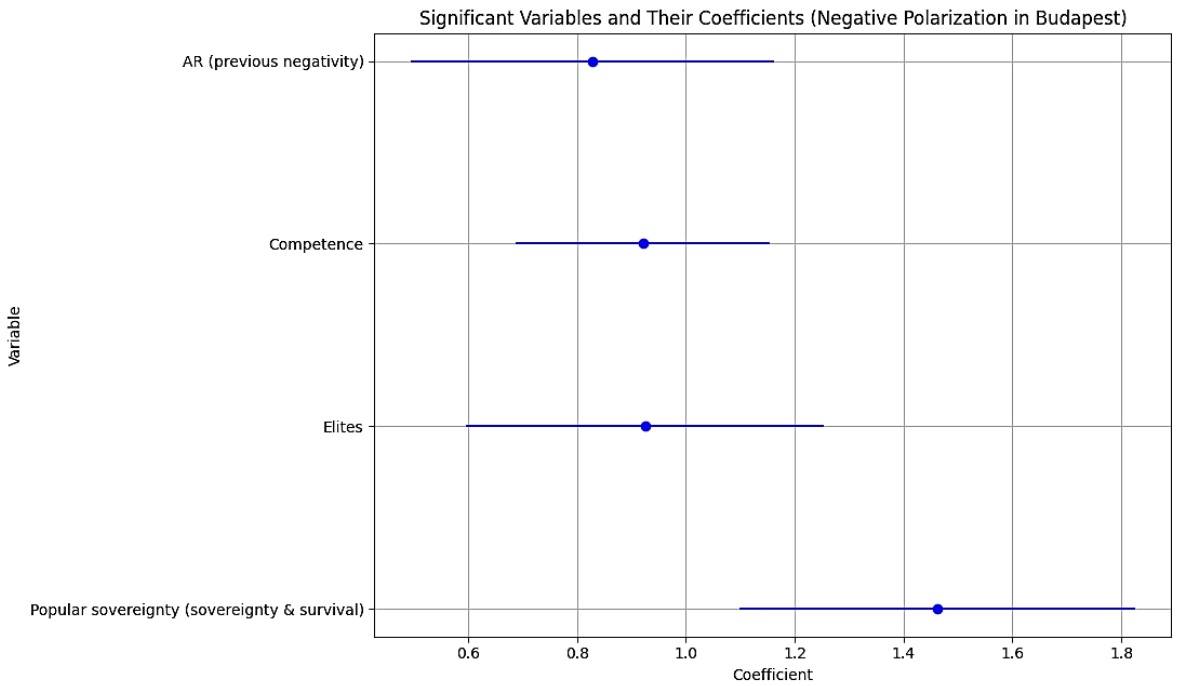


Figure 10.6: Parameter estimates (coefficients) and corresponding 95% confidence intervals from the ARIMA model for negative polarization in Budapest.

10.4 Discussion

This dissertation applies time series analysis to election speech data from the uncommon scenario of opposition victory under populist rule in illiberal systems. It introduces the Dynamic Polarization Model to understand the formation of affective polarization at the elite level. While there has been extensive discussion on interpersonal affect and the influence of elite cues, particularly in election campaigns (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019), our understanding of the role of party agendas in in-group and out-group dynamics has been limited. Although some studies highlight the significance of moral and populist messages in affective polarization (Garrett & Bankert, 2020; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021), others suggest that additional issues may contribute to partisan identity (Petrocik, 1996; Alesina, 1988). Moreover, while evidence indicates that party interactions exacerbate elite polarization (Macy et al., 2021) and that negative rhetoric is contagious among elites (Dolezal et al., 2016), there is a lack of comparative models that account for elite interactions across different contexts.

The application of the Dynamic Polarization Model to positive and negative polarization reveals the significant role of policies, populism, and morality in in-party identity formation, as well as the importance of populism in out-group formation, particularly in the context of opposition victory under populist governments (H1 and H2). This suggests that partisanship, rather than policy positions, drives inter-party conflict in these contexts, with populism emerging as the primary source of polarization. Consequently, successfully challenging incumbent governments requires opposition parties to refrain from engaging in policy-based attacks, as these may inadvertently reinforce the existing lack of substantive policy debates.

In the 2019 election campaigns, the strategic use of issue salience and selective emphasis became prominent, particularly in multi-party contexts like Istanbul and Budapest. Opposition parties formed alliances, leading to intensified competition between top candidates while marginalizing others. Instead of focusing on policy debates, parties conveyed distinct agendas to voters, using policies to construct their in-group identities. The opposition prioritized credibility and issue ownership, bolstered by populist arguments, while simultaneously leveraging populism to vilify the ruling parties and mobilize anti-government sentiment. However, the specific issues emphasized varied based on the targeted voter base, with the opposition focusing on democracy-related grievances in

Istanbul and elite criticism in Budapest. Nevertheless, both opposition candidates relied on populist discourse, albeit emphasizing people-centrism more than anti-elitism (H3).

In contrast, incumbent governments adopted a different strategy, prioritizing issues related to sovereignty and survival, particularly emphasizing the security aspect of popular sovereignty, to frame their campaigns negatively. Consequently, they placed greater emphasis on constructing out-group identities rather than fostering in-group cohesion, as observed in the opposition's approach. While both governments utilized policy issues, their relevance to in-party identity formation varied, with some aligning closely with populist narratives while others were sporadic. As a result, the opposition ran more positive campaigns leading up to these critical ballots (H4).

The results of the Dynamic Polarization Model partially support the earlier posited hypothesis on intra-party interactions heightening polarization (H5). The findings suggest that elite members polarize one another to varying degrees depending on the context. However, the results also align with the presumed strategic calculations of these parties. The analyses reveal that while elite members in Budapest indeed impact one another, particularly in terms of positive polarization, this dynamic is not observed in Istanbul. Party documents can easily explain this discrepancy. For instance, İmamoğlu's campaign manager, Necati Özkan (2019), extensively discussed the team's decision to disregard the AKP's attacks. Despite Erdoğan's vigorous attacks against the major opposition CHP, its chair Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, and the opposition in general, the opposition managed to refrain from direct confrontation. However, qualitative analysis (as presented in Chapter 6) demonstrated that the president tactfully avoided mentioning İmamoğlu's name.

In contrast, elite members in Budapest did influence each other. Fidesz chose to employ intense and sustained attacks against the opposition in a deliberate effort to repel and divide their supporters, recognizing that a united opposition would outnumber government constituents. On the other hand, the opposition pursued a campaign strategy centered around press briefings, swiftly reacting to the government's actions to rally polarized opposition voters against a common adversary: the government. Therefore, while affective polarization may escalate amid open inter-party conflicts, its persistence is not due exclusively to direct confrontation. Parties utilize policy stances and character narratives to construct in-group identity while leveraging populism to create the out-party identity.

Despite the insights provided by this study, there are limitations that should be acknowledged. Multicollinearity prevented the construction of separate models to assess the precise impact of each party's messages on polarization. Additionally, this analysis does not address how elite messaging influences voter behavior or the strategies parties employ to reach voters. Nonetheless, the Dynamic Polarization Model offers valuable insights into the dynamics of party competition in highly polarized environments, underscoring the impact of party interactions and issue framing on affective polarization. Future research could explore voter exposure to partisan cues through survey analyses and extend elite discourse analysis to social media platforms to compare parties' roles in affective polarization across countries.

10.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter shed light on the complex dynamics of affective polarization within the context of opposition victory under populist rule in illiberal systems. Through time series analysis and the Dynamic Polarization Model, I explored the formation of affective polarization on the elite level, revealing the significant roles of policies, populism, and character issues in in-party and out-party identity formation. The findings underscore the dominance of partisanship over position cues in these contexts, with populism emerging as a primary source of inter-party conflict.

Moreover, the study elucidates the strategic maneuvering of political parties during election campaigns, demonstrating their use of selective emphasis and distinct agendas to foster in-group identity construction. While opposition parties capitalized on populist arguments to establish credibility and mobilize against the ruling parties, governments prioritized out-party identity construction through negative rhetoric and emphasis on sovereignty and survival. However, a notable distinction emerges between Istanbul and Budapest regarding the prominence of populism in elite rhetoric. While experimental designs have demonstrated the prevalence of popular sovereignty in Turkish public attitudes (Aytaç et al., 2021), these findings strengthen the assertion that it is the elite who are responsible for fostering such sentiments. By extension, one might anticipate a high level of anti-elitism among the Hungarian public, given its pervasive presence within elite discourse during election campaigns.

Despite the study's contributions, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, including the inability to fully account for the impact of political parties on polarization

through distinct models. Nonetheless, the Dynamic Polarization Model offers valuable insights into the dynamics of party competition in highly polarized environments, highlighting the need for further research on voter exposure to partisan cues and elite discourse analysis across different media platforms.

In conclusion, this study underscores the complexity of affective polarization dynamics in the context of opposition victory under populist rule, providing a foundation for future investigations into the role of political messaging and party strategies in shaping electoral outcomes and democratic processes. Given the quasi-two-party configuration observed in otherwise multi-party contexts, it is logical to explore the applicability of the Dynamic Polarization Model to two-party scenarios or contexts characterized by intense two-party contestation. Another approach could involve expanding the analysis to include more parties and interaction variables. In summary, this model provides insight into the origins of popular attitudes, complementing findings from quasi-experimental designs.

Chapter 11

CONCLUSION

The year 2019 saw unexpected victories for the opposition in two countries known for their illiberal tendencies. On March 31, Ekrem İmamoğlu, representing the CHP and IYIP alliance, won the mayoral election in Istanbul, a crucial stronghold for the ruling populist AKP. Several months later, on October 13, Gergely Karácsony, backed by an all-opposition alliance, secured Budapest, considered the crown jewel of the Fidesz government. Istanbul had been under the control of the same pro-Islamist elite since 1994, following Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's victory in the mayoral election (Esen & Gumuscu, 2019). In contrast, Budapest had only come under Fidesz's control in 2010, when independent candidate István Tarlós secured the capital. However, the city, marked by corruption scandals, had since been a stronghold of government control over public resources and EU funds (Jakli & Stenberg, 2021; Kovarek & Dobos, 2023). Winning these crucial municipalities not only provided visibility and opportunities for the opposition but also disrupted clientelist networks and demotivated local party organizations (Demiralp & Balta, 2021; Yavuzyılmaz, 2021), which were vital for these governments.

However, İmamoğlu and Karácsony's tenures were far from smooth sailing. The first setback for the Turkish opposition came immediately after their victory when the results were annulled in Istanbul. While İmamoğlu managed to secure the rerun with an even more significant advantage, he faced further hindrances. Being seen as a strong potential candidate for the 2023 presidential election, İmamoğlu came under heavy attack. In December 2022, he received a prison sentence of two years and seven months for calling YSK members fools *(ahmak)* for annulling the March 2019 election results (BBC Türkçe, 2022). Despite appealing the sentence, it jeopardized his potential candidacy. Additionally, Canan Kaftancıoğlu, head of the CHP Istanbul chapter, was sentenced to nine years for criticizing Erdoğan and allegedly supporting the PKK (Deets, 2023; Öktem, 2021). Finally, in 2021, Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu launched an investigation against the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality based on the accusation of hiring 500 terrorists (Deets, 2023).

Moreover, while the government tightened the metropolis's budget, they also attempted to claim success over projects executed by the metropolitan administration (Deets, 2023). Nevertheless, İmamoğlu maintained a strong presence on social media, which he used to inform the public about developments in the city on a daily basis.

A smooth power transition seemed to be on the horizon when Karácsony cycled to the Budapest City Hall on his first day in office, but his term as mayor was far from tranquil. The first major blow came during the pandemic when the government applied new austerity measures to municipalities. Fidesz imposed a solidarity tax on larger and wealthier municipalities, typically held by opposition mayors, while systematically exempting small Fidesz strongholds (Kovarek & Littvay, 2022). Budapest was required to pay almost twelve times the tax it paid under the Fidesz administration, which Karácsony argued was an unbearable financial burden for the municipality. Like İmamoğlu, Karácsony emerged as a potential candidate for prime minister during the primaries for the 2022 election, but like the mayor of Istanbul, he eventually did not run for office. While he faced heavy attacks during this period, an even greater blow came in 2024 when the government introduced a law establishing the Sovereignty Protection Office *(Szuvereintásvédelmi Hivatal),* which would scrutinize organizations receiving foreign funds. Among many, Karácsony was implicated by government officials in accepting foreign donations, hence aiding the US's interference in the 2022 general elections. Nevertheless, voicing budgetary constraints, Karácsony maintained a strong presence on social media, posting about projects on a daily basis.

Despite facing attacks from national governments, both mayors announced their rerun in the 2024 local elections. While the public was left guessing about the AKP and Fidesz candidates, it was clear that İmamoğlu and Karácsony would face heated contests regardless. Although they could capitalize on their incumbency, governments, learning from their defeat, could find new ways to hinder them. Moreover, being in office also has its disadvantages, as the opposition mayors' inability to realize their programs could damage their issue reputation, swaying voters back to ruling parties.

Furthermore, İmamoğlu and Karácsony are about to prove themselves after the opposition's defeat in the general elections of 2022 and 2023. As the 2019 local elections remain the sole examples of overcoming populist governments, understanding how the

opposition could win these crucial elections is now more important than ever. I argue that, lacking experience in office, it was strategic communication that brought opposition victories against long-standing populist governments in illiberal systems, against all odds.

11.1 Unseating Populists in Power: *Exploring the role of strategic communication*

The publication of *Populists in Power* (2015), nearly a decade ago, shattered earlier optimistic expectations regarding the episodic nature of populism. Albertazzi and McDonnell's work revealed that populist parties were not only capable of navigating policy challenges in office but also adept at responding to public demands. Despite providing a hopeful perspective on populism within the norms of contemporary democracies, alarming trends emerged in Turkey and Hungary by the time of the book's publication. Rather than adhering to democratic norms, populists in power chose to rewrite them, giving rise to illiberalism (Mudde, 2021).

Illiberalism, often synonymous with competitive authoritarianism (Levistky & Way, 2010) but with distinct nuances (Wintrobe, 2018), underscores the obstacles faced by opposition parties in these systems. Most notably, it illustrates the uneven playing field to which the opposition is confined, marked by deteriorating media freedom, financial and legal restrictions, and vilification in government rhetoric (Levitsky & Way, 2002). By reducing contestation across all facets of politics, governments heighten the stakes of elections regularly held in these countries. Therefore, maintaining strict control over the media becomes paramount for ensuring uninterrupted incumbency (Bermeo, 2016). How can the opposition overcome the challenges of populists in power and secure victory in elections? And how do populists ultimately stumble in elections despite these daunting circumstances?

I argue that strategic communication plays a crucial role in helping the opposition overcome populists in power. Firstly, the opposition strategically selects a set of issues that diverge from the government agenda. Ideally, these issues are the ones that the public perceives as salient, as they are more likely to lead to electoral victory (Edwards et al., 1995; Benoit et al., 2003; Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Amorós & Puy, 2010). Secondly, to establish credibility and ownership over their agenda, the opposition employs populist rhetoric, prioritizing the people-centric aspect over its anti-elitist counterpart. Thirdly, their agenda enhances the

opposition's positive communication, thus increasing its ability to mobilize support by fostering the in-party identity. However, in this process, the opposition may adopt populist tendencies, and its selective emphasis may deepen existing partisan divisions in the public.

Populists are renowned for thriving in crisis or being prepared to perform if an emergency does not naturally arise (Moffitt, 2015). However, for populists in power, not all crises are advantageous. Voters' assessment of parties' issue reputation depends largely on their performance in government (Bélanger & Meguid, 2008; Petrocik, 1996), a factor that applies equally to populist parties, particularly those firmly entrenched in power. A party's poor performance in office can change voters' minds about its competence over issues, particularly economic ones (Christensen et al., 2014).

Amid unfavorable crises, like parties in established democracies (Dellis, 2009; Carson et al., 2020; Adams et al., 2023), populists in power seek to divert attention to issues of their expertise. Typically, these are security issues for which right-wing populism is well-known (Zaslove, 2004; Béland, 2020; Shehaj et al., 2021). However, this study suggests that security, including immigration and terrorism, serves as a pretext for populist governments to create and exploit the perceived crisis in popular sovereignty. By emphasizing popular sovereignty and security, populists present themselves as champions of the people against perceived elite threats, hence their heightened anti-elitism.

Recognizing that security issues have brought them electoral success in the past (Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2021; Bíró-Nagy, 2022), especially in the context of contentious polls, populists in power seek to appeal to both their core supporters (Stuckelberger, 2021) and swing voters (Rohrschneider, 2002) while dissuading opposition supporters from voting (Krupnikov, 2011). In essence, they strategically prioritize popular sovereignty and security to solidify their support base and mitigate the risk of electoral defeat. Consequently, they tend to run more negative campaigns, a characteristic typically associated with opposition parties in democratic settings (Nai, 2020; Haynes & Rhine, 1998; Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter & Van der Brug, 2013; Druckman et al., 2009; Johansson, 2014). Thus, one of the most intriguing findings is that negative political communication, characterized by attacks against rivals and the cultivation of out-party identity, is not exclusive to incumbency. Instead, I argue that the tones

of political parties are directly influenced by the issues they discuss during the communication process. Parties, in turn, select these issues based on the specific voter base they aim to reach.

Party alliances supported both opposition candidates as they embarked on their campaigns for the 2019 mayoral elections. They strategically adopted key events commonly used by the respective governments during their own campaigns. This decision likely stemmed from their differing mobilization goals. İmamoğlu, for instance, organized neighborhood meetings, a departure from the typical approach associated with Erdoğan's campaign style (Özen, 2020; Gümrükçü, 2022). These gatherings provided a platform to showcase his program and persona rather than directly confronting the government, which was the stated aim of the opposition (Özkan, 2019). In contrast, Karácsony, mirroring the approach of the Fidesz government, utilized press briefings as a means to engage with the public. By doing so, he executed his declared strategy (Index, 2019): launch attacks on the government and respond to its actions to rally polarized opposition voters against Fidesz. At the same time, he consistently underscored the strength of the opposition alliance by avoiding solo appearances on camera. Despite encountering challenges, such as producing fewer election videos and reaching fewer districts than the governments, opposition candidates successfully enhanced their online presence during the campaign.

Despite their earlier years in power being characterized by strong economic performance, by 2019, neither the AKP nor Fidesz could campaign on the same issue. Poor economic policies failed to address and even contributed to the rise in living costs and unemployment in Turkey (Öniş, 2019). Having been in national government for nearly two decades, the AKP could do little but try to shift the focus of public concern to its perceived competence. Although Hungary was not facing a crisis of similar magnitude at that time, the economy had slowed down by 2019, and welfare had become an increasingly pressing public concern (Boros & Laki, 2018). Having been in power for almost a decade, Fidesz was responsible for the nationalization of public sectors previously managed by municipalities (Hegedüs & Péteri, 2015), which could be perceived as significantly contributing to declining standards.

Consequently, neither government could campaign on issues the public perceived as salient. They attempted to redirect the focus to their competence to salvage the election, using

popular sovereignty and security as the rationale. Therefore, while such issues are often associated with the right-wing, it was the context that compelled this government to prioritize this agenda, contrasting with their early programs when economic concerns were their primary focus.

The constraints faced by governments created opportunities for the opposition in Istanbul and Budapest. As incumbent district mayors, their candidates lacked the experience and visibility comparable to ruling parties, prompting them to highlight issues that could resonate with a wider electorate. Both İmamoğlu and Karácsony prioritized welfare, albeit focusing on different aspects. İmamoğlu addressed public grievances by pledging to create employment opportunities and implement welfare schemes for vulnerable demographic groups, particularly women and children. Conversely, Karácsony vowed to address healthcare and housing crises by expanding local government oversight. Additionally, he promised measures for environmental protection, aligning with the concerns of Budapesters at that time (Publicus, 2019). While these issues were consistent with the ideologies of the parties they represented and could enhance their credibility, their significance to the broader public was a crucial factor in their issue selection. Nevertheless, candidates also faced the challenge of gaining the trust of highly polarized electorates amidst the ongoing discrediting tactics of populist governments.

The opposition candidates' approach in the 2019 election campaigns involved the application of populist strategies. Moreover, the content analysis revealed that they employed as much populist rhetoric as their respective governments. Additionally, the analysis found that governments exhibited more anti-elitism than opposition parties, which tended to focus more on people-centric messaging. While previous research has highlighted the flexible nature of anti-elitism in populist discourse (Enyedi, 2016; Aytaç et al., 2021), this study sheds light on the diverse elite groups targeted by incumbent populists and the heightened intensity of their use compared to challengers.

Although intense people-centrism was a shared characteristic among opposition parties, there were variations in the use of populist elements. İmamoğlu primarily conveyed moral messages to cultivate a positive image, while Karácsony emphasized restoring popular sovereignty through democratic practices. Moreover, in the unique context of Budapest,

Karácsony frequently appealed to the people, a strategy that appeared equally important for İmamoğlu and Erdoğan. Overall, opposition factions relied on robust people-centric messaging to bolster their credibility in the eyes of the public.

A significant realization by opposition parties was the futility of relying on issue position cues in illiberal contexts. As discussed in earlier chapters, governments in these countries ceased participating in televised debates in 2002 and 2010, respectively. Consequently, there is a dearth of substantive policy discussions, likely due to the entrenched grip on power by the ruling regimes. Furthermore, their tight control over the media prevents political rivals from meaningfully addressing their flawed policies. In 2019, Karácsony acknowledged that launching policy attacks would not lead to productive debates (Index, 2019), while İmamoğlu's campaign team opted against risking criticism to secure support from core government voters (Özkan, 2019). How can the opposition effectively critique the government and highlight its merits within limited maneuverability, enabling citizens to make comprehensive assessments during elections?

I argue that the opposition primarily targeted the government on populist grounds, with minimal emphasis on policy-based criticism. In essence, they framed the out-party group through populist cues in their discourse. Recognizing that opposition voters outnumbered government supporters, albeit disillusioned with political parties, Karácsony sought a unifying theme to mobilize them against the government, employing heavy anti-elitist rhetoric. In contrast, İmamoğlu took a more nuanced approach. While some have emphasized the significance of İmamoğlu's indirect attacks against the government (Demiralp & Balta, 2021), I argue that even more prominently, the opposition, including leaders of the CHP and IYP, capitalized on grievances associated with popular sovereignty, particularly focusing on issues concerning democratic practices. These findings contribute to developing the Dynamic Polarization Model, which illustrates how elite discourse fuels affective polarization, thus deepening the entrenched partisan divide in Turkish and Hungarian societies.

11.2 Crafting love and hate: Insights from the Dynamic Polarization Model

Turkey and Hungary have been characterized by intense affective polarization at the public level (Vegetti, 2019; Laebens & Öztürk, 2021; Ertan et al., 2022; Bettarelli et al., 2023). As a

result, partisan attitudes dominate citizens' political decision-making processes (Matuszewski & Szabó, 2019; Çakır, 2020; Aytaç et al., 2021; Demirel-Pegg & Dusso, 2022; Faragó et al., 2023). While scholarship agrees that elite polarization spills over to the public (Banda & Cluverius, 2018; Skytte, 2021), particularly intensifying during campaigns where elite cues are prominent (Iyengar et al., 2012; 2019), little is known about how political actors generate affective polarization. Similarly, while there is ample evidence that morality (Garrett & Bankert, 2020; Rudolph & Hetherington, 2021), populism, negativity (Sood & Iyengar, 2016), and specific policies (Harteveld, 2021) accelerate affects, further exploration is needed into how the elite utilizes these issues to craft in-group and out-group identities.

I argue that in the context of an opposition victory against a populist incumbent, the reconstruction of in-group and out-group dynamics in their campaign is crucial. The Dynamic Polarization Model, employing time-series methodology on elite discourse data, serves as a powerful tool for assessing how politicians interact with each other and with issues in forming group identities. This model can shed light on the role of policies, which have thus far been unexplained in affective polarization.

Despite the lack of substantial policy debates in illiberal contexts, citizens are not left uninformed about policies in these contexts. However, to overcome populist incumbents, opposition parties cannot rely on position cues to sway voters. Instead, they promote issues distinct from those of the government. The process results in two different realities that opposing camps convey to voters. As selective emphasis helps voters distinguish between parties (Gunderson, 2024) and is inherently tied to party identity (Petrocik, 1996; Alesina, 1988), it is reasonable to expect that political actors utilize policies to foster in-party identity. In summary, due to the government's tight control over the agenda and their lack of interest in policy debates, opposition parties have no choice but to prioritize issues they believe resonate with the people, even if they contrast with those emphasized by the incumbents.

In the context of an opposition victory against a populist incumbent, intra-party confrontation primarily revolves around populist issues. Conversely, policies are relegated to a marginal role in elite conflict, primarily serving as elements in the construction of in-group identity. Moreover, while morality serves as a crucial tool for fostering in-group affinity among the elite, competence, particularly in certain contexts, forms the basis for out-group antipathy.

In line with these generalizable findings, the analysis also suggests that populist components, consistent with their Manichean underpinnings, function as accelerators for either the in-group or out-group. While some components exhibit dual utility in different model specifications, the final models indicate their selective utilization.

It is crucial to recognize that campaigns and polarization are dynamic processes, evolving over time with internal dynamics that fluctuate (Hetherington, 2001; Garner & Palmer, 2011; Banda & Cluverius, 2018; Zingher & Flynn, 2018; Levin et al., 2021). The Dynamic Polarization Model delves into these nuances, capturing the evolving nature of elite rhetoric, unlike static accounts of campaign communication. Importantly, it elucidates the roles of elite members in generating affective polarization. Unlike network analysis approaches (Macy et al., 2021), it enables comparisons across different times and contexts, facilitating the derivation of generalizable findings.

While the model reveals the opposition parties' intensified efforts to bolster the in-party group, it also highlights intriguing contextual disparities between Istanbul and Budapest. İmamoğlu's issues predominantly contributed to the in-party identity, with only the democratic aspect of popular sovereignty generating negative polarization. Although İmamoğlu addressed autocratic measures, the content analysis indicates that opposition party leaders often raised such concerns. Thus, in line with existing literature, negative polarization was primarily associated with less prominent figures in the campaign (Dolezal et al., 2017).

In contrast, the Budapest opposition focused extensively on reshaping the out-party identity. The content analysis revealed a delicate balance between people-centrism and anti-elitism within the camp. Unlike İmamoğlu, Karácsony primarily reinforced the in-party group by highlighting democracy-related issues. In contrast to Fidesz, the Budapest opposition predominantly appealed to the people. However, their negative polarization was more pronounced than the Istanbul opposition's, aiming to unite fragmented opposition voters against the government. Most significantly, they emphasized the government's corruption to redirect people's discontent.

Governments prioritized negative polarization more than their challengers, particularly emphasizing the security aspect of popular sovereignty. This focus addressed perceived infringements on people's will by various elite groups. Notably, Fidesz's discoursed lacked

emphasis on genuine policies unconnected to populist issues. Unlike the AKP, policy issues did not persist throughout Fidesz's campaign and carried less weight in positive polarization than elements of the opposition agenda. Conversely, identifying policies uncorrelated with populism in Fidesz's campaign proved challenging, as such issues were sporadic and limited in scope.

The Dynamic Polarization Model revealed that elite members do not necessarily influence each other in the polarization process. This assertion hinges on parties' decisions to engage with one another. Sources indicate that the Istanbul opposition deliberately avoided confrontation with the government and ignored their attacks (Özkan, 2019). Conversely, the Budapest opposition chose to react to the government's actions through press briefings and daily statements (Index, 2019). As Karácsony stated in an interview, the opposition aimed to make citizens realize that it was the ruling party, not the opposition, that stood against the people. In summary, parties can generate affect without interacting with each other, but as the analyses suggest, contexts characterized by heated partisan exchanges tend to exhibit higher levels of negative polarization.

11.3 The prevalence of strategic campaigning: Comparative analysis and rival theories

This study revealed the role of strategic communication in opposition victory against populist incumbents in the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest mayoral elections. Through three methodologies, the study identified crucial elements in parties' strategies, whose configuration helped the opposition overcome populist governments. The fact that the allied opposition lost the 2022 and 2023 general elections in Hungary and Turkey, respectively, supports the applicability of the theory. I argue that in general elections, lacking experience in government, opposition parties could only rely on strategic communication to win against incumbents.

In the lead-up to the 2022 general election in Hungary, opposition parties selected a single candidate and published a comprehensive 72-page program titled *Rising Hungary (Emelkedő Magyarország).* However, the program lacked a clear and coherent agenda despite its length. It encompassed a broad range of issues, from the adoption of the Euro to the proposal for a new constitution but failed to prioritize or articulate specific policy proposals effectively. Also, the

opposition campaign was notably absent from many countryside regions, limiting the reach and impact of the opposition's electoral efforts.

In addition, the opposition candidate, Péter Márki-Zay handling of the issue of the Russo-Ukrainian war during the campaign further hindered the opposition's prospects. In an interview, he suggested that under his leadership, Hungary would unconditionally support NATO, even if it meant military intervention in Ukraine. This statement played into the government's narrative, which framed the election as a choice between peace and war. Fidesz capitalized on this narrative, positioning itself as the party of peace and stability, contrasting with the perceived warmongering of the opposition (Partizán, 2022).

I previously posited that populism tends to thrive in times of crisis. The prevailing circumstances likely played to the advantage of Fidesz, which had long asserted its dominance over security issues. However, the defeat of the opposition in the 2022 elections can be attributed to several factors, including their lack of a clear agenda and their contentious stance on the war in Ukraine. Rather than attempting to shift the focus away from security issues, the opposition found itself in direct competition with the government, which held expertise in this domain. Additionally, the opposition's heavy emphasis on anti-elitism may have hindered their efforts to establish credibility and appeal to a wider voter base, encompassing various opposition and government factions. To better appeal to core government supporters, the opposition should have refrained from criticizing government policies and instead placed greater emphasis on promoting their own agenda. In light of these strategies, the general election brought a never-before-seen victory for Fidesz with 67.84% with an advantage of 1,113,375 votes compared to the opposition (NVI, 2022).

The electoral success of the Nation Alliance drew the attention of more opposition parties, culminating in the formation of the Table of Six *(Altılı Masa)* ahead of the 2023 general election. On February 28, 2022, the parties unveiled a comprehensive 156-page program, committing to steer Turkey's transition back to a parliamentary system. However, even as late as March, the opposition struggled to reach a consensus on the choice of candidate, leading to the temporary withdrawal of IYIP chair Meral Akşener from the negotiations. The intra-opposition feud came to a close on March 6, 2023, with the announcement of CHP chair Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as the presidential candidate.

Initially, the campaign appeared to mirror İmamoğlu's strategies, employing positive communication and pledging a democratic transition post-election. However, especially after the inconclusive results of the first round of the presidential elections, their focus shifted to immigration and terrorism (Sayın, 2023). Kılıçdaroğlu accused Erdoğan of allowing 10 million immigrants into the country and vowed to repatriate them to Syria (Goksedef, 2023). His anti-elitist stance gained traction, with promises of cracking down on construction companies (referred to as the Gang of Five, *Beşli Çete)* with alleged ties to the ruling party (CHP, 2023). Similar to the opposition in Hungary, they eschewed traditional campaigning in rural areas in favor of a robust online presence (Menğüç, 2023)

At first glance, the climate appeared once more unfavorable for the ruling alliance. With high inflation, living costs, particularly food prices, surged (TÜİK, 2023b; 2023c). Moreover, a powerful earthquake struck the country's southeastern region on February 6. The government drew severe criticism for its delayed response to the disaster. Once again, however, they sought to shift the focus of public attention, with the Minister of Interior suggesting Western interference in the elections (NTV, 2023). Similar to the local election campaign, Erdoğan implicated the opposition in collusion with the PKK, a state-designated terrorist organization (Steinwehr, 2023).

Despite the challenging circumstances, the government adeptly redirected attention to issues within its domain of expertise. Conversely, the opposition displayed an inconsistent communication strategy, transitioning from a people-centric approach to one focused on anti-elitism. Moreover, they ventured into security-related topics that traditionally align with the government's strengths, thereby struggling to gain credibility for their agenda and failing to attract government voters effectively. Consequently, while the government experienced significant setbacks, it retained its status as the largest party in parliament, with Erdoğan securing re-election as president (YSK, 2023).

The mayoral and general elections underscore the limited applicability of economic voting theory (Duch & Stevenson, 2008; Lewis-Beck & Nadeau, 2011) within these specific contexts. Economic voting theory suggests that incumbent governments typically experience electoral success during periods of economic prosperity, while economic downturns often benefit opposition parties. However, in illiberal settings, research consistently highlights a

disparity between the government's and the opposition's interpretations of economic conditions (Szabó & Gerő, 2019; Aytaç et al., 2021), emphasizing the role of strategic communication by political parties.

In the case of Hungary, neither the mayoral nor the general elections occurred amidst unfavorable economic conditions. The 2019 election witnessed opposition victory despite high employment and the lack of inflation. In contrast, local and general elections in Turkey brought unfavorable climates to the government. Moreover, public concern regarding the state of the economy was paramount in 2023 (Aytaç, 2024). Aytaç contends that while economic theory remains applicable, divergent perceptions are essential in shaping voting behavior. Therefore, the opposition must use strategic communication to bolster credibility and ownership over economic matters. İmamoğlu's victory by a small margin in 2019 supports this idea. It is likely that the opposition could alter a small percentage of government voters' perception regarding the economy and manage to establish ownership over issues like employment.

Thus, economic voting theory's applicability is limited in illiberal contexts like Turkey and Hungary, where governments exert significant control over media and public discourse. Unlike democracies, these states lack independent news sources, with voters heavily relying on partisan media, conveying issue cues selectively (Çarkoğlu et al., 2014). Intense polarization thus leads voters to perceive the economic reality differently (Aytaç, 2024). The present study's findings underline the elite's role in shaping citizens' realities, showing the prevalence of selective emphasis in illiberal contexts. In short, an objectively bad economy is insufficient for the opposition's victory. Strategic communication can foster challengers' credibility and perceived ownership over policy issues in a highly polarized environment.

An alternative explanation for the success of the opposition could be attributed to effective coalition-building ahead of the 2019 elections. The uneven playing field for the opposition, which includes curtailing the electoral system and gerrymandering (Levitsky & Way, 2010), is central to these contexts, as securing uninterrupted incumbency is crucial for these governments. In light of these challenges, electoral coordination and alliances can be expected to assist the opposition in overcoming the government. While the advantages of coalitions are more apparent in parliamentary elections,

in the local context, pre-election coordination and alliances could also help the opposition secure more votes in direct mayoral ballots and capture municipal councils.

Ample evidence demonstrates the crucial role of elite cues in the success of coalitions. While coalition signals in campaigns can update attitudes and impact voting behavior (Gschwend et al., 2017; Bahnsen et al., 2020), in non-democracies, joint opposition campaigning can unite voters against the government (Ong, 2022). It appears that not only can elite cues foster parties' credibility regarding issues, but also maneuvers, underscoring the crucial nature of strategic communication.

However, by including ideologically divergent parties, alliance-building posed further challenges for the opposition, necessitating strategic communication. Due to conflicting ideologies, the opposition could only hope for a maximum of 40% of the vote, which motivated them to reach out to government supporters (Özkan, 2019). Despite opposition voters being in the majority in Budapest, the alliance incorporated contradictory elements, ranging from the far right to the green left. Recognizing the prevalence of partisan divides, Karácsony declared his interest in depolarizing opposition voters and rallying them against their common adversary, the Fidesz government (Index, 2019). In summary, establishing political alliances cannot fully account for the opposition's success. Karácsony had to overcome intra-party feuds, while İmamoğlu had to sway government voters to win the election. Thus, strategic communication was vital in uniting diverse voter segments under the same banner.

11.4 Reflections and limitations

This study has underscored the critical role of strategic communication in enabling the opposition to effectively challenge populist incumbents. Through the application of three distinct methodologies, I have demonstrated how the opposition can strategically construct both in-party and out-party identities to enhance credibility among voters.

The content analysis has highlighted the significance of selective issue emphasis, adept utilization of populist rhetoric, and the employment of positive communication strategies by the opposition. Moreover, employing the Dynamic Polarization Model through time-series analysis has provided further insights. This analysis revealed that while policies and character

references play a pivotal role in in-party group construction, the opposition must predominantly rely on populist discourse when constructing the out-party group.

Finally, the incorporation of four in-depth case studies has supplemented the quantitative analyses with rigorous qualitative evidence. These case studies have offered valuable context and depth, enriching our understanding of the complexities involved in strategic communication dynamics within opposition movements.

Like any research endeavor, this study is not without its limitations. One of the most prominent limitations is the dissertation's inability to present public opinion data from the 2019 mayoral elections, primarily due to the unavailability of surveys, particularly from Hungary. Such data would have provided valuable insights into citizens' exposure to campaign messages and elucidated how opposition parties reached different voter bases. Furthermore, the assessment of how these messages impact voters, particularly the role of populist messaging in establishing issue credibility, could have been enhanced through experimental design. However, this approach was not feasible due to the passage of time since the 2019 elections.

While the three-method approach employed in this study contributes to the robustness and generalizability of the findings, the Dynamic Polarization Model has certain limitations. Modeling parties' discourse separately was hindered by high levels of multicollinearity between the issues they discussed. This challenge was particularly evident in the Istanbul case, where parties delivered similar speeches at rallies. Consequently, the data only allowed for modeling overall campaign discourse rather than specific party rhetoric, emphasizing the importance of content and qualitative analyses in evaluating its results.

However, as a time-series model, the Dynamic Polarization Model can easily apply to campaigns characterized by intense two-party contests. Its application to multi-party settings would necessitate separate modeling of parties' rhetoric, potentially mitigating multicollinearity issues between issues. With some modifications, the model could offer valuable insights into elections in multi-party systems, particularly in illustrating how elites craft identities in two-party and highly polarized settings, such as in the US.

This discussion of limitations naturally leads us to consider future research avenues. While this study contributes to our understanding of party interactions in non-democratic contexts under populist rule, there remains much to explore in these unique environments. One

potential path forward is to continue the analysis in the upcoming local elections of 2024. Examining election dynamics in contexts where the opposition controls municipalities under populist national governments would provide valuable insights. Will parties alter their strategies based on past experiences? How will the opposition leverage the advantage of incumbency? Conversely, how will governments seek to restore their credibility and undermine opposition power? Similarly, extending these analyses to national ballots could shed light on party dynamics and elucidate factors contributing to the opposition's inability to secure victory.

In conclusion, this dissertation has comprehensively examined strategic communication dynamics in opposition politics, particularly in the context of challenging populist incumbents. Through a multi-method approach, including content analysis, qualitative case studies, and the application of the Dynamic Polarization Model, valuable insights have been gleaned into how opposition parties construct identities and communicate with voters. While limitations, such as the inability to model parties' discourse separately and the challenges of applying the Dynamic Polarization Model in multiparty settings, have been acknowledged, they underscore the need for continued research in this area. Future research endeavors could explore party interactions in non-democratic contexts further and extend analyses to upcoming elections to unravel evolving dynamics and strategies. Ultimately, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of political communication strategies and provides a foundation for further inquiry into opposition politics and party competition in diverse political landscapes.

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Appendix 1

CODEBOOK AND CODING INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Unitization and coding

The methodology applied in this thesis builds on the Comparative Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2020) and Benoit's functional analysis (Benoit, 1999; 2004; 2016; Benoit et al., 2003). Manifesto Coding Instructions lay down unitization rules (5th revised edition, 2021 – hereafter Volkens et al., 2020), but I modified them to suit speech analysis.

The analysis aims to assess the *messages* campaigners convey to voters. In other words, to identify issues candidates find essential and the salience of these issues. It operates with *a priori* categories, i.e., coding categories are preliminarily determined and should be applied to texts by coders. Coding instructions aim to outline and explain these a priori categories so that coders can define cases (unitize) and determine variables when reading texts.

Two main phases constitute the coding process: **1) unitizing** (how many unique statements speakers make?) and **2) coding** (what kind of statements do speakers make?). However, in this analysis, sentences are double-coded. Each unit has **a) a topic** and **b) a function.**

A unit can have only one issue, so the coder must identify the *primary or most important issue*. Likewise, a unit can have only one tone: the coder must identify the *primary tone* he or she perceives.

1.1.1 Transcription

There are two subject languages included in this analysis, Hungarian and Turkish, whereas the coding medium is English. A database was created, including hundreds of original texts that are authentic transcriptions prepared by native speakers, so local election materials processed in this dissertation are searchable and transparent.

When speaking, noises, disturbances, and technical problems may affect understanding. Also, since speeches are often partially spontaneous, speakers may make mistakes or mumble

when performing. Therefore, validating the content of these speeches by native speakers was essential.

The main body of speeches should be unitized and coded. Some transcribed videos contained other kinds of media, like short videos. These elements were omitted for transcriptions, as they were often visual recordings.

1.1.2 Unitization

The coding instructions of Volkens et al. (2020) suggest splitting texts into quasi-sentences. "One quasi-sentence contains exactly one statement or 'message'" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 5). In speeches, a sentence often equals a quasi-sentence, having only one message. Consequently, 'one sentence is, at minimum, one quasi-sentence' (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 5).

Naturally, sentences can be ambivalent and may bear more than a single message. Moreover, political slogans deliberately contain manifold messages. Remembering that each message should have one issue and tone due to coding rules is essential. Its context determines the primary message, but the same sentence can bear a different primary message in different contexts. For instance: *"The city should be a place where you do not have to keep off the grass."* This is a slogan that has a manifold meaning determined by its context.

The analysis aims to limit units to sentences. A 'natural' sentence should coincide with a quasi-sentence (unit) unless more than one sentence constitutes a unit, or a sentence should be further scattered and turned into more than one unit.

There are occasions when two subsequent sentences should be coded as one. For example, when a colon can replace the full stop/period between them. An example would be: *"We wanted to provide candidates for eight million citizens. We did it."* These are not two unique arguments, as the sentences could be re-formulated as follows: *"We reached the goal of providing candidates for eight million citizens."*

When performing, speakers often repeat their sentences to gain time or stress an argument. When two following sentences repeat the same information, their content only slightly varies (e.g., rephrased with synonyms), or the content adds a slightly different aspect to the original argument, so the sentences should be coded as a single quasi-sentence. An example would be: *"Today, almost 30% of young people are unemployed. This means there are two million unemployed young people."*

In live speeches, performers may share short anecdotes or jokes, interrupting their argument. The function of these detours is typically to convey a single message. Hence, a 'text within a text' should be coded as a single unit and have the codes that correspond to their messages. An example would be: *"My mother went to the market some days ago, where she met a woman who told her, 'I pray for your son's success every day.'"*

Volkens et al. (2020) suggest cutting a natural sentence only if it 'contains more than one unique argument' (5). This can occur when 1) two unrelated messages in a single sentence or 2) the messages relate, but they are distinct, e.g., in terms of aspects of the same policy.

Semicolons may be a good indicator for splitting up texts. However, since these are spontaneous or semi-spontaneous speeches, a *comma* may also indicate the border between two quasi-sentences. If the sentence could be split into bullet points, that also indicates further unitization. When a sentence touches upon different segments of reality (domains) simultaneously, the sentence should be split into quasi-sentences.

Conjunctive and *compound sentences* may indicate unitization but do not necessarily entail it. When there is a compound sentence that contains two (or more) independent clauses, and a semicolon marks their border (in Hungarian and Turkish, often a comma), or a coordinating conjunction (for, but, yet) or a conjunctive adverb (therefore, moreover), it is very likely that the sentence should be split into quasi-sentences.

Volkens et al. (2020) argue that a single word cannot constitute a quasi-sentence. Some words inserted during a live performance, like 'thank you' or 'okay,' should be coded as part of the given quasi-sentence. Examples, reasoning, explanations, synonyms, etc., are not unique arguments.

Though the following sentences contain commas, they do not constitute more than one unique argument. *"She is a bright, clever, and hard-working person."* In this case, we do not get a significant new piece of information indicating the split-up of the natural sentence. *"We will defend our borders and sovereignty, no matter the costs."* This sentence is a statement on the importance of sovereignty, and the segments do not contain significant new information bits.

Similarly, examples do not constitute separate quasi-sentences: *"European states fell one by one due to immigration, including Italy, Germany, and now Spain."* This is to demonstrate the severity of the migration crisis.

In addition, sentences resembling the following should be coded as a single quasi-sentence: *"The government provided people with unemployment benefits instead of jobs, training, and affordable housing."* Although the sentence contains three policies, they all refer to labor groups. Examples, such as lack of jobs or housing, mean to demonstrate the depth of a single issue, namely, the government's inappropriate handling of the problems of labor groups.

Finally, a short comparative sentence should not be cut into two or more quasi-sentences. If parts of the sentence express explicit policy statements, the coder can divide them into quasi-sentences. For example: *"The left has impoverished the people, cut their pensions and social schemes, but the government tackled poverty by increasing pensions and social schemes."* If parts of the sentence do not express explicit policy statements but contrast sides, the sentence should not be cut in two. For example: *"They destroy, we build (the country)."* In this case, the context determines whether the sentence is positive or negative, depending on which part is prevalent.

1.1.3 Coding

This analysis is the fusion of the Manifesto Project's codebook and Benoit's functional analysis. It operates with two main variables, so each message should be coded simultaneously into 1) an issue and 2) a tone.

After splitting the text into quasi-sentences, the issue included in the message should be identified. The main interest of the analysis is: "What are the statements of the party/candidate? Which policy positions does the party/candidate convey?" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 8).

Category definitions cannot be exhaustive, as new issue aspects can occur in speeches. Hence, definitions are guidelines that enable the coder to analyze different texts (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 8).

Coding can be challenging due to the ambiguity of language (Volkens et al., 2020; p. 8). Language can be ambivalent because of rhetoric. Some messages may be indirect, so coding requires the coder's close attention and understanding. For example, *"I know that I made mistakes in the past."* Alternatively, *"I am far from being perfect."* If a candidate states this about himself or herself, the intention is likely to convey a positive message about his or her character to voters.

Also, a message may not convey a straightforward meaning. In this case, the message's context should help coding. Volkens and others (2020) suggest considering context levels:

1. The rest of the sentence
2. The previous and the following sentences
3. The whole paragraph or section within the speech
4. The entire speech
5. The event or the audience
6. Political discourse on the issue in the time of local elections

When ambiguous, an issue can be identified by the goals conveyed in the message. So, if someone says, *"In order to eliminate unemployment, we will open new schools,"* he or she refers to unemployment (702, labor groups) and not education policy.

However, this logic does not apply when the statement goes, "*We want A, so we must employ B and C as the only feasible options"* (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 9). Such sentences contain multiple messages. *"To eliminate unemployment, # we must develop educational institutions, # and we must provide better social assistance schemes to the job seeking. #"* This sentence, thus, contains three quasi-sentences that are important on their own.

In rare cases, quasi-sentences have neither an issue nor a tone nor any. Generally, greetings and opening remarks are quasi-sentences that do not have functions and topics relevant to this analysis. An example would be: *"Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. I am very happy to be here with you today."*

Similarly, sentences between or at the end of speeches cannot have either function or topic relevant to the research. Such a sentence would be: *"And now, let us watch the video together!"* Alternatively, *"Now I would like to call xy on stage."* Typical formalities have neither tone nor issue: *"Thank you for your attention."*

Similarly, when someone interrupts a sentence with an insertion, such as "*Dear Friends,"* it does not constitute a relevant separate quasi-sentence: *"And the European Union, my dear friends, has been very harsh on us."* However, when such a sentence starts a paragraph, it bears neither issue nor tone: *"Dear Fellow-Partisans, Dear Members of the Congress. Now, I need to make some remarks on the upcoming elections."*

There can be rare cases when the coder can apply a tone to a quasi-sentence but cannot find the appropriate topic to match the unit. In this case, the coder should find the closest category applicable to the message.

1.2 Codebook

Variable 1: Topic	
	000 No meaningful category applies
Domain 1: *External relations*	**101** Foreign special relations
	102 Military
	103 Peace
	104 European Union
Domain 2: *Freedom and democracy*	**201** Freedom and human rights
	202 Democracy
	203 Constitutionalism and the rule of law
	204 Deliberation
	205 Transparency
	206 Media
Domain 3: *Political system*	**301** Decentralization
	302 Centralization
	303 Governmental and administrative efficiency
	304 Political corruptions
	305 Political alliances
	306 Political elite
	307 Electoral system and elections
Domain 4: *Economy*	**401** Economic goals
	402 Poverty
	403 Prosperity and economic growth
	404 Technology and infrastructure
Domain 5: *Welfare and the quality of life*	**501** Environmental protection
	502 Green areas
	503 Livable city
	504 Traffic, transportation, car parking
	505 Waste management and public cleansing
	506 Urban renovation and development
	507 Social equality

	508 Culture
	509 Welfare state expansion
	510 Education
Domain 6: *Fabric of society*	**601** National way of life
	602 Immigration
	603 Emigration
	604 Terrorism
	605 Sovereignty and survival
	606 Traditional morality (religion)
	607 Law and order
	608 Civic mindedness
	609 Multiculturalism
Domain 7: *Social groups*	**701** The people
	702 Labor groups
	703 Agriculture and farmers
	704 Small-scale businesses
	705 Middle-class and professional groups
	706 Underprivileged minority groups
	707 Non-economic demographic groups
Domain 8: *Character*	**801** Competence
	802 Political ideology
	803 Morality

Variable 2: Tone

a Positivity (acclaim)

b Negativity (attack)

c Defense

x No meaningful tone applies

1.3 Codes and definitions

Variable 1: Issue

000 No meaningful issue applies

"Statements not covered by other categories; sentences devoid of any meaning" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 23). This may include formalities, such as greetings and salutations, even inserted within sentences.

Example 1: *Köszönöm szépen. Kedves Főpolgármester-jelölt úr! Kedves Polgármester-jelöltek! Kedves Leendő Győztesek!*

Example 2: *Sayın ilçe başkanım, İstanbul büyükşehir belediye başkanım, çok kıymetli genel başkan yardımcıları, milletvekilleri, geçmiş dönem bakanım, çok kıymetli İyi Parti ilçe başkanı ve en önemlisi çok kıymetli Eyüpsultan halkı; efendim, hoş geldiniz.*

Domain 1: *External relations*

101 Foreign special relations

Favorable or unfavorable mentions of countries with a special relationship with the given country. The need for cooperation with this country and assistance or aid from or to this country likewise limits or severs ties with this country. Opinions about countries, evaluation of their policies.

Example 1: *És azt a reményemet sem rejtem véka alá, hogy Közép-Európa gazdasági fejlődése magával hozza politikai együttműködésünk izmosodását is.*

Example 2: *Onun için buradan İsrail'i kınıyorum, İsrail'i kınıyorum, İsrail'i kınıyorum, bu kadar net.*

102 Military

"The importance of external security and defense" (Volkens et al., 2021, p. 13), including references to military expenditure, number of troops, the improvement of military strength, army modernization, etc.

Example 1: *Mi is azt valljuk, hogy a modern és ütőképes honvédség megteremtésének kulcsa a korszerű fegyverrendszerek hadrendbe állítása mellett a fiatalítás és az önkéntesség.*

Example 2: *Bakınız, savunma sanayinde 17 yıl önce biz %20'sini karşılıyorduk, şimdi %68 karşılıyoruz.*

103 Peace

References to peace in international relations, ending wars, reluctance to use military, peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Example 1: -

Example 2: *Cumhuriyet kurulurken vatana ve dünyaya bir mesaj verildi: "Yurtta sulh, cihanda sulh". Yurtta barış, dünyada barış.*

104 European Union

Mentions of the European Union or the European Community, including policies, integration, authority, etc. When addressing immigration, units whose primary message incorporates the immigration policy of the EU receive this code, but not the ones whose main message problematizes immigration itself. Anti-imperialist remarks, when the EU is not specified, belong to 605 Sovereignty and survival. If the sentence refers to the EU, but the country's self-determination is its primary message, code 605 should be applied again.

Example 1: *Ehhez képest azt látjuk, hogy a bevándorláspárti erők és a távozó Európai Bizottság is minden erővel azon van, azon dolgozik, hogy még több migráns előtt nyissa meg a határokat…*

Example 2: -

Domain 2: *Freedom and democracy*

201 Freedom and human rights

Mentions of the importance of personal freedom, including freedom from state coercion, bureaucracy, and individualism. Mentions of human and civil rights, including the right to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, the limitation of personal freedom, etc. Mentions of press freedom belong to code 206.

Example 1: *Ebben az országban nyilvánosan meghurcoltak gimnazista lányokat, országgyűlési képviselőket, polgármestereket, tudósokat, művészeket, újságírókat, tanárokat.*

Example 2: *Bir hayalim var: fikirlerin özgürce sokaklarda yankılanmaya devam ettiği.*

202 Democracy

References to democracy, parts, and institutions of democratic regimes, democracy as the method or goal of specific entities or organizations. Includes references to the quality, state, erosion of democracy, the lack of political participation, negative remarks on democracy itself, or attempts to define and redefine it. Includes references to institutions, their definition, and re-definition (see politics, local governance, justice, etc.).

Example 1: *Hiszünk benne, hogy egy alternatívát tudunk felmutatni a jelenlegi elnyomó rendszerrel szemben…*

Example 2: *Onun için demokrasinin tüm kurallarını bu güzel kentte işletmeye, bu güzel kentte paylaşmaya hazır olun.*

203 Constitutionalism and the rule of law

Support for maintaining the status quo of the constitution or opposing the constitution and its specific aspects. Calls for constitutional amendments or a new constitution. References to earlier successful or unsuccessful amendments, abolishment of earlier constitutions. Mentions of the rule of law, that everyone is equal before the law, likewise, the lack of rule of law and that some are above the law.

Example 1: *Olyan, minthogyha ők döntenék el azt, hogy mik a szabályok. És nem a szabályok alapján hoznának döntéseket.*

Example 2: *(Bu ülkede) Kimse kimseye haddini bildiremez, bir şahsın yasal bir suçu varsa, suç işlemiş.*

204 Deliberation

The importance of informing citizens about political decision-making processes and decisions delivered and involving them in these processes. Likewise, the lack of communicating them to citizens or the lack of involving citizens in these processes.

Example 1: *…De ami ennél talán még fontosabb, olyan módon működtessük, hogy a polgárok érezzék azt, hogy részt vesznek az önkormányzat, illetve a saját életük irányításában.*

Example 2: *Kardeşim, sadece İsmetpaşa için değil, tüm İstanbul için geçerli, her konuyu sadece Bayrampaşa'daki mahalleler değil, İstanbul'daki her konuyu biz vatandaşla konuşarak çözeceğiz.*

205 Transparency

The visibility or lack of visibility of governmental operations, finance, and whether these political processes are done openly. The promise of more transparency in the future or claims of being/not being transparent at present.

Example 1: *A harmadik lépés az, hogy megválasztásom esetén, Zuglóhoz hasonlóan a legszigorúbb átláthatósági intézkedéseket fogjuk bevezetni…*

Example 2: *Yani ulaşım koordinasyon merkezinde ne yazık ki erişilmesi, konuşulması, paylaşılması ve şeffaflığı ile çok kötü yönetildiğini bildiğim bu merkez.*

206 Media

References to the state of media in the country, press freedom and ownership, media coverage and the representation of political actors in the media, opposition and pro-government media, opposition and pro-government journalism and journalists, propaganda of any kind, etc.

Example 1: *Hiszen ha azt mondanám Önöknek, akik jelen vannak, hogy a média 90%-át a Fidesz uralja, akkor minden elmondok arról, hogy mennyire nincs nyilvánossága a szolnoki embereknek.*

Example 2: *Bu ne, Hürriyet Gazetesi diyor ki, burada İstanbul, Ankara'yı İmamoğlu ile Yavaş değil, HDP yönetecek.*

Domain 3: *Political system*

301 Decentralization

Support for decentralizing political and economic power and increasing autonomy at the sub-national level in policymaking and economics. Autonomy of municipalities, the extension of their self-determination, the importance of local customs, local expertise, and problem-solving.

Example 1: *Most annál szélesebb önrendelkezési lehetőséget, hogy egy település saját maga határozhassa meg fejlődésének irányait, hogy az európai uniós forrásokat milyen fejlesztésekre fordítja, kiegészítve ezt a Modern Városok program adta lehetőségekkel, nos, ennél szélesebb autonómiát nem is tudok elképzelni.*

Example 2: **-**

302 Centralization

Opposition to decision-making at lower political levels. More centralization in political and administrative procedures. It may include references to civil service and bureaucracy, financial dependence on the central government or the state, cooperation and close ties with the national

government, and the advantages of these ties. The prospect of gaining, maintaining, or losing these ties. "Favorable mentions of the desirability of a strong and stable government in general" (16).

Example 1: *Hála és köszönet ezért a kiemelt figyelemért elsősorban Orbán Viktor miniszterelnök úrnak.*

Example 2: *Bak belediye başkanı bile öyle, dönüp bakarlar yüzbinlerce oy alsın isterse, talimat geldi mi, gelmedi mi bakarlar.*

303 Governmental and administrative efficiency

"Need for efficiency and economy in government and administration and the general appeal to make the process of government and administration cheaper and more efficient" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 16). It may include references to civil service and bureaucratic procedures, mishandling resources, and the wasteful management of specific institutions, e.g., car parking systems. This category may include references to governmental efficiency in a financial sense, i.e., a balanced budget, rational spending, and the lack or elimination of waste. This category contrasts with political corruption because these statements refer to inefficiency, not the deliberate misuse of public resources for private interests. Specific policy categories may overrule this one. Conversely, this applies when a statement lacks specific policy reference.

Example 1: *És az is világosan látszik, hogy az önkormányzatnak már a tavalyi évben is három és félmilliárd forinttal maradtak el a bevételei a tervezettektől.*

Example 2: *Biz istanbullunun parasını çarçur etmeyeceğiz, İstanbullunun önceliklerini ve bütçelerine hazırlayacağız ve harcayacağız.*

304 Political corruption

The use of political and economic power for private gains. The misuse of resources and influence to enhance political or economic power. Corruption allegations, the need to eliminate political corruption, and the means to prevent corruption. This category stands in contrast with 303 because this contains the outright mention of corruption or its description.

Example 1: *Józsefvárosnak a forrásait ma a Fidesz szívja le, ezért nem költünk eleget arra, amire kellene, és nem jár mindaz, ami a józsefvárosiakat megilletné.*

Example 2: *Aynı şekilde 3 y. 3 y ne demek? Yokluk, yolsuzluk ve yasaklar, İstanbul'u bununla da zehirlediler.*

305 Political alliance

The political cooperation of members of different political parties on a common agenda of some kind. It may include references to the allied opposition in the country or the government and its quasi-coalition partners. It includes political alliances with non-partisan actors, such as civil society organizations.

Example 1: *Hallatlanul lelkesít az, hogy ennyi szervezet, ennyi ember és ennyi kerület tud együtt egy sátrat fenntartani, együtt, egy közösségben dolgozni, egy közös célért.*

Example 2: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, HDP, maalesef bunlarla beraber hareket eden yine ne var? Sözde içi karmakarışık bir İyi Parti var, bir de ne yazık ki Saadet var, dörtlü mekanizma.*

306 Political elite

Specific references to the political elites of the country, present and pre-democratic elites, i.e., elites from previous political systems. This category captures anti-elitist references and criticisms about previous and current political elites. Specific references to corruption (304) may overrule this category.

Example 1: *Arról döntünk, hogy ez a város a miénk-e, vagy pedig hagyjuk azt, hogy ebben a városban minket alattvalóként kezeljenek.*

Example 2: *Korktular, küçük küçük gruplar ile ülkeyi yönetecekleri zannediyorlar.*

307 Electoral system and elections

References to the current local elections, how mayors and representatives are selected, technical matters, references to other elections, and the electoral system itself. It may include references to the institution, its rules and norms, and technical or organizational questions. Prognoses about electoral success or loss belong to 801 Competence.

Example 1: *A tegnapi napon elindult a 2019-es őszi önkormányzati választási kampány, hivatalosan is elkezdődött az ajánlások gyűjtése.*

Example 2: *Değerli dostlarım, yöneticiler seçilir, belediye başkanları seçilir, seçildikten sonra hizmet ederler.*

Domain 4: *Economy*

401 Economic goals

"Broad and general economic goals that are not mentioned in relation to any other category. General economic statements that fail to include any specific goal" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 17). Includes economic policies that do not fall under specific categories. Likewise, mentions of specific policies, such as welfare policies, fall under 509.

Example 1: *Szeretném jelezni Önöknek, hogy én egy olyan polgármester vagyok, aki Zuglóban nemcsak hogy megszüntette a Papcsák Ferenc által kivetett kommunális adót, de vissza is fizette a beszedett adó összegét.*

Example 2: *Bu şehrin imkânlarını şehrin insanları ile, şu ekonomik sıkıntıda daha rahat, daha ucuz faydalanmalarını sağlayacağız.*

402 Poverty

General references to poverty, tackling poverty, increase or decrease in poverty. It excludes specific policy references or appeals to social groups. It includes emotive references to indigence, contrasting the present with the past/future.

Example 1: *Ezzel totális mélyszegénységbe taszították őket, és elmélyítették a leszakadásukat is.*

Example 2: *Yoksunluk olmasa, sözüm ona öyle, tanzim satışı olmasa, yoksulluk yaşamıyorsak, tanzim satışlar kurulur mu? Kurulmaz.*

403 Prosperity and economic growth

General references to economic growth and claims about prosperity and economic performance. It excludes specific policy references.

Example 1: *A csehek mellett mi teljesítünk Európában a legjobban.*

Example 2: *Vereceğiniz her oy İstanbul'un aydınlık yarınları demek. Daha çok iş, daha çok aşk, daha çok bereket, daha çok üretim demek.*

404 Technology and infrastructure

The modernization and development of industry, energy and communal services, roads, and communication. It includes references to science and technological innovations in the industry, support for developments in the industry, infrastructural development, such as the construction of roads and bridges, and technological infrastructure, such as internet and other services. Note that when there is a specific reference to traffic and transportation policies, category 504 should be applied.

Example 1: *Ebből negyvenöt kilométer út aszfaltozása fog megtörténni, ez több mint kétszázkét utat jelent Budapesten.*

Example 2: *İstanbul-İzmir arasındaki mesafeyi 3.5 saate düşürecek otoyolu etap etap hizmete açıyoruz. Bu yıl içinde de tamamlıyoruz.*

Domain 5: *Welfare and the quality of life*

501 Environmental protection

"General policies in favor of protecting the environment, fighting climate change, and other green policies. For instance: general preservation of natural resources; preservation of countryside, forests, etc.; protection of natural parks; animal rights" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 19). It includes references to natural catastrophes and related crisis management. It includes the consequences of the lack of environmentalism, such as health impacts, air pollution, and rising temperatures.

Example 1: *Gergő vezetésével ez a város egy zöld, fenntartható és környezetbarát irányba tudna elmozdulni, funkcionális szempontból sokkal biztonságosabb és sokkal érzékenyebb lenne ez a város.*

Example 2: *Hani o CHP konuşuyor ya, çevre mevre… Siz ne anlarsınız çevreden?*

502 Green areas

Concrete policy references establishing and managing green areas within the city or addresses the lack of such spaces. Includes references to parks, playgrounds, riverbanks, coastlines, etc. It excludes urban development, culture, and sports matters.

Example 1: *Úgyhogy évi 15 ezer fa, budapesti nagyerdő és zöldfolyosó a Dunára. Ezek a programok meg fognak valósulni.*

Example 2: *İstanbul'a kazandıracağımız yeşil koridor Bağcılar'ı da kapsayacak: Bağcılar 15 Temmuz ve Mahmutbey Mahalleleri arasında 3009 metrekare yeşil alana sahip olacak.*

503 Liveable city

General characteristics of the city and references to life in the city. It excludes any specific policy references. Includes praising the city for its beauty, grandeur, and atmosphere and general statements about making urban life good.

Example 1: *2019-ben Európa legjobb úticélja lett, ez Brüsszelből jött ez a kitüntetés, az elmúlt évtized teljesítményére hivatkozva.*

Example 2: *Bu asla bir mucize değil, yürütülebilir, erişilebilir, güvenli, havası temiz, daha az gürültülü ve yaşam kalitesi yüksek bir kent yaratmak için bütün olanaklar arasında mevcut.*

504 Traffic, transportation, car parking

Mentions of traffic and changes in the traffic system, traffic jams, public transport, car traffic, air traffic, other alternative traffic modes, and car parking system. It excludes mentions of road construction in the sense of infrastructure.

Example 1: *A BKV-t kivéreztették, napról napra örülnek a buszsofőrök, ha be bírják indítani a buszokat.*

Example 2: *2023'e kadar 123000 araç kapasiteli otoparkı hizmete almayı planlıyoruz.*

505 Waste management and public cleansing

Specific mentions of waste management that do not fall under the more general categories of environmental protection and liveable city. The organization of waste disposal, household or industrial waste collection, recycling, littering, pest control, etc. It includes the consequences of inadequate waste management and public cleansing.

Example 1: *Főpolgármester úr! Miért engedte azt, hogy Budapesten újra elszaporodjanak a patkányok?*

Example 2: *Bu çöp dağlarını kim kaldırdı? Biz kaldırdık.*

506 Urban renovation and development

References to the existence or the lack of policies aiming at the following:

1. Development or functional change of some urban regions
2. The preservation of certain urban areas because of, e.g., their historical value
3. The improvement of urban areas exposed to damage or environmental catastrophes

Mentions of city profile, architecture, transformation of spaces, cultural heritage, etc. Includes more general references to developing the city or the municipality.

Example 1: *A társasházaknak a homlokzatát mi saját forrásból, együtemben szeretnénk a Margit körúton felújítani, megújítani.*

Example 2: *Beykoz'un tüm sorunları size bir hemşehrimiz, bir dostunuz, bir yol arkadaşınız olarak söylüyorum ki, yıllardır çözme dikleri problem çözme dikleri imar sorunları dönüşüm sorunları hem de örnek bir Beykoz'u ortaya koyacağız.*

507 Social equality

"The concept of social justice and the need for fair treatment of all people. It may include special protection for underprivileged social groups; removal of class barriers; need for fair distribution of resources; the end of discrimination" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 19). It may also include general remarks on the lack of equality, equity, or social justice.

Example 1: *Tarlós István Orbán Viktor bábjaként nem segítette, hanem inkább üldözte a budapesti szegényeket.*

Example 2: *Bu şehrin kenar ilçesi olmayacak, herkes eşit olacak, göreceksiniz.*

508 Culture

Need for cultural and leisure facilities, demand for arts and sports. Pledges for more funding of such institutions and activities. It includes references to museums, galleries, cinemas, theatres, libraries, tourism, etc. It includes references to recreational activities, such as public sports clubs. The popular topic of sports stadiums may also occur within the categories of governmental inefficiency or corruption.

Example 1: *A program esélyt ad a településünkön a helyi kultúra, a szabadidős tevékenységek fejlődéséhez, támogatja a hagyományok megtartását és azok továbbvitelét.*

Example 2: *Ve burada gerçekten Adalar'ın çok simgesel noktalarda kendi ürünlerini sunmasını ve turizmin içine girmesi ile ilgili hususi çalışmalarımız olacak.*

509 Welfare state expansion

"Mentions need to introduce, maintain, or expand any public social service or social security scheme. This includes, for example, the government funding of: health care, child care, elderly care and pensions, and social housing" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 19). Includes references to creating creches, kindergartens, nursing homes, social housing programs, hospitals and clinics, outpatient services, etc. Includes building facilities and organizes or re-organizes such services. Includes social schemes and scholarships when the welfare aspect is stressed. The sentence should be coded accordingly if the favored social group is stressed.

Example 1: *Évente száz bérlakást ígért, de ebből nulla valósult meg.*

Example 2: *Başakşehir Hastanesi, inşallah, önümüzdeki yıl bitiyor, dev bir hastane, Avrupa yakasına orası hizmet verecek.*

510 Education

Expansion or limitation of education, including the number of schools, colleges, and universities. References to the structure, finance, and quality of education. Includes stipends and scholarships unless the welfare aspect or the youth as a demographic group bears more importance.

Example 1: *Fontos, hogy a lehetőségeihez mérten az önkormányzat segítse a szabad oktatást, a tudáshoz való szabad hozzáférést.*

Example 2: *Hızlıca 12 kadın, 8 erkek öğrenci yurdu olmak üzere toplamda 10000 öğrenci kapasiteli 20 yurdu derhal hayata bu şehirde geçireceğiz.*

Domain 6: *Fabric of society*

601 National way of life

"Favorable mentions of the manifesto country's nation, history, and general appeals. May include support for established national ideas; general appeals to pride of citizenship; appeals to patriotism; appeals to nationalism" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 20). It includes historical references, references to national symbols and historical figures, and appeals to national character. Includes irredentist remarks, references to historical territories and population.

Example 1: *Nekünk valóságos hungaricumaink vannak, kulturális szempontból Kodály, Katona öröksége, a Cifrapalotánk, a kitűnő barackpálinkánk, és természetesen a Kecskeméten gyártott, de Európa szerte is ismert Pirosarany és Erős Pista.*

Example 2: *Hani o güzel iki gözüyle, o mavi gözleriyle Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün vatandaşımızın gözüne bakarak dinliyor.*

602 Immigration

Mentions of the influx of foreign nationals to a country or a city. "Statement advocating the restriction of the process of immigration, i.e., accepting new immigrants. Might include statements regarding: immigration being a threat to the national character of the manifesto country; the boat is a full argument; the introduction of migration quotas, including restricting immigration from specific countries or regions, etc." (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 20).

Example 1: *Annak tehát hogy az európai bevándorláspárti baloldal megrendelésének eleget téve a magyar ellenzék bevándorláspárti polgármesterei illegális migránsokat telepíthessenek a magyar településekre, a magyar városokba, Budapestre.*

Example 2: *Bununla ilgili tabii ki göçmenler konumuz da var.*

603 Emigration

Mentions of the abandonment of a country or a city by nationals.

Example 1: *Minden jel szerint a fiatalok között már nem a kiköltözés, hanem a hazaköltözés a divat.*

Example 2: -

604 Terrorism

References to potential or unlawful violence against citizens for political purposes and the actual or potential threat of such events. Includes mentions of terrorist organizations, suspecting someone of terrorism, and counter-terrorism policies.

Example 1: *Az Ahmed H.-hoz hasonló terroristákat tehát kitoloncolni, nem pedig behozni kell.*

Example 2: *Bu adam şu anda terör örgütleri ile beraber değil mi, beraber, buyurun, şimdi size bir de onları ispat edeyim ekranda, buyrun, izleyin.*

605 Sovereignty and survival

Real or perceived threats that undermine the nation's sovereignty. It includes issues such as self-determination and autonomous decision-making regarding finances and politics. It may include domestic and international issues, external threats, and domestic forces white-anting the nation or the state. Includes anti-imperialist remarks unless the EU is the core message. It includes conspiracies against the country or its government. It includes references to regained sovereignty and freedom or successful defense against internal and external threats.

Example 1: *A bevándorláspártiak mielőbb át akarják nyomni a migránskvótát a tagállamokon.*

Example 2: *Cumhuriyet Mitingleri'nde darbe çağrısı yapan cuntacılar var.*

606 Traditional morality (religion)

Mentions of traditional and religious moral values. "May include: prohibition, censorship, and suppression of immorality and unseemly behavior; maintenance and stability of the traditional family as a value; support for the role of religious institutions in state and society" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 20). It includes outright religious references, prayers, citations from religious texts,

religious expressions, and references to religious practice. It includes references to religious sites, organizations, sects, etc.

Example 1: *A magyar férfiak hisznek férfi és nő házasságában, saját életüket is családban, házastárssal, gyerekekkel szeretnék leélni.*

Example 2: *Maşallah, barekallah, tebareke Allah.*

607 Law and order

"Favorable mentions of strict law enforcement, and tougher actions against domestic crime... May include increasing support and resources for the police; tougher attitudes in courts; the importance of internal security" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 21). It also includes opposing arguments, i.e., arguments for less police force. Typically includes acclaim, such as successfully tackling crimes.

Example 1: *És persze tudjuk azt, hogy mindig a rendőrség végzi el a munka érdemi részét, de azt is tudjuk, hogy amit hozzá tudunk tenni, azt meg kell tennünk.*

Example 2: *Arkadaşlar, Türkiye bir hukuk devletidir, toplantı ve gösteri yürüyüşleri kanunu vardır. Bir toplantı bir yürüyüş nasıl yapılacak, bunlar hukukta bellidir.*

608 Civic mindedness

"General appeals for national solidarity and the need for society to see itself as united. Calls for solidarity with and help for fellow people, familiar and unfamiliar. May include: favorable mentions of civil society and volunteering; decrying anti-social attitudes in times of crisis; appeal for public-spiritedness; support for the public interest" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 21). Appeals to civic duties, such as encouraging citizens to attend the elections. It may include encouraging citizens to do citizen-initiated campaigning, share content on social media, or take photos of candidates, i.e., to participate in the elections in a non-traditional or traditional manner.

Example 1: *Arra kérünk titeket, hogy ha tudtok, támogassatok minket egy újság kiadásával, amiben elmondjuk a programunkat.*

Example 2: *Ben size çok net söyleyeyim, siz beni bütün İstanbul'a anlatacaksınız, siz beni bütün İstanbul'a tanıtacaksınız.*

609 Multiculturalism

"Appeals for cultural homogeneity in society" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 21). "Favorable mentions of cultural diversity and cultural plurality... May include the preservation of the autonomy of religious linguistic heritages within the country, including special educational provisions" (2020, p. 22). Arguments for and against homogeneity in society.

Example 1: *A kecskeméti Főtér egyedisége a vallási tolerancia fellegvára.*

Example 2: *Şöyle diyorum. Yani bu kadar zengin bir şehir yok. Her kültür var, her insan var. Her yörenin insanı var, sazı var, sözü var, vallahi var, var oğlu, var, her şey var, her şey var. Dünya güzeli. Aynen öyle dünya güzeli seslenişi.*

Domain 7: *Social groups*

701 The people

Includes appeals to the people, the will, power, beauty, and wisdom of the people, asking for their good wishes or prayers. Includes compliments or positive remarks on the people. Includes direct compliments to the audience or the crowd. Includes liking the speaker to the people, claiming that he/she is one of them, or his/her love for them.

Example 1: *Szerezzük vissza Budapestet, mert Budapest a tiétek! Tiéd a város!*

Example 2: *Hepimiz parkımızı severiz, biz komşuluğumuzu severiz, sosyal çevremizi severiz, apartmanımızı severiz.*

702 Labor groups

Mentions of "all labor groups, the working class, and unemployment workers," trade unions, and the treatment of employees, including job security and job creation, working conditions, wages, and pension provisions (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 22). It may also include general references to the level of unemployment at a particular time and general references to successful job creation decrease in unemployment. Specific group categories may override this category when a smaller social group is addressed.

Example 1: *Gyurcsányék a kezdettől fogva támadják a közfoglalkoztatást is, ők elvennék még ezt a lehetőséget is az emberektől.*

Example 2: *Kendi kurumumuzda iş imkanı yaratacağız, yeni fırsatlar yaratacağız.*

703 Agriculture and farmers

"Specific policies in favor of agriculture and farmers. Includes all types of agriculture and farming practices. Only statements that have agriculture as the key goal should be included in this category" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 22). This topic will likely appear in the Istanbul campaign in rural districts, such as Şile, Silivri, Çatalca, or Sarıyer. The following issues also belong to this category: the status of agricultural quarters, sales of agricultural products, and schemes to support agriculture.

Example 1: -

Example 2: *İlişki kuracağımız tarımsal alt bölgelerde öncelikle sürekli finansal kıskaç altında kaybettiği için üretimden çekilmek zorunda kalan çiftçiyi İstanbul kenti olarak koruyacağız.*

704 Small-scale businesses

References to small businesses, workshops, craftsmen, shop owners, vendors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed people.

Example 1: *Nyolcról tizenkétmillióra emelkedett háromszáznegyvenezer KATÁ-s vállalkozó alanyi adómentessége.*

Example 2: *Esnaf olmayı hani kötü davranan birisine ne derler bilirsiniz demi azıcık esnaf ol derler.*

705 Middle-class and professional groups

"References to the middle class" that may include references to "professional groups (e.g., doctors or lawyers); white collar groups (e.g., bankers or office employees); service sector groups (e.g., IT industry employees); old and/or new middle class" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 22). It may include references to pedagogists, teachers, academics, etc.

Example 1: *Semmi okunk a kishitűségre. Itt, itt, Magyarországon a világ legmodernebb gyárait, a világ legmodernebb technológiáit, fejlesztési központjait magyar munkások és magyar mérnökök működtetik, sőt irányítják.*

Example 2: *Özellikle Türkiye'de büyük sorunu olan atanamayan öğretmenlerin ve emekli eğitimcilerin akreditasyon ve denetim dahilinde mahalle evlerinde hizmet vermesi sağlanacak. Bu da ciddi bir destek ortamını şehirli ile buluşturduk, buluşturmuş olacağız.*

706 Underprivileged minority groups

Mentions of "underprivileged minorities who are defined neither in economic nor in demographic terms (e.g., the handicapped, homosexuals, immigrants, indigenous)" (Volkens et al., 2020, p. 22). Most importantly, it includes ethnic and religious minorities and LGBTQ groups.

Example 1: *Az előjelek biztatóak, bár a romák világában sok minden megváltozott, de tudjátok, még ma is nehéz világ az.*

Example 2: *Sultangazi yarın bu sandıkları öyle bir patlatır ki, benim Sultangazi'deki Kürt kardeşlerim de buna iyi bir ders versin.*

707 Non-economic demographic groups

Mentions of demographically defined groups, typically women, university students, age groups, and children.

Example 1: *Megbecsüljük azokat a nőket, akik az anyaságot tekintik a hivatásuknak, de azokat is, akik a gyermekvállalás mellett a munkaerő-piacon is aktívak, miközben semmi hátrány nem érinti azokat, akik lemondtak a gyermekvállalásról.*

Example 2: *Kadınlarımızın İstanbul'da daha özgür ve daha güzel bir şekilde gezmesini sağlamalıyız.*

Domain 8: *Character*

801 Competence

This category includes references to competence, skills, and leadership. Includes characteristics that make a good or bad leader (person or party), and skills that make a party or leader successful. It includes claims about political achievements during the campaign, such as the collection of supporting signatures.

Example 1: *Karácsony alkalmatlansága újabb és újabb területeken nyilvánul meg.*

Example 2: *Sandığa gideceğiz, oylarımızı kullanacağız ve Emel Başkan'ı Eyüpsultan'a başkan olarak seçeceğiz.*

802 Political ideologies

An individual's or entity's values, principles, and ideas of an ideal state and society. It includes political ideologies, such as social democracy, conservativism, or political Islam.

Example 1: *Az a jobboldali populizmus, aminek én az ellenfelének érzem magam, az abban hisz, hogy az erős vezetőknek kell az embereket képviselniük. Akár az ő akartuk ellenére is.*

Example 2: *Beylikdüzü modelinde sosyal demokrat belediyeciliği armağan ettiğimiz iki temel kavram sevgi ve saygıdır.*

803 Morality

References to a person's (or group of people's) personal qualities, characteristics, morality, outlook, or nature.

Example 1: *Azt is szeretném zárásként Önöknek hangsúlyozni, hogy a józsefvárosi ellenzéki polgármester-jelölt már számtalan valótlanságot állított mind a kerület ügyeit illetően, mind a regnáló polgármesterre vonatkozóan.*

Example 2: *Güzel insanlarla tanıştık, olur ya, çok dikkatli bir insanım, ama olur ya, bir kişinin kalbini kırmışımdır, olur ya, bir kişiyi incitmişimdir, hepinizin huzurunda özür diliyorum, hepinizin huzurunda özür diliyorum.*

Variable 2: Tone

a Positivity

In-party cues. This includes mentions of the self and their accomplishments and references to the 'extended self,' encompassing the party, fellow partisans, and campaign participants. Additionally, positivity extends to references to third parties in a favorable light, such as the audience, electorate, constituents, social groups, or the general public.

Example 1: *A másik pedig az, hogy nagyon szeretem azokat az embereket, akikkel itt együtt kell dolgoznunk, és együtt kampányoltunk ma.*

Example 2: *Adını şımarıklıkları karşısında sessiz, çoğunluğun dili olacak, hislerine tercüman olacak, haykıran gür sedası olacağız.*

b Negativity

Out-party cues. This category involves mentions of the other and their actions, including rivals, their respective parties, politicians from opposing parties, and their campaign participants. Furthermore, negativity extends to references to third parties, such as constituents of rival parties, social groups, or the general public, but in a negative context.

Example 1: *Minden, ami a kormánynak, a miniszterelnöknek fontos, arra van pénz, minden, amire a budapestieknek fontos, arra már sokkal kevésbé.*

Example 2: *Bunlar (CHP'nin söyledikleri) da yalan, bu sabah yalan, akşam yalan.*

c Defense

Mixed cues. This encompasses refutations of attacks against the self or the extended self. It includes responses to attacks from rivals, rival parties, politicians, specific actors, constituents, the media, and others.

Example 1: *Ezen kívül a polgármester úr feljelentését, amiben azzal vádolja a referenciákat, hogy azok hamisak, a büntetőeljárást a nyomozóhatóság bűncselekmény hiányában megszüntette, lévén kiderült, hogy a referenciák valósak és igazak.*

Example 2: *Nereden bunun kaynağı, nereden harcıyoruz diyenlere de söyleyeyim, tek tek çalıştık, bunu bilsinler, sofra destek paketinin yıllık maliyeti bu kentte 52 buçuk milyon liradır, değerli hemşerilerim, bu paranın İstanbul büyükşehir belediye bütçesinin içindeki payı sadece ve sadece binde ikidir. Bunu hepimiz tarafından bilinmesini istiyorum.*

x No meaningful tone applies

This category includes formalities and interruptions that lack relevance to the discourse at hand.

Example 1: *Jó napot kívánok, én is üdvözlöm önöket!*

Example 2: *Hepinizi sevgiyle, saygıyla selamlıyorum.*

Appendix 2

LIST OF SPEECHES

The following table contains the list of speeches sorted by speaker name as they appear in the original database. The list includes their ID, date of upload and conduct, and URL. All speeches are archived and available upon request. To avoid ambiguities, I referred to speeches by their ID throughout Chapter 10.

Speech name	*Speech ID*	*Date of upload*	*Real date*	*URL*
Arató Gergely, 2019.09.20.	160	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Ayhan Koç, 27.02.2019	338	27-02-2019	27-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Djy7GXtedFY&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Balog Róbert, 2019.10.12.	235	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2137278933243691/?v=2137278933243691
Balogh József 2019.09.30.	39	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp0grHvfTzY&ab_channel=Fidesz
Barabás Richárd, 2019.08.28.	118	28-08-2019	28-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/481315522416373/?v=481315522416373
Barabás Richárd, 2019.09.22.	221	22-09-2019	22-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/976483836024766/?v=976483836024766

Baranyi Krisztina, 2019.09.09.	136	09-09-2019	09-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/378437913093391/?v=378437913093391
Bayram Şenocak, Yenikapı, 24.03.2019	260	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGqyxW0Wmw&ab_channel=MersinG%C3%BCndem
Béres András, 2019.08.30.	122	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/437445013519739/?v=437445013519739
Binali Yıldırım, 02.03.2019	357	02-03-2019	01-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXvC0v-qUo4&ab_channel=Demir%C3%B6renHaberAjans%C4%B1
Binali Yıldırım, Şişli, 05.03.2019	249	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Binali Yıldırım, Yenikapı, 24.03.2019	262	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGqyxW0Wmw&ab_channel=MersinG%C3%BCndem
Binali Yıldırım, Zeytinburnu, 05.03.2019	242	05-03-2019	28-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJtM9hSVR2c&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Borbély Ádám 2019.09.03.	13	03-09-2019	03-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/budapest-nem-cirkusz-cimmel-Independentit-plakatkampanyt-a-fidelitas
Borbély Ádám 2019.09.08.	15	08-09-2019	08-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-gergely-nem-ismeri-budapestet02
Borbély Ádám 2019.09.20.	26	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-szaz-napja-keptelen-bevezetni-a-zugloiak-ingyenes-parkolasat
Borbély Ádám 2019.10.10.	59	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbLchK6PcPc&ab_channel=Fidesz
Borbély Lénárd 2019.09.19.	23	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-keruletek-mIndependenten-korabbinal-gyorsabban-aszfaltozhatjak-foldutjaikat
Borbély Lénárd 2019.09.26.	30	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/ket-harom-even-belul-a-felujitott-csepeli-hev-en-lehet-majd-utazni

Böröcz László 2019.08.27.	4	27-08-2019	27-08-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoZjUy6L84k&ab_channel=Fidesz
Böröcz László 2019.09.03.	12	03-09-2019	03-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/budapest-nem-cirkusz-cimmel-Independentit-plakatkampanyt-a-fidelitas
Böröcz László 2019.10.08.	57	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-fidelitas-kampanyt-Independentit-karacsony-gergely-alkalmatlansagarol
Böröcz László 2019.10.10.	60	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7DYtakZoHQ&ab_channel=Fidesz
Bősz Anett, 2019.09.20.	161	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Botka László, 2019.10.12.	329	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2407909436116097
Csárdi Antal, 2019.10.11.	228	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/440506999906989/?v=440506999906989
Déri Tibor, 2019.09.13.	140	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/381276989459457/?v=381276989459457
Déri Tibor, 2019.09.20.	162	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Dés László, 2019.08.27.	285	27-08-2019	27-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=475208753060964
Deutsch Tamás 2019.09.30.	37	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn9ictw52no&ab_channel=Fidesz
Deutsch Tamás 2019.10.04.	56	04-10-2019	04-10-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/soros-embere-bevandorlasparti-polgarmesterekkel-telepittetne-be-a-migransokat
Devlet Bahçeli, Yenikapı, 24.03.2019	263	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGqyxW0Wmw&ab_channel=MersinG%C3%BCndem

Dobrev Klára, 2019.09.20.	164	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/537232040402557/?v=537232040402557
Dobrev Klára, 2019.09.28.	177	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Dobrev Klára, 2019.10.10.	360	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/471516056772812/?v=471516056772812
Dobrev Klára, 2019.10.11.	232	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/440506999906989/?v=440506999906989
Donáth Anna, 2019.09.13.	214	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/802659633483366/?v=802659633483366
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 08.02.2019	333	08-02-2019	08-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_jjI1_Bg6k&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 08.02.2019	330	08-02-2019	08-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vWQpAPu54g&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 08.03.2019	341	08-03-2019	08-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZIxFfuXqF4&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 11.02.2019	350	11-03-2019	11-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KityEFIb8Ew&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 13.03.2019	342	13-03-2019	13-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yabGwEKIIP4&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 16.02.2019	334	16-02-2019	16-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcVYPk_xGE0&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 20.02.2019	347	20-02-2019	20-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKDSuVk5qsI&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 25.02.2019	335	25-02-2019	25-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-wEES7nlVw&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu

Ekrem İmamoğlu, 27.02.2019	337	27-02-2019	27-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Djy7GXtedFY&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 27.03.2019	343	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UELF7nV85d4&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 28.02.2019	339	28-02-2019	28-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt_VkvvupT4&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, 29.03.2019	344	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYAyByGXiLw&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Adalar, 18.03.2019	81	18-03-2019	18-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t1MQvv8mcQ&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Ataşehir, 26.03.2019	97	26-03-2019	26-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F39SqGnBLPI&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Avcılar, 10.02.2019	63	10-02-2019	09-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1xKtXmHYdY&ab_channel=ismaily%C3%BCksek
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Bağcılar, 25.03.2019	93	25-03-2019	23-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvUUEmVlzl8&ab_channel=HAST%C4%B0GRAMTV
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Bahçelievler, 23.03.2019	88	23-03-2019	23-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYTK8R0id30&ab_channel=T%C3%BCrkHaberAjans%C4%B1
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Bakırköy, 23.03.2019	352	23-03-2019	23-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbyGNIA5MrU&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Başakşehir, 27.03.2019	99	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://youtu.be/GiAmdsFnxZY
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Bayrampaşa, 19.03.2019	84	19-03-2019	19-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CegrvHTMEY&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beşiktaş, 30.03.2019	114	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDxGrdCZeUk&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0

Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beykoz, 15.03.2019	76	15-03-2019	15-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivvyr6KGRL0&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beykoz, 21.02.2019	65	21-02-2019	21-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNyVLddW4bM&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beylikdüzü, 02.03.2019	348	02-03-2019	02-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtoMQwnMLtg&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beylikdüzü, 27.03.2019	103	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZkjq5ENTY4&ab_channel=T%C3%BCrkiyeG%C3%BCndem
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Beyoğlu, 25.03.2019	92	25-03-2019	25-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6RGyPuc6SU&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Büyükçekmece, 09.03.2019	72	09-03-2019	09-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-rGwBo0BuM&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Çatalca, 15.03.2019	77	15-03-2019	14-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quT2yVmN3zU&ab_channel=SiyasiG%C3%BCndemler
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Çekmeköy, 20.03.2019	85	20-03-2019	20-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyH5AGxCIo0&ab_channel=OPayla%C5%9F%C4%B1m
Ekrem İmamoğlu, endorsement, 2019.09.01.	286	01-09-2019	01-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2265683856890561
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Esenler, 28.03.2019	107	28-03-2019	28-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VH59MuzDebg&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 01.03.2019	68	01-03-2019	01-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU1q5fZyLSM&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 09.02.2019	345	09-02-2019	09-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bK32U8IrRo&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 11.03.2019	74	11-03-2019	11-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkjWyduiMfc&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0

Ekrem İmamoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 18.03.2019	80	18-03-2019	17-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3WYWNvor8Y&ab_channel=32gunHaber
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Güngören, 19.03.2019	83	19-03-2019	19-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5C-WQtdBwsQ&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Güngören, 28.03.2019	106	28-03-2019	28-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGA7nlYPWCA&ab_channel=HaberB%C3%BClteni
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kadıköy, 18.03.2019	82	18-03-2019	18-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-DlvE7CGms&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kağıthane, 05.03.2019	70	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-85l_B-_o2c&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kağıthane, 28.03.2019	108	28-03-2019	28-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RPfP4CQYdw&ab_channel=HaberB%C3%BClteni
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Kartal, 20.03.2019	351	20-03-2019	20-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIaGM4KNZ5E&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Pendik, 29.03.2019	111	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKJqKlaKfM4&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Sancaktepe, 09.03.2019	71	09-03-2019	08-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buDK_69yPBM&ab_channel=SANCAKTEPEMEDYANET
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Sancaktepe, 28.03.2019	105	28-03-2019	26-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nP-T5hwlc0w&ab_channel=SANCAKTEPEMEDYANET
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Sarıyer, 17.03.2019	79	17-03-2019	17-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjYqc2jCDJM&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Şile, 15.03.2019	75	15-03-2019	15-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7HZxcndyQnE&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Silivri, 03.03.2019	69	03-03-2019	03-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ftf4knyjtFg&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0

Ekrem İmamoğlu, Şişli, 25.02.2019	66	25-02-2019	25-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYBt9laoUiw&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Sultanbeyli, 24.03.2019	91	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lxU8MpJwas&ab_channel=HaberB%C3%BClteni
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Sultangazi, 25.03.2019	94	25-03-2019	25-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwdVlqW-R4E&ab_channel=HaberB%C3%BClteni
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Tuzla, 10.03.2019	73	10-03-2019	10-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2av6RqyMq4&ab_channel=SiyasiG%C3%BCndemler
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Tuzla, 29.03.2019	110	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzBsrHfQmjY&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Ümraniye, 16.03.2019	78	16-03-2019	16-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQigX0TXYIo&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Ümraniye, 29.03.2019	109	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUq7HY_DeEg&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Üsküdar, 22.03.2019	87	22-03-2019	22-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N55NjEraUc8&ab_channel=T%C3%BCrkHaberAjans%C4%B1
Ekrem İmamoğlu, Zeytinburnu, 17.02.2019	64	17-02-2019	17-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qitGRt3EgI&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Élő Norbert, 2019.08.26.	284	26-08-2019	26-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2533195673386390
Élő Norbert, 2019.09.28.	178	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Emel Bilenoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 01.03.2019	67	01-03-2019	01-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU1q5fZyLSM&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Emel Bilenoğlu, Eyüpsultan, 09.02.2019	346	09-02-2019	09-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bK32U8IrRo&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0

Erdősi Éva, 2019.10.08.	198	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2483704085285623/?v=2483704085285623
Erős Gábor, 2019.09.04.	128	04-09-2019	04-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2488790788016807/?v=2488790788016807
Farkas Éva 2019.09.30.	50	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3r3rvHASgo&ab_channel=Fidesz
Fazlı Kılıç, Şişli, 05.03.2019	243	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Fekete-Győr András, 2019.09.08.	134	08-09-2019	08-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2247840548655850/?v=2247840548655850
Fekete-Győr András, 2019.09.16.	146	16-09-2019	16-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/376371466374492/?v=376371466374492
Fekete-Győr András, 2019.10.07.	320	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/893082451074790/?v=893082451074790
Fekete-Győr András, 2019.10.11.	231	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/440506999906989/?v=440506999906989
Glázer Tímea, 2019.09.30.	183	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1380507895449745/?v=1380507895449745
Gulyás Gergely 2019.09.30.	40	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfawOM1kEng&ab_channel=Fidesz
Gurmai Zita, 2019.09.20.	157	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Gy. Németh Erzsébet, 2019.08.30.	120	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/437445013519739/?v=437445013519739
Gy. Németh Erzsébet, 2019.09.13.	213	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/802659633483366/?v=802659633483366

Gy. Németh Erzsébet, 2019.09.26.	173	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/523106905113456/?v=523106905113456
Gyurcsány Ferenc, 2019.10.09.	324	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3644669048883995
Hadházy Ákos, 2019.10.01.	311	01-10-2019	01-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1314756172029435
Hajnal Miklós, 2019.09.19.	154	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/388156735197865/?v=388156735197865
Hajnal Miklós, 2019.09.28.	175	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Hajós András, 2019.10.11.	328	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/430568704264039/?v=430568704264039
Halász János 2019.08.26.	3	26-08-2019	26-08-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJpd0sxFVuM&ab_channel=Fidesz
Halász János 2019.08.30.	6	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-Fidesz-kampanyban-hivja-fel-a-figyelmet-arra-hogy-gyurcsanyek-lebontanak-a-keritest
Halász János 2019.09.17.	19	17-09-2019	17-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/az-ellenzek-bevandorlasparti-polgarmesterjeloltjei-nagy-veszelyt-jelentenek-a-telepulesekre
Halász János 2019.09.20.	25	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/az-ellenzeki-polgarmesterek-betelepitenek-a-bevandorlokat
Halász János 2019.09.23.	28	23-09-2019	23-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP11j56nzS0&ab_channel=Fidesz
Hayati Yazıcı, 08.02.2019	353	08-02-2019	08-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewcaT_KEUT8&ab_channel=AKParti
Hegyesi Beáta, 2019.09.30.	182	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1380507895449745/?v=1380507895449745

Heltai László, 2019.08.30.	123	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/437445013519739/?v=437445013519739
Horváth Csaba, 2019.08.24.	280	24-08-2019	24-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/692856677856595/?v=692856677856595
Kálmán Olga, 2019.09.22.	220	22-09-2019	22-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/976483836024766/?v=976483836024766
Kálmán Olga, 2019.10.07.	195	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/565438137531536/?v=565438137531536
Kálmán Olga, 2019.10.09.	200	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/526665047902081/?v=526665047902081
Karácsony Gergely, 1. kerület, 2019.10.12.	237	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/529431667791706/?v=529431667791706
Karácsony Gergely, 15. kerület, 2019.10.12.	239	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2380186338908011/?v=2380186338908011
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.24.	279	24-08-2019	24-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/692856677856595/?v=692856677856595
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.24.	115	24-08-2019	24-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2469883713248781/?v=2469883713248781
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.25.	281	25-08-2019	25-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=389351108381336
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.25.	117	25-08-2019	25-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/393220334731640/?v=393220334731640
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.26.	282	26-08-2019	26-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2533195673386390
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.08.31.	210	31-08-2019	31-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/magyarinfo/videos/2651047144913810/

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.03.	124	03-09-2019	03-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/474302393153969/?v=474302393153969
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.04.	127	04-09-2019	04-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2488790788016807/?v=2488790788016807
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.04. (2)	129	04-09-2019	04-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2424906637591498/?v=2424906637591498
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.05.	287	05-09-2019	05-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=910545739322608
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.06.	131	06-09-2019	06-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/775660766183616/?v=775660766183616
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.08.	133	08-09-2019	08-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2247840548655850/?v=2247840548655850
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.09.	288	09-09-2019	09-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=519733562115448
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.09.	135	09-09-2019	09-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/378437913093391/?v=378437913093391
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.10.	137	10-09-2019	10-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2265031426959091/?v=2265031426959091
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.11.	289	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1392033504287411
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.11.	139	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/637513226770085/?v=637513226770085
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.11. (2)	291	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/383790425854471/?v=383790425854471
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.12.	292	12-09-2019	12-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/672813946572624/?v=672813946572624

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.13.	141	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/381276989459457/?v=381276989459457
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.13.	215	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/802659633483366/?v=802659633483366
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.13. (2)	144	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1335070126642610/?v=1335070126642610
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.14.	145	14-09-2019	14-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1478324208990870/?v=1478324208990870
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.16.	293	16-09-2019	16-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2403540493215459
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.16.	147	16-09-2019	16-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/376371466374492/?v=376371466374492
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.17.	294	17-09-2019	17-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=732844350470325
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.17.	148	17-09-2019	17-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/957807087903606/?v=957807087903606
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.18.	295	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=416622592381044
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.18.	150	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2384612051858161/?v=2384612051858161
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.18.	217	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1139652429758787/?v=1139652429758787
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.19.	296	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2476777652553331/?v=2476777652553331
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.19.	153	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/388156735197865/?v=388156735197865

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.20.	297	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1354417161392270/?v=1354417161392270
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.20.	156	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.20.	165	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/537232040402557/?v=537232040402557
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.21.	298	21-09-2019	21-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/687914181707303/?v=687914181707303
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.22.	299	22-09-2019	22-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/482148062366752/?v=482148062366752
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.22.	222	22-09-2019	22-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/976483836024766/?v=976483836024766
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.23.	300	23-09-2019	23-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2524805771083110
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.23.	167	23-09-2019	23-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/904572733275561/?v=904572733275561
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.24.	301	24-09-2019	24-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=364481841104226
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.24.	170	24-09-2019	24-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2187314804894208/?v=2187314804894208
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.25.	302	25-09-2019	25-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/511480899628810/?v=511480899628810
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.25.	223	25-09-2019	25-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/824819307913344/?v=824819307913344
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.26.	303	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=693068931156897

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.26.	171	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/523106905113456/?v=523106905113456
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.27.	304	27-09-2019	27-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/691581821343503/?v=691581821343503
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.27.	224	27-09-2019	27-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/474302393153969/?v=474302393153969
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.27. (2)	305	27-09-2019	27-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2459575124328123/?v=2459575124328123
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.28.	306	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=729077014183294
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.28.	176	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.29.	307	29-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1307121609469023
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.30.	308	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=398966704134442
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.09.30.	181	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1380507895449745/?v=1380507895449745
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.01.	312	01-10-2019	01-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=622627614808851
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.01.	309	01-10-2019	01-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1314756172029435
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.01.	186	01-10-2019	01-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/942563886104922/?v=942563886104922
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.02.	313	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/386633625365213/?v=386633625365213

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.02.	225	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2427023204236129/?v=2427023204236129
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.02.	187	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/510123133103919/?v=510123133103919
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.02. (2)	314	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/448723565987930/?v=448723565987930
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.03.	316	03-10-2019	03-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=401879637142160
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.03.	191	03-10-2019	03-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/381467872742890/?v=381467872742890
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.04.	317	04-10-2019	04-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/746435325795175/?v=746435325795175
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.04.	226	04-10-2019	04-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/510528259740633/?v=510528259740633
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.06.	318	06-10-2019	06-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2466799533415611/?v=2466799533415611
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.06.	227	06-10-2019	06-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1402911009885497/?v=1402911009885497
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.07.	319	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/893082451074790/?v=893082451074790
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.07.	194	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2258578971031286/?v=2258578971031286
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.07. (3)	359	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/565438137531536/?v=565438137531536
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.08.	321	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1406685089485697

Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.08.	197	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2483704085285623/?v=2483704085285623
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.09.	323	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2138552029780461/?v=2138552029780461
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.09.	203	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/526665047902081/?v=526665047902081
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.10.	204	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/471516056772812/?v=471516056772812
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.11.	327	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/193944440638410/videos/395253681156655/?__so__=channel_tab&__rv__=all_videos_card
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.11.	206	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2524076704347203/?v=2524076704347203
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.11.	233	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypchSnHZO68&ab_channel=ATVMagyarorsz%C3%A1g
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.12.	236	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2137278933243691/?v=2137278933243691
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.12.	208	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/531302111016029/?v=531302111016029
Karácsony Gergely, 2019.10.13.	209	13-10-2019	13-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/775353116237182/?v=775353116237182
Karácsony Gergely, 8. kerület, 2019.10.12.	238	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/467411250525898/?v=467411250525898
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Avcılar, 27.03.2019	101	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4MOqr_g7B0&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Beylikdüzü, 27.03.2019	104	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZkjq5ENTY4&ab_channel=T%C3%BCrkiyeG%C3%BCndem

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Çekmeköy, 24.03.2019	90	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jU-K3NrqUgg&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Esenyurt, 27.03.2019	98	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHkWXcmEo_s&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Eyüpsultan, 26.03.2019	95	26-03-2019	26-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jAL8Tn57pWY&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Kartal, 24.03.2019	89	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paE32cmtWzo&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Küçükçekmece, 27.03.2019	100	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BtFsje1FGA&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Şişli, 26.03.2019	96	26-03-2019	26-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izX73SNE3Do&ab_channel=CHPTV
Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, 2019.08.30.	121	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/437445013519739/?v=437445013519739
Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, 2019.09.22.	219	22-09-2019	22-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/976483836024766/?v=976483836024766
Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, 2019.09.28.	180	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, 2019.10.07.	196	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/565438137531536/?v=565438137531536
Kerpel-Fronius Gábor, 2019.10.10.	205	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/471516056772812/?v=471516056772812
Kiss László, 2019.09.13.	143	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1335070126642610/?v=1335070126642610
Kocsis Máté 2019.08.25.	2	25-08-2019	25-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/alig-nehany-ora-alatt-osszegyultek-tarlos-istvan-ajanlasai

Kocsis Máté 2019.08.31.	10	31-08-2019	31-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/ha-zuglo-sikertortenet-miert-nem-azzal-kampanyol-karacsony-gergely
Kocsis Máté 2019.09.09.	16	09-09-2019	09-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/az-ellenzek-torvenytelenul-kezelte-a-valasztok-szemelyes-adatait-jozsefvarosban
Kocsis Máté 2019.09.28.	32	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-gergely-teljesen-alkalmatlan-budapest-vezetesere
Kocsis Máté 2019.09.30.	38	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYsRt1Lv7eY&ab_channel=Fidesz
Kocsis Máté 2019.10.09.	58	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnDaU7OXiVU&ab_channel=Fidesz
Kocsis Máté 2019.10.12.	62	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNx4u_ArjSA&ab_channel=Fidesz
Kósa Lajos 2019.08.24.	1	24-08-2019	24-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/az-ellenzek-hatalmas-kudarccal-Independentul-a-valasztason
Kósa Lajos 2019.09.11.	17	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/elegtelenre-vizsgazott-az-ellenzek-jeloltallitasbol
Kósa Lajos 2019.09.30.	42	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98RiB1RFT0o&ab_channel=Fidesz
Kovács Péter 2019.09.30.	47	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23An_ncGRIY&ab_channel=Fidesz
Kovács Péter 2019.10.03.	55	03-10-2019	03-10-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-xvi-kerulet-iden-12-milliardot-kapott-foldutak-aszfaltozasara
Kubatov Gábor 2019.09.30.	46	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/ma-a-Fidesz-europa-legmodernebb-es-legszervezettebb-partja
Kunhalmi Ágnes, 2019.09.13.	212	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/802659633483366/?v=802659633483366

Kunhalmi Ágnes, 2019.10.11.	230	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/440506999906989/?v=440506999906989
László Imre, 2019.08.24.	116	24-08-2019	24-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2469883713248781/?v=2469883713248781
László Imre, 2019.10.02.	189	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/510123133103919/?v=510123133103919
László Imre, 2019.10.07.	193	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2258578971031286/?v=2258578971031286
Lukács András, 2019.09.10.	138	10-09-2019	10-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2265031426959091/?v=2265031426959091
Márki-Zay Péter, 2019.10.10.	325	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1163817350673708/?v=1163817350673708
Márton Roland, 2019.09.30.	184	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1380507895449745/?v=1380507895449745
Mehmet Murat Çalık, 08.02.2019	331	08-02-2019	08-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vWQpAPu54g&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Mehmet Murat Çalık, Beylikdüzü, 02.03.2019	349	02-03-2019	02-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtoMQwnMLtg&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Mehmet Murat Çalık, Beylikdüzü, 27.03.2019	102	27-03-2019	27-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZkjq5ENTY4&ab_channel=T%C3%BCrkiyeG%C3%BCndem
Meral Akşener, Çekmeköy, 20.03.2019	86	20-03-2019	20-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyH5AGxCIo0&ab_channel=OPayla%C5%9F%C4%B1m
Meral Akşener, Kağıthane, 30.03.2019	112	30-03-2019	28-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AEHzj8fqQE&ab_channel=BARI%C5%9EINSES%C4%B0
Mevlüt Uysal, Yenikapı, 24.03.2019	261	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGqyxW0Wmw&ab_channel=MersinG%C3%BCndem

Molnár Gyula, 2019.10.07.	192	07-10-2019	07-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2258578971031286/?v=2258578971031286
Molnár Zsolt, 2019.08.30.	119	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/437445013519739/?v=437445013519739
Molnár Zsolt, 2019.09.26.	174	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/523106905113456/?v=523106905113456
Muammer Keskin, 25.02.2019	336	25-02-2019	25-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-wEES7nlVw&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Nacsa Lőrinc 2019.08.29.	5	29-08-2019	29-08-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJzkq7ks60U&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nacsa Lőrinc 2019.09.03.	11	03-09-2019	03-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TcSej024jg&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nacsa Lőrinc 2019.09.18.	21	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anzg3v1KMKQ&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nacsa Lőrinc 2019.09.19.	24	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://www.Fidesz.hu/videok/trocsanyi-kinevezese-a-soros-terv-utjaban-all-ezert-tamadjak-ot-a-bevandorlasparti-erok
Nacsa Lőrinc 2019.09.27.	31	27-09-2019	27-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-pdz_XRKHw&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nagy-Majdon József 2019.09.30.	44	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySAQt570hUA&ab_channel=Fidesz
Németh Szilárd 2019.09.30.	41	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mekTf7IQzjg&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nevzat Şatıroğlu, Şişli, 05.03.2019	245	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Niedermüller Péter, 2019.10.09.	201	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/526665047902081/?v=526665047902081

Nihal Yıldırım, Şişli, 05.03.2019	247	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Novák Katalin 2019.09.30.	48	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0-bLTAvtDA&ab_channel=Fidesz
Nunkovics Tibor, 2019.09.20.	159	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Ömer Fuat Günday, Şişli, 05.03.2019	248	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Orbán Viktor 2019.09.29.	34	29-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvA5QQNe5GI&ab_channel=Fidesz
Orosz Anna, 2019.10.08.	199	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2483704085285623/?v=2483704085285623
Őrsi Gergely, 2019.09.18.	151	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2384612051858161/?v=2384612051858161
Őrsi Gergely, 2019.09.18.	218	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1139652429758787/?v=1139652429758787
Papp László 2019.09.30.	51	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2459575124328123/?v=2459575124328123
Parti Nagy Lajos, 2019.10.08.	322	08-10-2019	08-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2644592562450488
Pásztor István 2019.09.30.	52	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/nem-mIndependentegy-kik-lesznek-a-polgarmesterek-hogyan-alakulnak-a-testvervarosi-kapcsolatok
Pikó András, 2019.09.04.	126	04-09-2019	04-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2488790788016807/?v=2488790788016807
Pikó András, 2019.09.04. (2)	130	04-09-2019	04-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2424906637591498/?v=2424906637591498

Pikó András, 2019.09.11.	290	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/383790425854471/?v=383790425854471
Pikó András, 2019.09.13.	211	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/802659633483366/?v=802659633483366
Radócz Zoltán, 2019.09.30.	185	30-09-2019	30-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1380507895449745/?v=1380507895449745
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 09.02.2019	354	09-02-2019	09-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmml2VvP09s&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 10.02.2019	361	10-02-2019	10-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE36ET5pfwo&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ataşehir, 16.02.2019	240	16-02-2019	16-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjsDrcxDsfA&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Avcılar, 12.03.2019	252	12-03-2019	12-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXCjTKTnQ_8&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Bağcılar, 30.03.2019	277	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ypstu_wRzU&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Bahçelievler, 30.03.2019	276	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-tPGl8qRxQ&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Bayrampaşa, 30.03.2019	275	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCfdU8fLeqA&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Beykoz, 29.03.2019	268	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSyzU0VGWM0&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Beylikdüzü, 12.03.2019	255	12-03-2019	12-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KDsDZH6Pak&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Beyoğlu, Kasımpaşa, 05.03.2019	358	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ubvje7vWQy0&ab_channel=AKParti

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Büyükçekmece, 12.03.2019	254	12-03-2019	12-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_a1lM-OAsM&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Çatalca, 16.03.2019	256	16-03-2019	16-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff1IJe8zpLg&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Çekmeköy, 29.03.2019	269	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEYQfnf6bhA&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, electoral committees, 10.02.2019	355	10-02-2019	10-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VDPItVOKjo&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Esenyurt, 05.03.2019	250	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJ_A8KLTkoo&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Eyüpsultan, 05.03.2019	251	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juni_H3UHsY&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Eyüpsultan, Haliç, 23.02.2019	356	23-02-2019	23-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d74Q1kXvyhA&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Gaziosmanpaşa, 18.03.2019	258	18-03-2019	16-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzX9uTkhBvU&ab_channel=subasi94
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Güngören, 30.03.2019	273	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqiZlUieCng&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Kağıthane, 30.03.2019	274	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfqRfxc5sI0&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Küçükçekmece, 12.03.2019	253	12-03-2019	12-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dZS2NhDKcQ&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Maltepe, 29.03.2019	270	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAa7wM80kJc&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Pendik, 29.03.2019	265	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R1QYzpwTIg&ab_channel=AKParti

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Sancaktepe, 05.03.2019	241	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8zRpOhDeYY&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Sultanbeyli, 29.03.2019	266	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dil1XoZ5C2E&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Sultangazi, 30.03.2019	272	30-03-2019	30-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TLvJTtma0M&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Tuzla, 29.03.2019	271	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k676J48PAk&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ümraniye, 29.03.2019	267	29-03-2019	29-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbJjTZmE5SU&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Üsküdar, 19.03.2019	259	19-03-2019	19-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKCXoM4mOMY&ab_channel=AKParti
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Yenikapı, 24.03.2019	264	24-03-2019	24-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUGqyxW0Wmw&ab_channel=MersinG%C3%BCndem
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Zeytinburnu, 16.03.2019	257	16-03-2019	16-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDt6o8YRsE0&ab_channel=AKParti
Rozgonyi Zoltán 2019.09.17.	20	17-09-2019	17-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-gergely-tobb-mint-harom-honapja-szaboltalja-a-zugloiak-ingyenes-parkolasat
Rozgonyi Zoltán 2019.09.28.	33	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/zuglo-nem-tud-elni-a-fejlesztesi-forrasokkal-karacsony-gergely-alkalmatlansaga-miatt
Schmuck Erzsébet, 2019.09.20.	155	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Semjén Zsolt 2019.09.30.	45	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky2WuICrTwI&ab_channel=Fidesz
Soproni Tamás, 2019.09.03.	125	03-09-2019	03-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/474302393153969/?v=474302393153969

Soproni Tamás, 2019.09.26.	172	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/523106905113456/?v=523106905113456
Soproni Tamás, 2019.10.09.	202	09-10-2019	09-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/526665047902081/?v=526665047902081
Szabó Rebeka, 2019.09.20.	166	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/537232040402557/?v=537232040402557
Szabó Rebeka, 2019.10.02.	315	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/448723565987930/?v=448723565987930
Szabó Rebeka, 2019.10.11.	207	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2524076704347203/?v=2524076704347203
Szabó Tímea, 2019.09.13.	142	13-09-2019	13-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1335070126642610/?v=1335070126642610
Szabó Tímea, 2019.09.20.	158	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Szabó Tímea, 2019.09.28.	179	28-09-2019	28-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1863191720493629/?v=1863191720493629
Szabó Tímea, 2019.10.11.	229	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/440506999906989/?v=440506999906989
Szalai Kriszta, 2019.09.18.	152	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2384612051858161/?v=2384612051858161
Szalai Kriszta, 2019.09.18.	216	18-09-2019	18-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/1139652429758787/?v=1139652429758787
Szalai Kriszta, 2019.10.10.	326	10-10-2019	10-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=401129210551748
Szatmáry Kristóf 2019.08.30.	8	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/foldutakat-aszfaltoznak-ujpesten

Szatmáry Kristóf 2019.09.19.	22	19-09-2019	19-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-keruletek-mIndependenten-korabbinal-gyorsabban-aszfaltozhatjak-foldutjaikat
Szatmáry Kristóf 2019.10.03.	54	03-10-2019	03-10-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/a-xvi-kerulet-iden-12-milliardot-kapott-foldutak-aszfaltozasara
Székely Sándor, 2019.09.23.	168	23-09-2019	23-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/904572733275561/?v=904572733275561
Szél Bernadett, 2019.09.20.	163	20-09-2019	20-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/380569362636629/?v=380569362636629
Szél Bernadett, 2019.10.01.	310	01-10-2019	01-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1314756172029435
Szemereyné Pataki Klaudia 2019.09.30.	35	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bj1y-A3KV80&ab_channel=Fidesz
Szeneczey Balázs 2019.09.26.	29	26-09-2019	26-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/ket-harom-even-belul-a-felujitott-csepeli-hev-en-lehet-majd-utazni
Szijjártó Péter 2019.09.30.	36	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3nrEIY-yG4&ab_channel=Fidesz
Tarlós István, 2019.10.12.	278	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jWSB2tTOJ0&ab_channel=H%C3%ADrTV
Tóth Bertalan, 2019.09.06.	132	06-09-2019	06-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/775660766183616/?v=775660766183616
Trippon Norbert, 2019.09.17.	149	17-09-2019	17-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/957807087903606/?v=957807087903606
Trippon Norbert, 2019.09.24.	169	24-09-2019	24-09-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2187314804894208/?v=2187314804894208
Ujhelyi István, 2019.10.03.	190	03-10-2019	03-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/381467872742890/?v=381467872742890

V. Naszályi Márta, 2019.08.26.	283	26-08-2019	26-08-2019	https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2533195673386390
V. Naszályi Márta, 2019.10.02.	188	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/510123133103919/?v=510123133103919
Varga Judit 2019.09.30.	43	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1fKEGoYdDY&ab_channel=Fidesz
Varga Mihály 2019.09.30.	49	30-09-2019	29-09-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PORyciGJIY&ab_channel=Fidesz
Volkan Bozkır, Şişli, 05.03.2019	246	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Wintermantel Zsolt 2019.08.30.	7	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/foldutakat-aszfaltoznak-ujpesten
Woman (activist), 2019.10.12.	234	12-10-2019	12-10-2019	https://www.facebook.com/karacsonygergely/videos/2137278933243691/?v=2137278933243691
Woman, 08.03.2019	340	08-03-2019	08-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZIxFfuXqF4&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Worker, 08.02.2019	332	08-02-2019	08-02-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_jjI1_Bg6k&ab_channel=Ekrem%C4%B0mamo%C4%9Flu
Yavuz Tellioğlu, Şişli, 05.03.2019	244	05-03-2019	05-03-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn0fsra1BOQ&ab_channel=ERT%C5%9EAHMEDYA%2FRadyoTelevizyon
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.08.30.	9	30-08-2019	30-08-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/foldutakat-aszfaltoznak-ujpesten
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.09.06.	14	06-09-2019	06-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-tarja-fel-az-egesz-zugloi-parkolasi-botranyt
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.09.11.	18	11-09-2019	11-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsonyek-hagyjanak-fel-a-csalassal-es-a-torvenysertessel

Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.09.14.	18	14-09-2019	14-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-mismasol-keptelen-rendbe-tenni-a-zugloi-parkolast
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.09.21.	27	21-09-2019	21-09-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-gergely-alkalmatlansaga-csodbe-vitte-zuglot
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.10.02.	53	02-10-2019	02-10-2019	https://Fidesz.hu/videok/karacsony-titkolozik-mert-titkolnivaloja-van
Zsigmond Barna Pál 2019.10.11.	61	11-10-2019	11-10-2019	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSrtuOFrrVo&ab_channel=Fidesz

Appendix 3

LIST OF CAMPAIGNERS

The following list contains the names of campaign participants of the 2019 Istanbul and Budapest elections in alphabetical order. The list includes their unique ID, party affiliation, rank, role in the 2019 elections, and relevant additional information on their political career following the elections.

Akşener, Meral	36	Chair of the nationalist IP since its split from MHP in 2017. She formed an electoral alliance with CHP in 2018 for the general elections, which was revived for the local elections.
Arató, Gergely	63	DK, MP since 2018.
Bahçeli, Devlet	94	MHP, former deputy prime minister, and current chair of the far-right, nationalist MHP. He formed the People's Alliance with AKP in 2018, which was maintained in the local elections.
Balog, Róbert	85	Independent opposition candidate for District 20 mayor. He was head of the department at the Budapest Heat Networks, PLC (Főtáv Zrt.) in 2019.
Balogh, József	22	Fidesz-KDNP, mayor of Szabadkígyós (Békés County) since 1998.
Barabás, Richárd	40	PM, municipal councilor since 2014, and deputy mayor of District 11, Budapest since 2019.
Baranyi, Krisztina	51	Independent opposition mayor of Budapest District 9 since 2019.
Béres, András	44	PM, municipal councilor since 2010, and deputy mayor of District 3 since 2019.
Bilenoğlu, Emel	35	CHP, candidate for mayor of Eyüpsultan, Istanbul in 2019.
Borbély, Ádám	14	Fidesz-KDNP, head of youth organization Fidelitas in Budapest. Municipal councilor and group leader in District 14 since 2019.
Borbély, Lénárd	17	Fidesz-KDNP, former MP, mayor of District 21 since 2014.

Böröcz, László	9	Fidesz-KDNP, head of Fidelitas (2014-2019), former MP, ministerial commissioner since 2022.
Bősz, Anett	64	Liberal, former MP, chair of the Hungarian Liberal Party since November 2019. Deputy mayor of Budapest since 2022.
Botka, László	102	Independent opposition mayor of Szeged since 2019. Formerly member of MSZP, mayor since 2002.
Bozkır, Volkan	89	AKP, diplomat and former minister. He served as coordinator deputy during the local election campaign in 2019. President of the UN General Assembly (2020-2021).
Çalık, Mehmet Murat	38	CHP, mayor of Beylikdüzü, Istanbul since 2019. Formerly municipal advisor and technical coordinator under İmamoğlu.
Csárdi, Antal	83	LMP, MP since 2018.
Déri, Tibor	53	Momentum, later DK (2022-), mayor of District 4 since 2019.
Dés, László	96	Hungarian musician and composer. He endorsed Karácsony in the 2019 campaign.
Deutsch, Tamás	21	Fidesz-KDNP, former MP, MEP since 2009.
Dobrev, Klára	66	DK, vice president of the European Parliament (2019-2022), the party's candidate for prime minister in 2022.
Donáth, Anna	82	Momentum, MEP since 2019, later party chair (2021-2022).
Élő, Norbert	69	DK, opposition candidate for District 12 mayor. Member of the General Assembly of Budapest since 2019, councilor for economic development since 2022.
Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip	5	AKP, president of the Republic of Turkey since 2014. Previously prime minister (2003-2014) and mayor of Istanbul (1994-1998). He is also the co-founder (2001) and chair (2017-) of AKP.
Erdősi, Éva	78	Independent opposition candidate for District 21 mayor. Member of PM until 2019 and DK since 2022.
Erős, Gábor	48	PM, founding member, municipal councilor in Budapest District 8 since 2014, vice-mayor since 2019.
Farkas, Éva	32	Fidesz-KDNP, mayor of Makó (Csongrád County) since 2014.
Fekete-Győr, András	50	Momentum, founding member and chair (2017-2021), the party's candidate for prime minister and MP since 2022.

Glázer, Tímea	71	DK, candidate for mayor of Győr (Győr-Moson-Sopron County), municipal councilor since 2019.
Gulyás, Gergely	23	Fidesz-KDNP, MP since 2010, and minister for the Prime Minister's Office since 2018.
Günday, Ömer Fuat	91	AKP, chair of the Şişli chapter in Istanbul. Later candidate for MP in Istanbul.
Gurmai, Zita	61	MSZP, former MEP, advisor to the European Commission, MP since 2018.
Gy. Németh, Erzsébet	42	DK, candidate for District 17 mayor. Deputy mayor of Budapest (2019-2022), later MP (2022-).
Gyurcsány, Ferenc	99	DK, prime minister of the MSZP-SZDSZ governments (2004-2009). His speech delivered in the MSZP congress caused mass protests in 2006, eventually paving the way for a landslide Fidesz victory in 2010. He has been a central figure of government rhetoric, embodying the failures and immorality of the left in government and opposition.
Hadházy, Ákos	97	Independent, former LMP member, MP since 2016.
Hajnal, Miklós	59	Momentum, local election campaign manager in 2019, municipal councilor in District 12, MP since 2022.
Hajós, András	101	Hungarian comedian, musician, and broadcaster. He endorsed Karácsony in the 2019 campaign.
Halász, János	8	Fidesz-KDNP, MP since 1998, former secretary of state. Deputy leader of the parliamentary group, vice president of the Committee on National Security.
Hegyesi, Beáta	70	PM, opposition candidate for Budakeszi mayor (Pest County).
Heltai, László	45	LMP, founding member, municipal councilor in Disrict 6, Budapest (2014-).
Horváth, Csaba	95	MSZP, former MP, mayor of District 2, deputy mayor of Budapest. Karácsony's successor as mayor of District 14 since 2019.
İmamoğlu, Ekrem	4	CHP, Nation Alliance candidate for Istanbul mayor in 2019. Former member of Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP), and CHP since 2008. Former president of CHP chapter in Beylikdüzü, and district mayor between 2014 and 2019. Mayor of Istanbul since 2019. Sentenced to two years in prison in 2022. Vice-president candidate in 2023.
Kálmán, Olga	77	DK, after losing the primaries, she endorsed Karácsony for Budapest mayor. DK spokesperson since 2022.

Karácsony, Gergely	2	PM, formerly member of LMP, MP (2010-2014), mayor of District 14 (2014-2019), opposition candidate for prime minister in 2018. He entered the opposition primaries but withdraw in favor of Péter Márki-Zay in 2021. Mayor of Budapest since 2019.
Kerpel-Fronius, Gábor	43	Momentum, head of District 13 party chapter, candidate for Budapest mayor in 2019. After losing the primary, he endorsed Karácsony. Deputy mayor of Budapest since 2019.
Keskin, Muammer	104	CHP, mayor of Şişli, Istanbul since 2019.
Kılıç, Fazlı	86	AKP, mayor of Kağıthane between 2004 and 2019. He was succeeded by Mevlüt Öztekin (AKP).
Kılıçdaroğlu, Kemal	37	CHP chair and Main Opposition Leader since 2010. Director general of the Social Security Institution (*Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu,* SGK) in the 90's, later MP and parliamentary group leader. CHP candidate for Istanbul mayor in 2009. He formed the Nation Alliance with IP before the 2018 general elections, which was maintained in the local elections. He was the allied opposition's *(Altılı Masa, Table of Six)* candidate for president in 2023.
Kiss, László	55	MSZP, later member of DK. Mayor of Budapest District 2 since 2019.
Koç, Ayhan	105	CHP, former municipal councilor of AKP in Sultanbeyli, Istanbul. In 2019, CHP nominated him for Sultanbeyli mayor.
Kocsis, Máté	7	Fidesz-KDNP, mayor of Budapest District 8 (2009-2018), MP (2010-2014, 2018-), president of the Budapest chapter (2015-), and leader of parliamentary groups since 2018.
Kósa, Lajos	6	Fidesz-KDNP, former mayor of Debrecen (1998-2014), MP, parliamentary group leader and minister. He was the local election campaign manager of Fidesz in 2019.
Kovács, Péter	29	Fidesz-KDNP, previously MP, District 16 mayor since 2014.
Kubatov, Gábor	28	Fidesz-KDNP, MP, party director. His audio recording leaked in 2010, in which he spoke about a list of Fidesz and opposition voters obtained by his party illegally.
Kunhalmi, Ágnes	81	MSZP, MP since 2018, co-chair since 2020.

László, Imre	39	DK, former MP, mayor of District 11 since 2019.
Lukács, András	52	Civil society group leader, president of the Clean Air Action Group *(Levegő Munkacsoport)* and vice-president of Green Budget Europe.
Márki-Zay, Péter	100	Independent opposition mayor of Hódmezővásárhely (Csongrád-Csanád County) since 2018, founder of the Everybody's Hungary Movement *(Mindenki Magyarországa Mozgalom,* MMM) in 2018. Opposition candidate for prime minister in 2022.
Márton, Roland	72	MSZP, county councilor, the opposition candidate for mayor of Székesfehérvár (Fejér County) in 2019.
Molnár, Gyula	76	MSZP, former MP, party chair, mayor of District 11 (2002-2010), later member of DK.
Molnár, Zsolt	41	MSZP, party director, MP since 2006. He was reported to be seen among far-right protesters in 1992, as well as to have economic and political ties to Fidesz.
Nacsa, Lőrinc	10	Fidesz-KDNP, MP, member and spokesman of KDNP parliamentary group since 2018. Member of the European Council (2021), MP, and deputy group leader (2022-).
Nagy-Majdon, József	26	Fidesz-KDNP, mayor of Bátonyterenye (Nógrád County) since 2010.
Németh, Szilárd	24	Fidesz-KDNP, MP, councilor, and mayor of District 21 (2010-2014). Secretary of State of the Ministry of National Security since 2018.
Niedermüller, Péter	80	DK, former MEP, opposition mayor of District 7 since 2019.
Novák, Katalin	30	Fidesz-KDNP, former secretary of state, minister without portfolio (Family Affairs), and MP. She has been the president of Hungary as of 2022.
Nunkovics, Tibor	62	Jobbik, MP and deputy group leader (2019-).
Orbán, Viktor	18	Fidesz-KDNP, founding member of Fidesz in 1988, chair (1993-2000, 2003-), MP (1990-), prime minister (1998-2002, 2010-).
Orosz, Anna	79	Momentum, municipal councilor (2019-2022), party chair (2021), and MP (2022-).
Őrsi, Gergely	57	MSZP, mayor of District 2, Budapest since 2019.

Papp, László	33	Fidesz-KDNP, former municipal councilor, mayor of Debrecen (Hajdú-Bihar County) since 2014, following Lajos Kósa in office.
Parti Nagy, Lajos	98	Hungarian writer, playwright, and poet. He endorsed Karácsony in the 2019 campaign.
Pásztor, István	34	Serbian politician, chair of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians *(Vajdasági Magyar Szövetség, Савез војвођанских Мађара,* VMSZ) (2008-), and president of the Assembly of Vojvodina (2012-).
Pikó, András	47	Independent, opposition mayor of District 8 since 2019.
Radócz, Zoltán	73	MSZP, municipal councilor in Szolnok (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County) (2014-2019). Opposition candidate for Szolnok mayor in 2019.
Rozgonyi, Zoltán	15	Fidesz-KDNP, municipal councilor (1998-), candidate for District 14 mayor in 2014 and 2019.
Şatıroğlu, Nevzat	88	AKP, MP from Istanbul (2018-).
Schmuck, Erzsébet	60	LMP, co-chair (2019-), MP (2014-2022).
Tellioğlu, Yavuz	87	MHP, head of the far-right Idealist Hearts or Grey Wolves *(Ülkü Ocakları)* (2009-2010), their Istanbul chapter (2011-2013), deputy chair of MHP Istanbul chapter (2014), and head of its Şişli chapter (2016-). Later, vice-president of MHP in Istanbul province and MHP board member.
Semjén, Zsolt	27	KDNP, founding member, later MP and minister, deputy prime minister since 2010.
Şenocak, Bayram	92	AKP, deputy president of the youth organization and head of the AKP Avcılar chapter. He was nominated for Avcılar mayor in 2014. Later, head of the Istanbul chapter (2018-2021) and MP (2023-).
Soproni, Tamás	46	Momentum, mayor of District 6, Budapest since 2019.
Szabó, Rebeka	67	PM, founding member, earlier founding member of LMP, MP (2010-2014), vice-mayor of District 14 (2014-2022), later co-chair of PM and MP again (2022-).
Szabó, Tímea	54	PM, founding member, earlier founding member of LMP. MP (2010-)
Szalai, Krisztina	58	Hungarian actress and writer, opposition candidate for councilor in Budapest District 2 in 2019.

Szatmáry, Kristóf	12	Fidesz-KDNP, earlier municipal councilor, deputy group leader, and MP (2006-). Vice-chairman of the Enterprise Development Committee since 2018, overseeing road construction.
Székely, Sándor	68	Hungarian Solidarity Movement *(Magyar Szolidaritás Mozgalom*, Szolidaritás), founder and chair, MP (2018-2022).
Szél, Bernadett	65	Independent, formerly member of LMP, MP (2012-2022), chair and leader of parliamentary group until 2018, the party's candidate for prime minister in 2017.
Szemereyné Pataki, Klaudia	19	Fidesz-KDNP, former MP, mayor of Kecskemét (Bács-Kiskun County) since 2014.
Szeneczey, Balázs	16	Fidesz-KDNP, chief of staff of the mayor of Budapest (2010), deputy mayor of Budapest (2012-2019).
Szijjártó, Péter	20	Fidesz-KDNP, MP (2002-), earlier Orbán's spokesman, secretary of state, and minister of foreign affairs since 2014.
Tarlós, István	1	1990-2006), MP (2010), mayor of Budapest (2010-2019), prime ministerial commissioner since 2019.
Tóth, Bertalan	49	MSZP, MP (2006-2007, 2014-), party chair and co-chair (2018-2022), group leader (2016-).
Trippon, Norbert	56	MSZP, member of DK since October 2019. Earlier deputy mayor of District 4 and group leader in the municipal assembly, chair of the Committee on Government Procurement (2014-2019).
Ujhelyi, István	75	MSZP, member until 2022, formerly municipal councilor, MP, and MEP (2014-).
Uysal, Mevlüt	93	AKP, former mayor of Başakşehir district (2009-2017), mayor of Istanbul until 2019.
V. Naszályi, Márta	74	PM, formerly LMP, municipal councilor in District 1 (2010-2013), Budapest Assembly (2018-), and mayor since 2019.
Varga, Judit	25	Fidesz-KDNP, former secretary of state and minister of justice (2019-2023).
Varga, Mihály	31	Fidesz-KDNP, MP (1990-), former deputy party chair, secretary of state, minister (2017-), and deputy PM (2018-2022).
Wintermantel, Zsolt	11	Fidesz-KDNP, mayor of District 4 (2010-2019).

Woman (activist)	84	
Woman (at the course)	106	
Worker (janitor)	103	
Yazıcı, Hayati	107	AKP, party co-founder and vice-chairman, MP (2002-), former deputy PM, minister of custom and trade (2011-2014).
Yıldırım, Binali	3	AKP, former Fast Ferries Co. Inc. (İDO), MP, minister, presidential advisor, mayoral candidate for Izmir, prime minister, party leader, and speaker of parliament. In 2018, he was nominated for Istanbul mayor and lost against İmamoğlu in 2019.
Yıldırım, Nihal	90	AKP, candidate for Şişli mayor in 2019.
Zsigmond, Barna Pál	13	Fidesz-KDNP, MP (2018-), he was spokesman of Fidesz Budapest in 2019.

Appendix 4

VOTE SHARES IN THE ISTANBUL AND BUDAPEST MAYORAL ELECTIONS

Table A.4.1: 2014 and 2019 vote share in the Istanbul mayoral election (YSK, 2014; 2019).

	2014								**2019 (March)**									
District	Population	Votes	AKP	%	CHP	%	Difference	%	Population	Votes	AKP	%	Change %	CHP	%	Change %	Difference	%
Arnavutköy	225,670	123,866	71,220	57.50	21,731	17.54	49,489	39.95	282,488	146,543	86,532	59.05	1.55	47,828	32.64	15.09	38,704	26.41
Avcılar	417,852	254,450	99,830	39.23	115,393	45.35	15,563	6.12	448,882	248,759	102,729	41.30	2.06	133,968	53.85	8.50	31,239	12.56
Bağcılar	754,623	444,046	251,330	56.60	100,863	22.71	150,467	33.89	745,125	415,391	236,222	56.87	0.27	149,998	36.11	13.40	86,224	20.76
Bahçelievler	599,027	384,067	183,634	47.81	137,449	35.79	46,185	12.03	611,059	349,444	170,036	48.66	0.85	157,861	45.17	9.39	12,175	3.48
Bakırköy	221,594	152,987	35,067	22.92	104,245	68.14	69,178	45.22	229,239	139,660	34,255	24.53	1.61	99,519	71.26	3.12	65,264	46.73
Başakşehir	342,422	192,647	95,872	49.77	63,235	32.82	32,637	16.94	460,259	222,928	115,471	51.80	2.03	92,843	41.65	8.82	22,628	10.15
Bayrampaşa	269,809	178,894	91,024	50.88	65,974	36.88	25,050	14.00	274,735	168,845	86,443	51.20	0.32	72,983	43.22	6.35	13,460	7.97
Beşiktaş	188,793	131,359	22,927	17.45	98,664	75.11	75,737	57.66	182,649	113,836	21,400	18.80	1.35	88,406	77.66	2.55	67,006	58.86
Beylikdüzü	262,473	155,892	61,502	39.45	74,347	47.69	12,845	8.24	352,412	194,146	77,062	39.69	0.24	108,500	55.89	8.19	31,438	16.19
Beyoğlu	241,520	153,768	73,906	48.06	51,384	33.42	22,522	14.65	233,323	135,071	66,258	49.05	0.99	59,796	44.27	10.85	6,462	4.78
Büyükçekmece	223,324	133,275	57,795	43.37	59,435	44.60	1,640	1.23	254,103	148,218	66,101	44.60	1.23	75,027	50.62	6.02	8,926	6.02
Çatalca	67,843	46,414	17,303	37.28	22,327	48.10	5,024	10.82	73,718	50,459	22,524	44.64	7.36	24,926	49.40	1.29	2,402	4.76
Esenler	458,857	275,948	168,852	61.19	54,680	19.82	114,172	41.37	450,344	258,641	158,452	61.26	0.07	82,122	31.75	11.94	76,330	29.51
Esenyurt	686,968	364,138	162,922	44.74	123,808	34.00	39,114	10.74	954,579	456,219	198,864	43.59	1.15	230,121	50.44	16.44	31,257	6.85
Eyüpsultan	367,824	234,253	107,641	45.95	94,913	40.52	12,728	5.43	400,513	235,222	111,505	47.40	1.45	110,411	46.94	6.42	1,094	0.47
Fatih	419,266	266,505	130,166	48.84	91,254	34.24	38,912	14.60	443,090	222,807	114,570	51.42	2.58	93,848	42.12	7.88	20,722	9.30

Gaziosmanpaşa	498,120	307,319	165,430	53.83	90,373	29.41	75,057	24.42	491,962	284,971	153,270	53.78	-0.05	111,119	38.99	9.59	42,151	14.79
Güngören	303,371	195,791	100,807	51.49	62,703	32.03	38,104	19.46	289,441	171,779	89,456	52.08	0.59	71,648	41.71	9.68	17,808	10.37
Kağıthane	432,230	273,312	139,708	51.12	89,029	32.57	50,679	18.54	448,025	260,619	136,157	52.24	1.13	106,801	40.98	8.41	29,356	11.26
Küçükçekmece	748,398	461,771	192,510	41.69	184,694	40.00	7,816	1.69	792,821	452,344	193,625	42.80	1.12	231,989	51.29	11.29	38,364	8.48
Sarıyer	337,681	219,022	86,486	39.49	107,249	48.97	20,763	9.48	347,214	210,696	87,346	41.46	1.97	113,392	53.82	4.85	26,046	12.36
Silivri	161,165	98,198	38,919	39.63	45,180	46.01	6,261	6.38	193,680	110,178	45,490	41.29	1.65	56,414	51.20	5.19	10,924	9.91
Sultangazi	513,022	295,216	168,934	57.22	74,317	25.17	94,617	32.05	534,565	296,906	167,532	56.43	-0.80	108,960	36.70	11.52	58,572	19.73
Şişli	272,380	182,834	50,349	27.54	112,355	61.45	62,006	33.91	279,817	164,932	46,417	28.14	0.61	104,948	63.63	2.18	58,531	35.49
Zeytinburnu	287,223	176,152	84,047	47.71	53,352	30.29	30,695	17.43	293,574	155,054	76,367	49.25	1.54	68,782	44.36	14.07	7,585	4.89
Europe	9,301,455	5,702,124	2,658,181	46.62	2,098,954	36.81	559,227	9.81	10,067,617	5,613,668	2,664,084	47.46	0.84	2,602,210	46.35	9.54	61,874	1.10
Adalar	16,052	10,783	3,563	33.04	5,974	55.40	2,411	22.36	15,238	10,324	3,462	33.53	0.49	6,060	58.70	3.30	2,598	25.16
Ataşehir	408,986	264,695	111,010	41.94	122,669	46.34	11,659	4.40	425,094	259,282	109,416	42.20	0.26	136,855	52.78	6.44	27,439	10.58
Beykoz	248,071	165,115	80,477	48.74	59,124	35.81	21,353	12.93	248,260	157,216	80,266	51.05	2.31	67,010	42.62	6.82	13,256	8.43
Çekmeköy	220,656	128,813	62,684	48.66	46,254	35.91	16,430	12.75	264,508	149,884	72,706	48.51	-0.15	63,777	42.55	6.64	8,929	5.96
Kadıköy	482,571	370,420	77,709	20.98	261,784	70.67	184,075	49.69	482,713	312,071	63,135	20.23	-0.75	237,707	76.17	5.50	174,572	55.94
Kartal	450,498	299,065	127,595	42.66	129,616	43.34	2,021	0.68	470,676	296,019	129,073	43.60	0.94	151,174	51.07	7.73	22,101	7.47
Maltepe	476,806	314,494	120,922	38.45	156,895	49.89	35,973	11.44	513,316	311,146	121,082	38.91	0.47	172,664	55.49	5.60	51,582	16.58
Pendik	663,569	401,170	211,693	52.77	123,666	30.83	88,027	21.94	711,894	410,737	221,200	53.85	-1.09	164,055	39.94	9.12	57,145	13.91
Sancaktepe	329,788	184,370	89,290	48.43	60,388	32.75	28,902	15.68	436,733	238,010	114,069	47.93	-0.50	108,362	45.53	12.77	5,707	2.40
Sultanbeyli	315,022	175,781	112,478	63.99	19,541	11.12	92,937	52.87	336,021	180,596	114,087	63.17	-0.82	51,379	28.45	17.33	62,708	34.72
Şile	32,823	22,396	10,519	46.97	7,222	32.25	3,297	14.72	37,692	26,221	14,295	54.52	7.55	10,404	39.68	7.43	3,891	14.84
Tuzla	221,620	128,944	61,244	47.50	47,422	36.78	13,822	10.72	267,400	151,151	72,553	48.00	0.50	69,944	46.27	9.50	2,609	1.73
Ümraniye	674,131	414,259	213,446	51.52	136,712	33.00	76,734	18.52	710,280	408,119	215,195	52.73	1.20	168,018	41.17	8.17	47,177	11.56
Üsküdar	534,970	358,897	161,095	44.89	152,233	42.42	8,862	2.47	531,825	340,628	161,413	47.39	2.50	160,146	47.01	4.60	1,267	0.37

Asia	5,075,563	3,239,202	1,443,725	44.57	1,329,500	41.04	114,225	3.52633	5,451,650	3,251,404	1,491,952	45.89	1.316	1,567,555	48.21	7.168	75,603	2.325
Total	14,377,018	8,941,326	4,101,906	45.88	3,428,454	38.34	673,452	7.53	15,519,267	8,865,072	4,156,036	46.88	1.005	4,169,765	47.04	8.692	13,729	0.155

Table A.1.2: The March and June 2019 vote share in the Istanbul mayoral election (YSK, 2019).

	2019 (March)								**2019 (June)**								
District	Population	Votes	AKP	%	CHP	%	Difference	%	Votes	AKP	%	Change	CHP	%	Change	Difference	%
Arnavutköy	282,488	146,543	86,532	59.05	47,828	32.64	38,704	26.41	142,814	83,701	58.61	-0.44	53,894	37.74	5.10	29,807	20.87
Avcılar	448,882	248,759	102,729	41.30	133,968	53.85	31,239	12.56	250,760	91,873	36.64	-4.66	152,348	60.75	6.90	60,475	24.12
Bağcılar	745,125	415,391	236,222	56.87	149,998	36.11	86,224	20.76	416,006	230,271	55.35	-1.51	172,694	41.51	5.40	57,577	13.84
Bahçelievler	611,059	349,444	170,036	48.66	157,861	45.17	12,175	3.48	354,488	163,896	46.23	-2.42	180,441	50.90	5.73	16,545	4.67
Bakırköy	229,239	139,660	34,255	24.53	99,519	71.26	65,264	46.73	144,098	28,545	19.81	-4.72	112,656	78.18	6.92	84,111	58.37
Başakşehir	460,259	222,928	115,471	51.80	92,843	41.65	22,628	10.15	224,757	112,968	50.26	-1.54	104,571	46.53	4.88	8,397	3.74
Bayrampaşa	274,735	168,845	86,443	51.20	72,983	43.22	13,460	7.97	169,476	80,593	47.55	-3.64	84,228	49.70	6.47	3,635	2.14
Beşiktaş	182,649	113,836	21,400	18.80	88,406	77.66	67,006	58.86	120,038	18,525	15.43	-3.37	99,480	82.87	5.21	80,955	67.44
Beylikdüzü	352,412	194,146	77,062	39.69	108,500	55.89	31,438	16.19	194,539	71,543	36.78	-2.92	118,351	60.84	4.95	46,808	24.06
Beyoğlu	233,323	135,071	66,258	49.05	59,796	44.27	6,462	4.78	138,161	64,346	46.57	-2.48	69,824	50.54	6.27	5,478	3.96
Büyükçekmece	254,103	148,218	66,101	44.60	75,027	50.62	8,926	6.02	147,497	58,690	39.79	-4.81	85,155	57.73	7.11	26,465	17.94
Çatalca	73,718	50,459	22,524	44.64	24,926	49.40	2,402	4.76	49,499	19,204	38.80	-5.80	28,852	58.29	8.89	9,648	19.49
Esenler	450,344	258,641	158,452	61.26	82,122	31.75	76,330	29.51	258,297	154,094	59.66	-1.61	96,051	37.19	5.43	58,043	22.47
Esenyurt	954,579	456,219	198,864	43.59	230,121	50.44	31,257	6.85	448,013	184,194	41.11	-2.48	250,738	55.97	5.53	66,544	14.85
Eyüpsultan	400,513	235,222	111,505	47.40	110,411	46.94	1,094	0.47	237,736	105,559	44.40	-3.00	125,766	52.90	5.96	20,207	8.50
Fatih	443,090	222,807	114,570	51.42	93,848	42.12	20,722	9.30	226,089	109,306	48.35	-3.07	109,636	48.49	6.37	330	0.15
Gaziosmanpaşa	491,962	284,971	153,270	53.78	111,119	38.99	42,151	14.79	287,376	148,463	51.66	-2.12	130,245	45.32	6.33	18,218	6.34

Güngören	289,441	171,779	89,456	52.08	71,648	41.71	17,808	10.37	173,442	85,555	49.33	-2.75	82,987	47.85	6.14	2,568	1.48
Kağıthane	448,025	260,619	136,157	52.24	106,801	40.98	29,356	11.26	264,920	131,328	49.57	-2.67	126,131	47.61	6.63	5,197	1.96
Küçükçekmece	792,821	452,344	193,625	42.80	231,989	51.29	38,364	8.48	454,137	176,518	38.87	-3.94	264,600	58.26	6.98	88,082	19.40
Sarıyer	347,214	210,696	87,346	41.46	113,392	53.82	26,046	12.36	212,750	78,970	37.12	-4.34	128,864	60.57	6.75	49,894	23.45
Silivri	193,680	110,178	45,490	41.29	56,414	51.20	10,924	9.91	107,864	39,403	36.53	-4.76	65,338	60.57	9.37	25,935	24.04
Sultangazi	534,565	296,906	167,532	56.43	108,960	36.70	58,572	19.73	299,294	168,167	56.19	-0.24	121,803	40.70	4.00	46,364	15.49
Şişli	279,817	164,932	46,417	28.14	104,948	63.63	58,531	35.49	169,407	43,127	25.46	-2.69	122,731	72.45	8.82	79,604	46.99
Zeytinburnu	293,574	155,054	76,367	49.25	68,782	44.36	7,585	4.89	155,270	71,405	45.99	-3.26	79,147	50.97	6.61	7,742	4.99
Europe	10,067,617	5,613,668	2,664,084	47.46	2,602,210	46.35	61,874	1.10	5,646,728	2,520,244	44.63	-2.83	2,966,531	52.54	6.18	446,287	7.90
Adalar	15,238	10,324	3,462	33.53	6,060	58.70	2,598	25.16	10,580	2,977	28.14	-5.40	7,378	69.74	11.04	4,401	41.60
Ataşehir	425,094	259,282	109,416	42.20	136,855	52.78	27,439	10.58	261,105	100,867	38.63	-3.57	153,982	58.97	6.19	53,115	20.34
Beykoz	248,260	157,216	80,266	51.05	67,010	42.62	13,256	8.43	156,670	75,687	48.31	-2.74	76,464	48.81	6.18	777	0.50
Çekmeköy	264,508	149,884	72,706	48.51	63,777	42.55	8,929	5.96	149,007	70,894	47.58	-0.93	73,949	49.63	7.08	3,055	2.05
Kadıköy	482,713	312,071	63,135	20.23	237,707	76.17	174,572	55.94	324,151	54,868	16.93	-3.30	263,817	81.39	5.22	208,949	64.46
Kartal	470,676	296,019	129,073	43.60	151,174	51.07	22,101	7.47	297,827	118,722	39.86	-3.74	171,579	57.61	6.54	52,857	17.75
Maltepe	513,316	311,146	121,082	38.91	172,664	55.49	51,582	16.58	317,098	112,198	35.38	-3.53	197,322	62.23	6.73	85,124	26.84
Pendik	711,894	410,737	221,200	53.85	164,055	39.94	57,145	13.91	412,651	213,764	51.80	-2.05	186,464	45.19	5.25	27,300	6.62
Sancaktepe	436,733	238,010	114,069	47.93	108,362	45.53	5,707	2.40	236,263	109,966	46.54	-1.38	119,532	50.59	5.06	9,566	4.05
Sultanbeyli	336,021	180,596	114,087	63.17	51,379	28.45	62,708	34.72	177,506	114,130	64.30	-1.12	56,995	32.11	3.66	57,135	32.19

Şile	37,692	26,221	14,295	54.52	10,404	39.68	3,891	14.84	25,567	12,358	48.34	-6.18	12,452	48.70	9.03	94	0.37
Tuzla	267,400	151,151	72,553	48.00	69,944	46.27	2,609	1.73	150,803	67,944	45.05	-2.95	78,680	52.17	5.90	10,736	7.12
Ümraniye	710,280	408,119	215,195	52.73	168,018	41.17	47,177	11.56	414,819	209,815	50.58	-2.15	193,266	46.59	5.42	16,549	3.99
Üsküdar	531,825	340,628	161,413	47.39	160,146	47.01	1,267	0.37	344,391	151,634	44.03	-3.36	183,671	53.33	6.32	32,037	9.30
Asia	5,451,650	3,251,404	1,491,952	45.88	1,567,555	48.21	2.32524	2.32524	3,278,438	1,415,824	43.19	-2.7005	1,775,551	54.16	5.94681	359,727	10.97
Total	15,519,267	8,865,072	4,156,036	46.88	4,169,765	47.04	13,729	0.15	8,925,166	3,936,068	44.10	-2.7802	4,742,082	53.13	6.10	806,014	9.03

Table A.4.3: 2014 and 2019 vote share in the Budapest mayoral election (NVI, 2014; 2019b).

	2014								**2019**									
District	Population	Votes	Fidesz	%	MOMA	%	Difference	%	Population	Votes	Fidesz	%	Change %	Allied opp.	%	Change %	Difference	%
District 1	25,910	10,861	6,091	56.08	3,227	29.71	2,864	26.37	26,149	12,742	6,032	47.34	-8.74	5,917	46.44	16.73	115	0.90
District 2	87,963	36,326	19,308	53.15	12,540	34.52	6,768	18.63	87,410	41,990	18,891	44.99	-8.16	20,854	49.66	15.14	1,963	4.67
District 3	125,167	45,368	22,850	50.37	15,429	34.01	7,421	16.36	125,992	55,411	24,070	43.44	-6.93	28,178	50.85	16.84	4,108	7.41
District 11	134,388	55,892	27,693	49.55	19,986	35.76	7,707	13.79	132,825	63,039	27,702	43.94	-5.60	31,354	49.74	13.98	3,652	5.79
District 12	59,029	24,758	13,893	56.12	7,957	32.14	5,936	23.98	57,877	28,530	13,507	47.34	-8.77	13,313	46.66	14.52	194	0.68
District 22	54,228	18,840	9,605	50.98	5,760	30.57	3,845	20.41	55,282	23,942	11,148	46.56	-4.42	11,285	47.13	16.56	137	0.57
Buda	486,685	192,045	99,440	51.78	64,899	33.79	34,541	17.99	485,535	225,654	101,350	44.91	-6.87	110,901	49.15	15.35	9,551	4.23
District 4	99,369	35,119	16,651	47.41	12,370	35.22	4,281	12.19	97,293	40,503	16,987	41.94	-5.47	20,977	51.79	16.57	3,990	9.85
District 5	26,270	10,468	5,712	54.57	3,430	32.77	2,282	21.80	26,028	10,622	5,161	48.59	-5.98	4,809	45.27	12.51	352	3.31
District 6	37,195	11,751	5,604	47.69	4,172	35.50	1,432	12.19	37,131	12,945	5,268	40.70	-6.99	6,840	52.84	17.34	1,572	12.14
District 7	55,113	16,405	7,306	44.54	5,995	36.54	1,311	7.99	51,845	17,614	7,080	40.20	-4.34	9,215	52.32	15.77	2,135	12.12
District 8	71,247	18,930	9,995	52.80	5,685	30.03	4,310	22.77	71,253	23,009	10,321	44.86	-7.94	10,969	47.67	17.64	648	2.82
District 9	55,446	18,106	8,739	48.27	6,221	34.36	2,518	13.91	54,460	21,567	8,855	41.06	-7.21	11,103	51.48	17.12	2,248	10.42
District 10	75,366	21,809	10,149	46.54	7,942	36.42	2,207	10.12	72,907	25,151	11,189	44.49	-2.05	12,450	49.50	13.08	1,261	5.01
District 13	112,436	40,817	14,355	35.17	19,236	47.13	4,881	11.96	115,348	48,174	15,931	33.07	-2.10	29,268	60.75	13.63	13,337	27.69
District 14	115,696	43,297	18,980	43.84	17,207	39.74	1,773	4.09	114,268	50,759	19,984	39.37	-4.47	27,451	54.08	14.34	7,467	14.71
District 15	80,267	26,160	11,646	44.52	9,379	35.85	2,267	8.67	78,813	31,387	13,799	43.96	-0.55	15,651	49.86	14.01	1,852	5.90

District 16	72,134	26,922	14,533	53.98	8,290	30.79	6,243	23.19	73,219	33,387	16,266	48.72	-5.26	15,154	45.39	14.60	1,112	3.33
District 17	87,476	29,596	15,853	53.56	8,745	29.55	7,108	24.02	88,059	36,715	17,663	48.11	-5.46	16,805	45.77	16.22	858	2.34
District 18	100,738	35,565	16,478	46.33	12,610	35.46	3,868	10.88	100,725	41,414	18,885	45.60	-0.73	20,233	48.86	13.40	1,348	3.25
District 19	60,083	23,104	9,944	43.04	8,646	37.42	1,298	5.62	58,505	24,191	10,120	41.83	-1.21	12,503	51.68	14.26	2,383	9.85
District 20	64,409	19,999	9,120	45.60	7,356	36.78	1,764	8.82	64,117	22,798	10,185	44.67	-0.93	11,254	49.36	12.58	1,069	4.69
District 21	76,195	26,287	12,234	46.54	8,945	34.03	3,289	12.51	74,406	29,017	13,426	46.27	-0.27	13,775	47.47	13.44	349	1.20
District 23	22,281	8,358	3,861	46.20	2,575	30.81	1,286	15.39	22,449	9,166	4,138	45.15	-1.05	4,235	46.20	15.39	97	1.06
Pest	1,211,721	412,693	191,160	46.32	148,804	36.06	42,356	10.26	1,200,826	478,419	205,258	42.90	-3.42	242,692	50.73	14.67	37,434	7.82
Total	1,698,406	604,738	290,600	48.05	213,703	35.34	76,897	12.72	1,686,361	704,073	306,608	43.55	-4.51	353,593	50.22	14.88	46,985	6.67

Appendix 5

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CAMPAIGN ISSUES

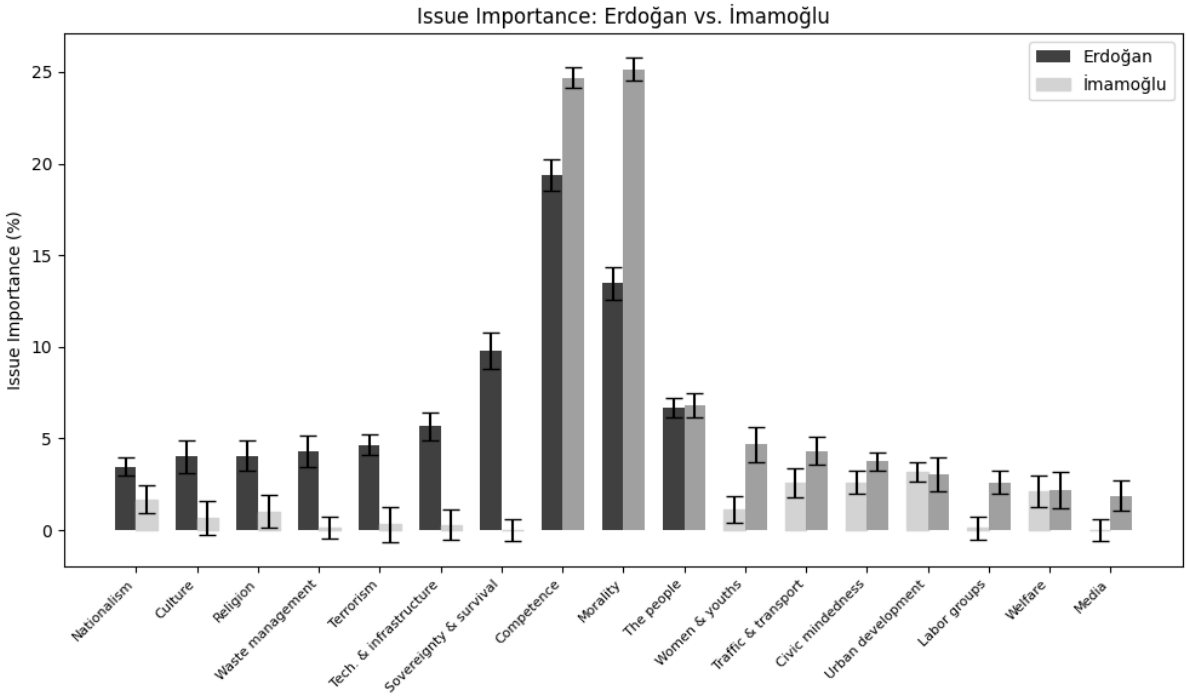

Figure A.5.1: Issue salience: Erdoğan vs. İmamoğlu.

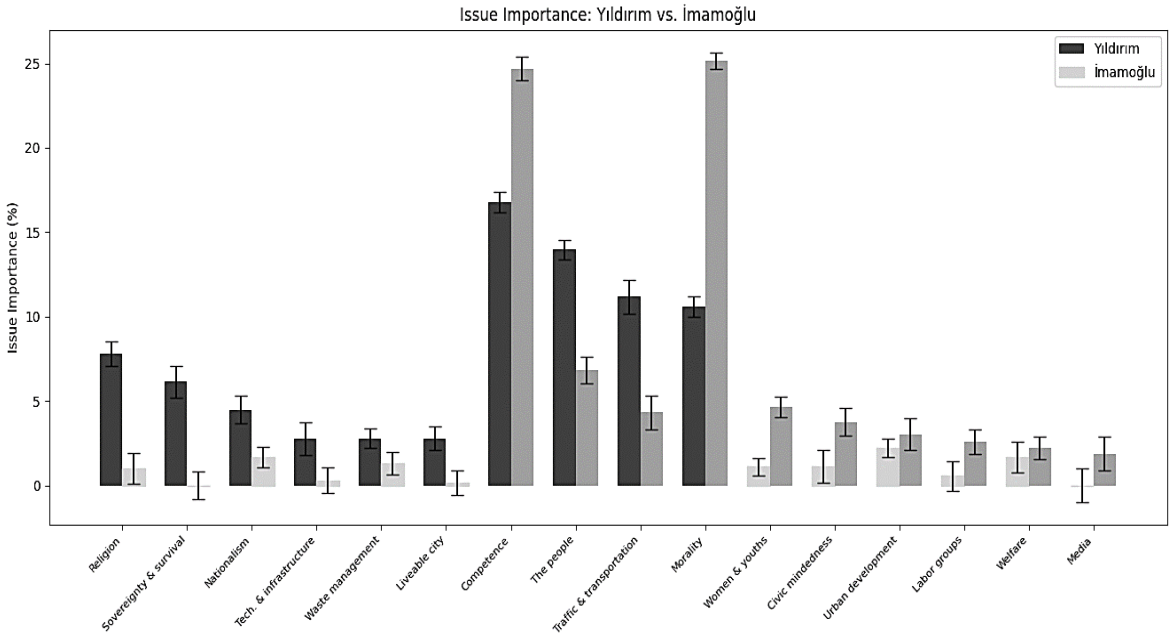

Figure A.5.2: Issue salience: Yıldırım vs. İmamoğlu.

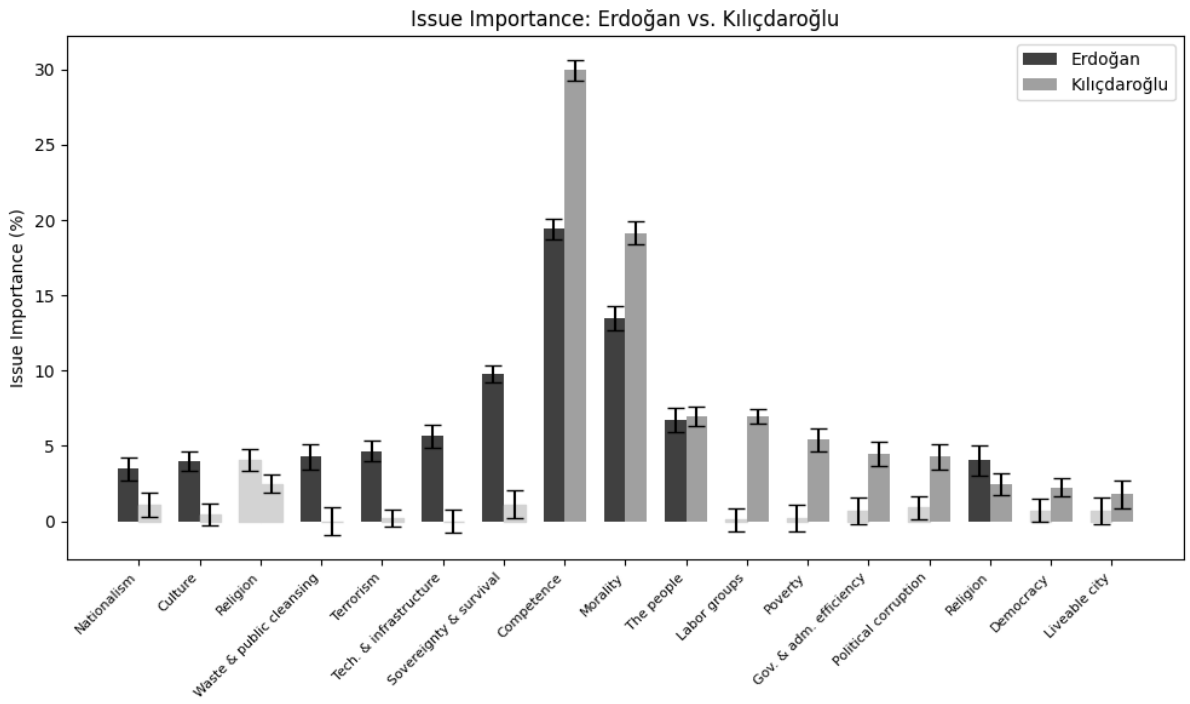

Figure A.5.3: Issue salience: Erdoğan vs. Kılıçdaroğlu.

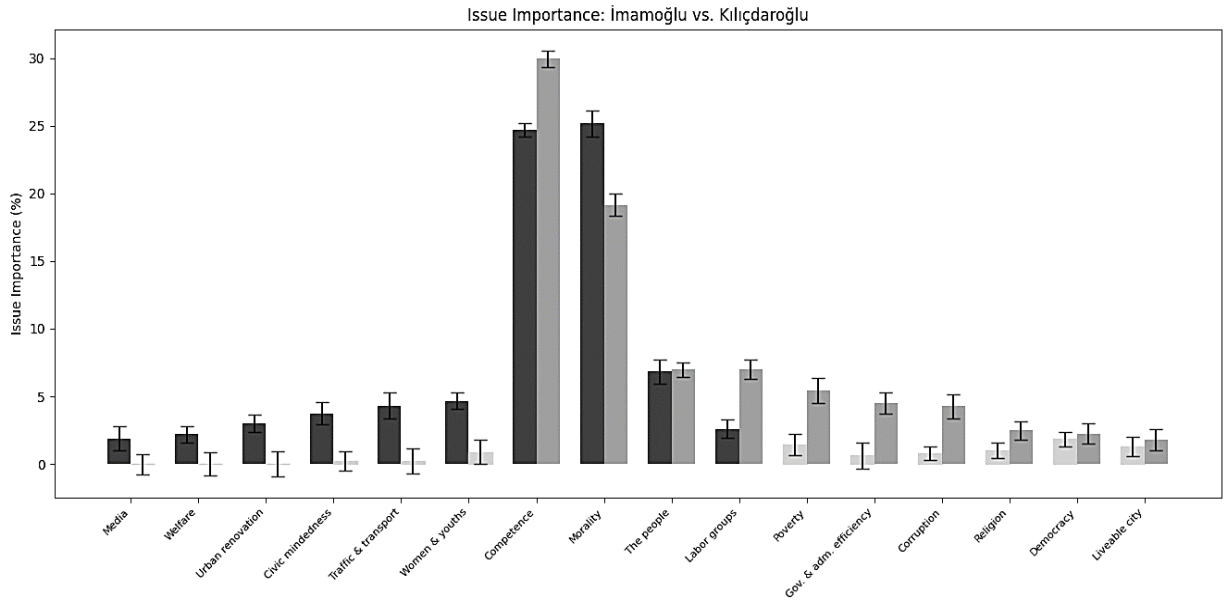

Figure A.5.4: Issue salience: İmamoğlu vs. Kılıçdaroğlu.

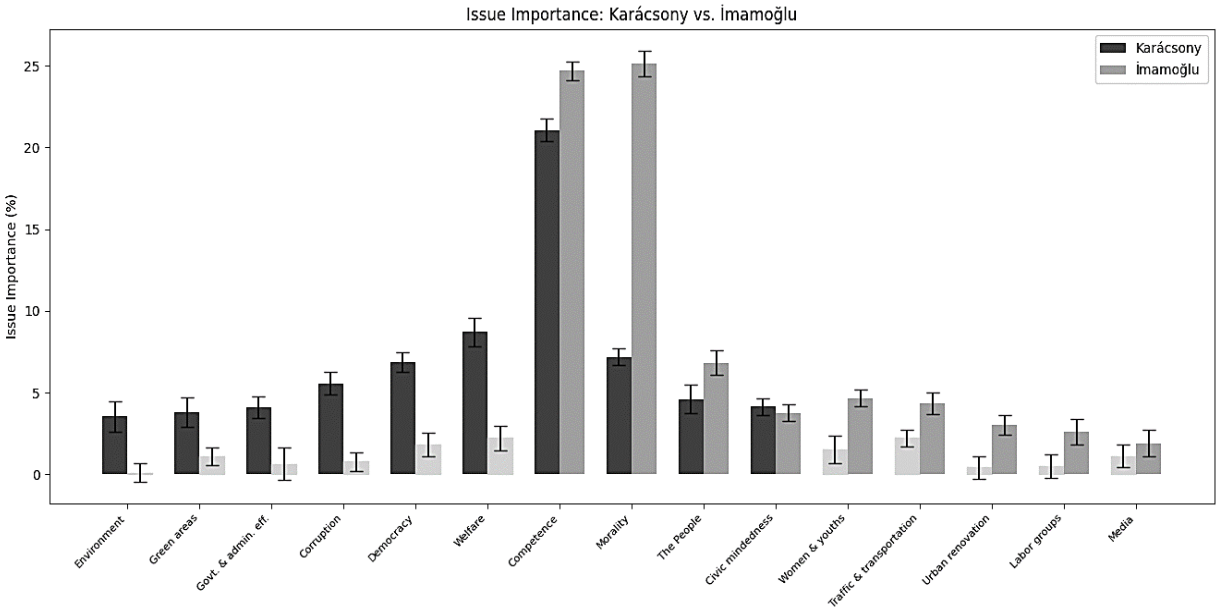

Figure A.5.5: Issue salience: İmamoğlu vs. Karácsony.

Appendix 6

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL POPULISM IN CAMPAIGNS

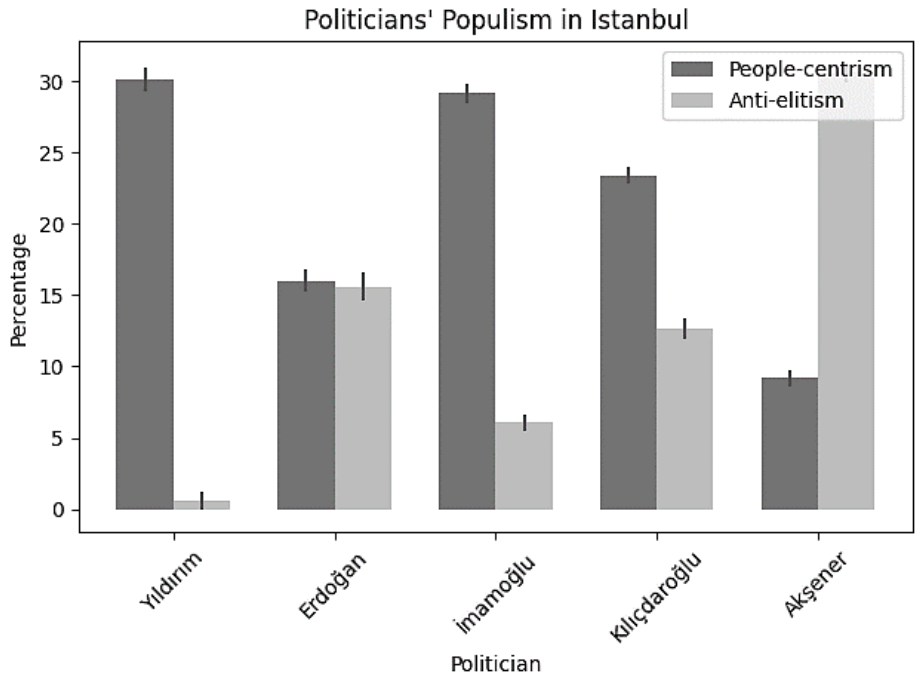

Figure A.6.1: Politicians' populism in Istanbul.

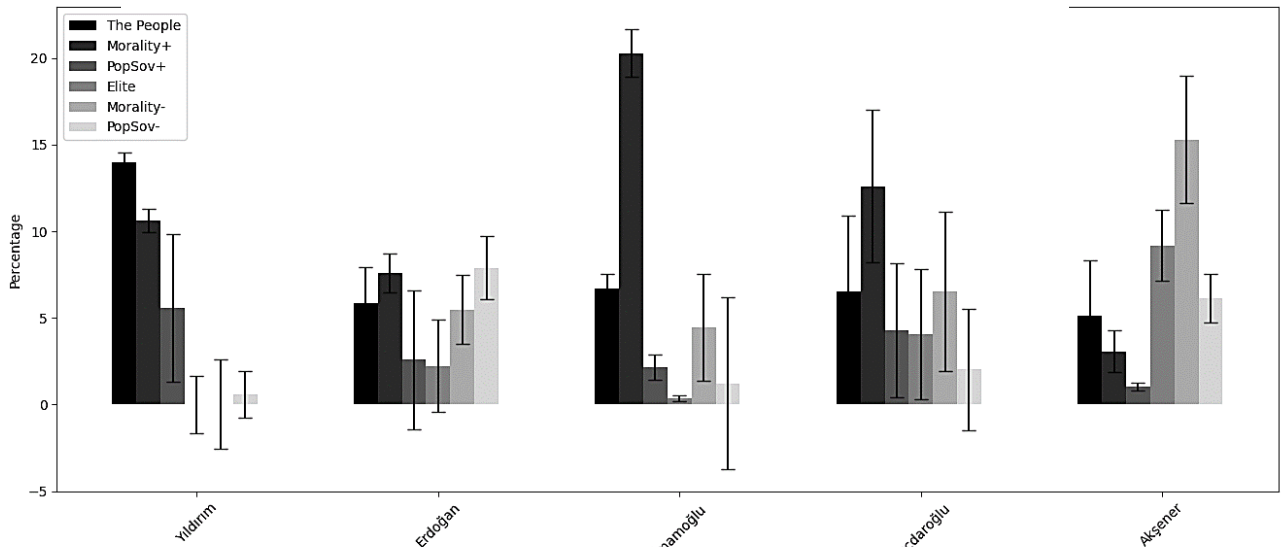

Figure A.6.2: Politicians' populist components in Istanbul.

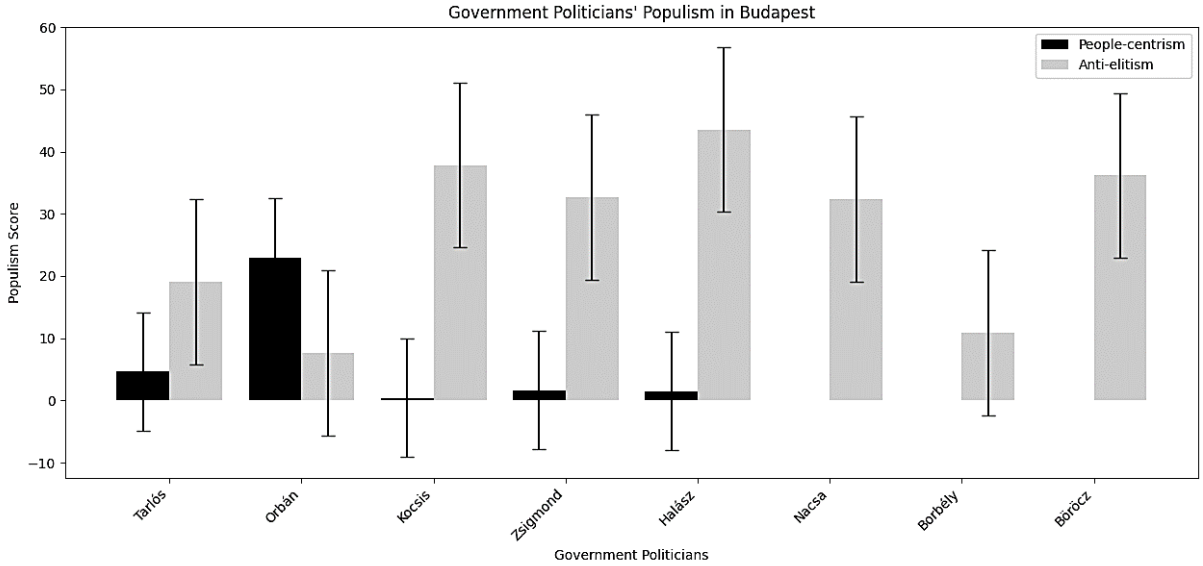

Figure A.6.3: Government politicians' populism in Budapest.

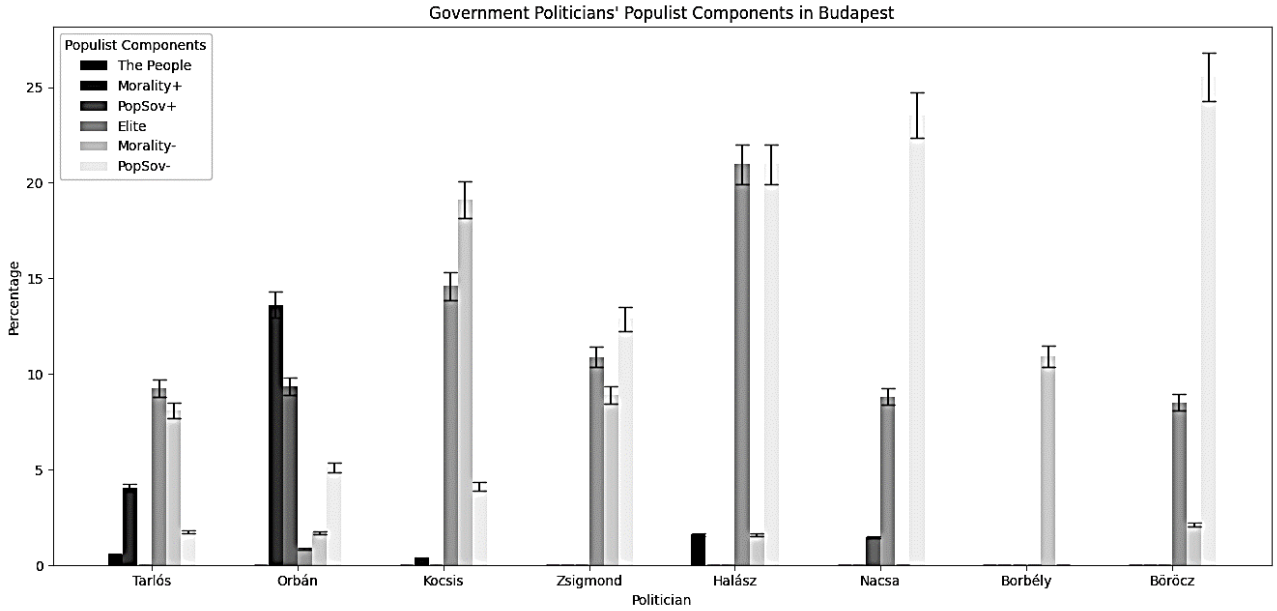

Figure A.6.4: Government politicians' populist components in Budapest.

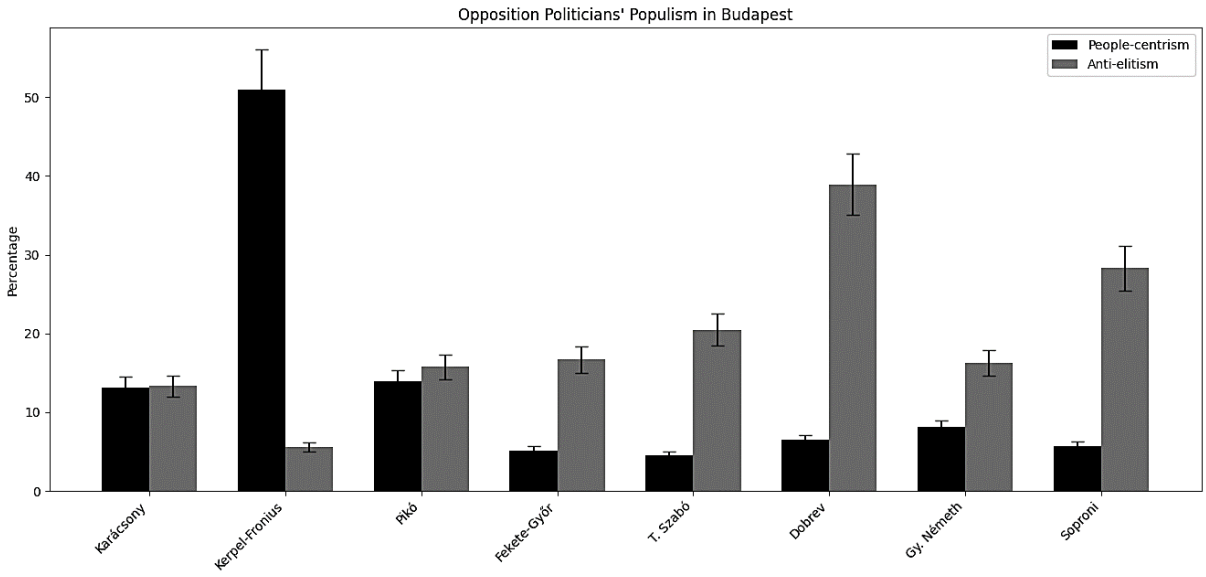

Figure A.6.5: Opposition politicians' populism in Budapest.

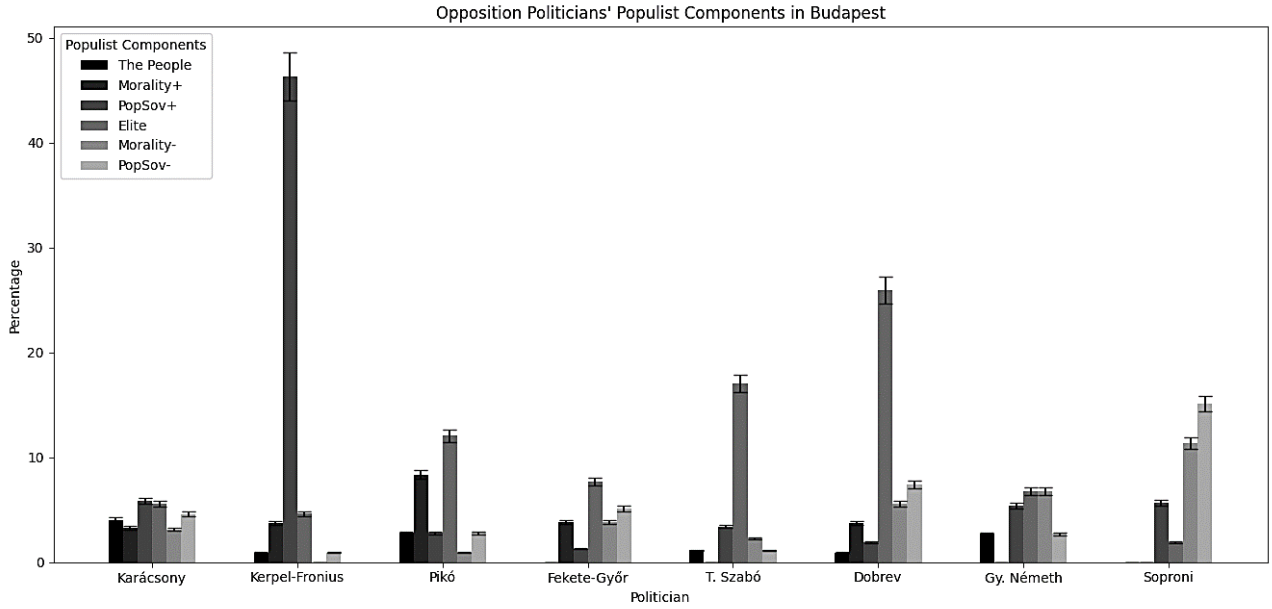

Figure A.6.6: Opposition politician's populist components in Budapest.

Appendix 7

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL CAMPAIGN TONES

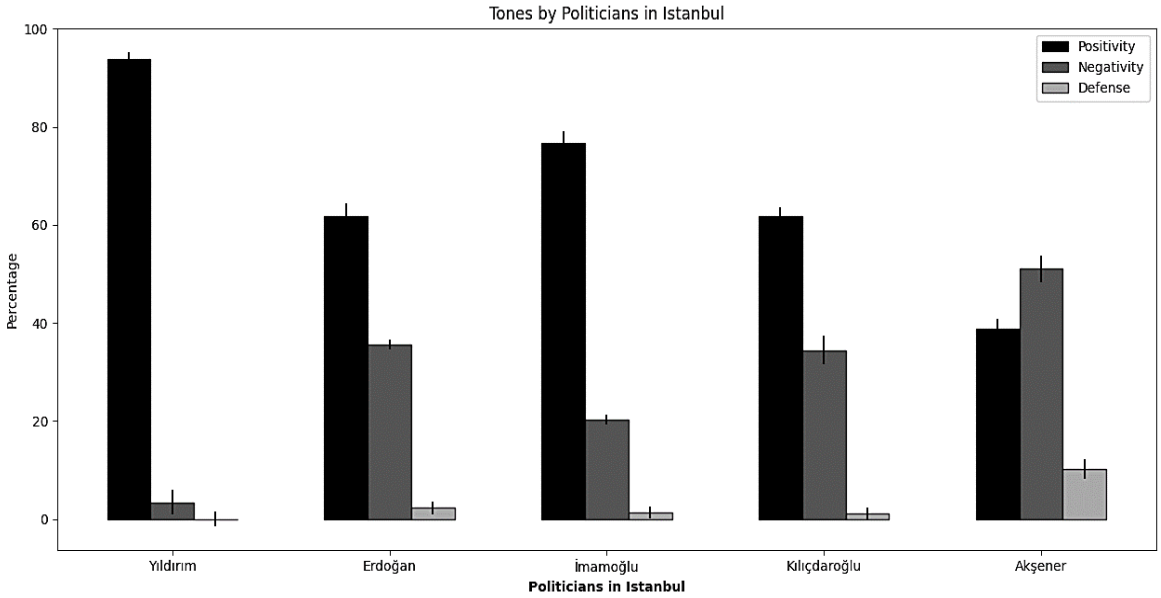

Figure A.7.1: Politicians' tones in Istanbul.

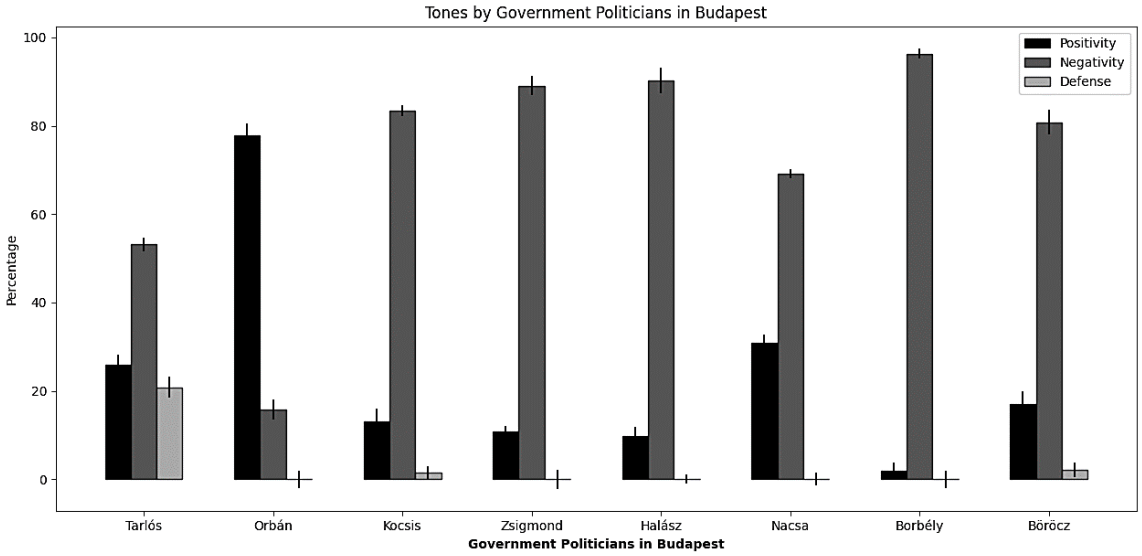

Figure A.7.2: Government politicians' tones in Budapest.

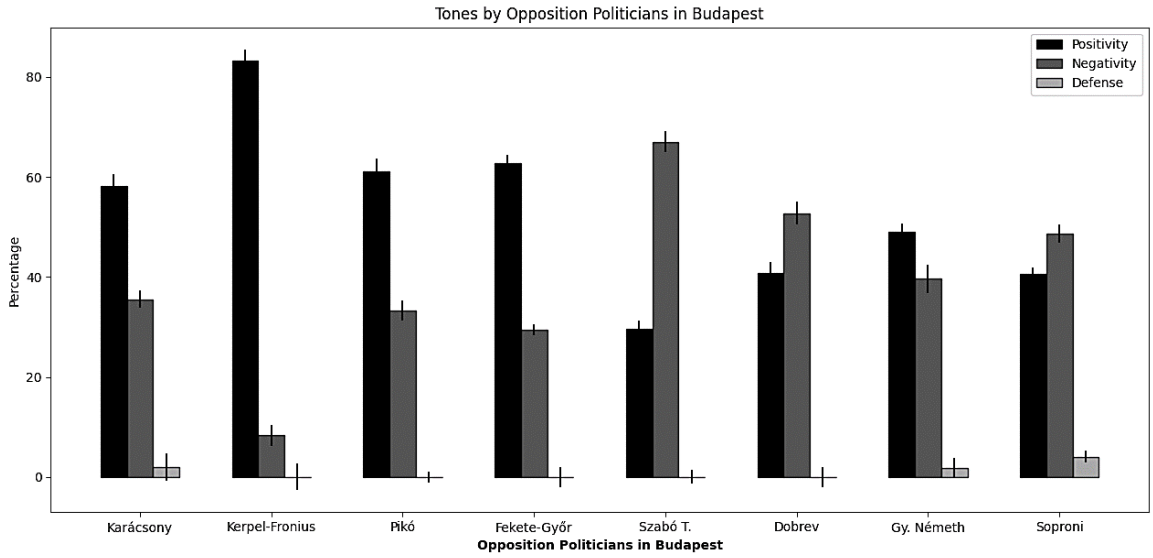

Figure A.7.3: Opposition politicians' tones in Budapest.

Appendix 8

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TIME SERIES MODELS

Table A.8.1: Descriptive statistics for the Istanbul models.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Positivity (depol.)	57.85	34.054	0	100
Negativity (pol.)	16.52	13.761	0	43
Elites	1.74	2.279	0	11
Pop. sov. (sov&suv)	1.71	3.881	0	17
Pop. sov. (democracy)	1.9699	2.48071	0	13.77
Morality & the people	22.2472	16.53959	0	69.23
Infrastructure	.95	1.722	0	7
Religion	1.14	1.548	0	5
Urban development	2.75	4.447		20
Economy & labor	3.4688	4.54617	0	19.47
Traffic & transportation	2.96	7.785	0	54
Multiculturalism	.26	.506	0	3
Small-scale business	.25	1.369	0	10
Pol. Ideology	.14	.337	0	1
Trasparency	.21	.664	0	4

Variables are expressed in percentages per day (N = 51). Control variables included.

Table A.8.2: Descriptive statistics for the Budapest models.

Variable	Mean	Std. dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Positivity (depol.)	49.57	25.438	0	100
Negativity (pol.)	37.18	23.398	0	85
Elites	10.88	8.960	0	39
Pop. sov. (sov&suv)	6.05	6.185	0	33
Pop. sov. (democracy)	2.28	7.661	0	50
Morality	5.9694	8.23540	0	34.31
The People	3.14	6.278	0	38
Infrastructure	1.10	3.770	0	18
Economy & labor	2.4109	12.43133	0	88.89
Competence	22.06	12.935	0	44
Traffic & transportation	3.32	14.101	0	100
Green city	6.4582	10.77273	0	51.79
Welfare	4.95	8.126	0	34
Culture	.39	1.530	0	11
Decentralization	.51	1.031	0	4
Youths	.2950	1.64249	0	11.67
Media	.51	1.379	0	7

Variables are expressed in percentages per day (N = 51). Control variables included.