

**CONFLICTS AND ELECTIONS: WHEN IS DOMESTIC DIVERSION
MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR?**

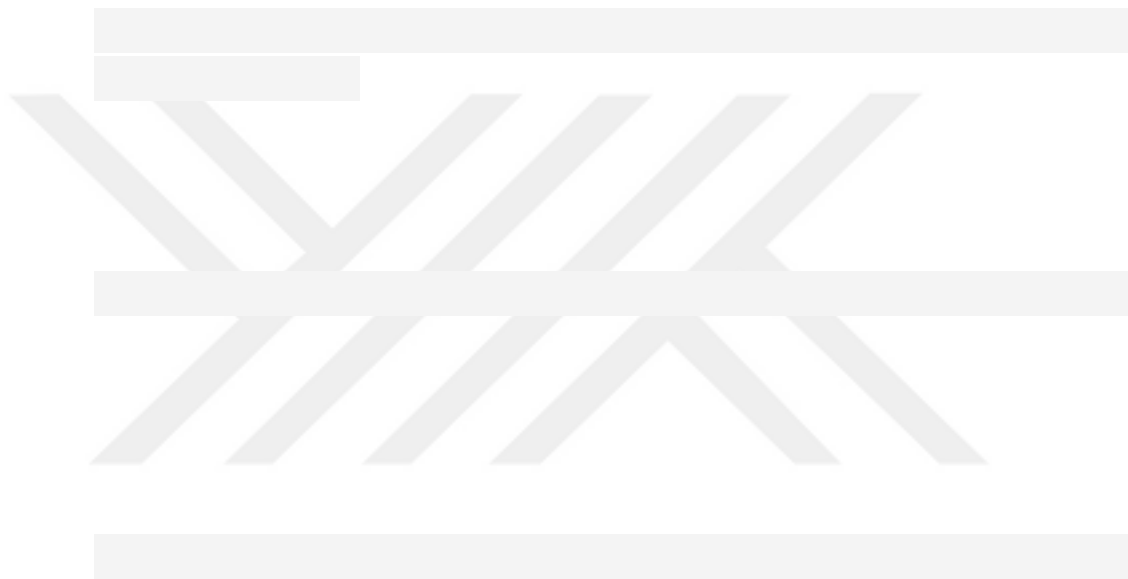
by
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ABSTRACT

CONFLICTS AND ELECTIONS: WHEN IS DOMESTIC DIVERSION MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR?

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Political Science M.A. THESIS, JULY 2021

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Political Sophistication

This thesis examines the relationship between conflicts and elections with a limited focus on domestic conflicts. It seeks to explain which factors affect the likelihood of domestic diversion and, specifically the effect of domestic diversion on electoral outcomes. The first empirical chapter investigates the interactive effect of mobilization type of minorities and election timing on leaders' propensity to initiate domestic diversion. The findings suggest that mobilization type matters during election years. While non-militant minorities are less likely to be targeted by domestic diversion during election years, militant minorities are more likely to be the target when macroeconomic conditions in a given country worsen during election years. The second empirical chapter investigates the effect of domestic diversion on voting behavior. To analyze the electorates' reaction to domestic diversion, it focuses on the period between two consecutive elections in Turkey, i.e., June and November 2015. Turkey had witnessed rising terror and conflict between the two elections. CSES Module 4 data are utilized in this chapter. The findings demonstrate that with the interview date approaching the last date of the field research, the survey respondents become more likely to state security as the most important problem (MIP). Consequently, those stating security as MIP are more likely to support the incumbent, if they are politically unsophisticated. While politically unsophisticates tend to be more sensitive to the "rally around the flag" effect, sophisticates tend to punish the incumbent.

ÖZET

ÇATIŞMALAR VE SEÇİMLER: YEREL YÖNLENDİRME NE ZAMAN DAHA OLASIDIR?

ÖMER FARUK GEMALMAZ

Siyaset Bilimi YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, TEMMUZ 2021

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Mert Moral

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerel Yönlendirme, Seçimler, Azınlığın Seferberlik Türü, Siyasi Bilgi

Bu tez, çatışmalar ve seçimler arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Tezin kapsamı iç çatışmalarla sınırlıdır. Çalışmada hangi faktörlerin yerel yönlendirme olasılığını etkilediğinin ve yerel yönlendirmenin seçim sonuçları üzerindeki etkilerinin açıklanması amaçlanmaktadır. İlk ampirik bölüm azınlıkların seferberlik tipinin ve seçim zamanlamasının, liderlerin yerel yönlendirme başlatma eğilimleri üzerindeki etkileşimli etkisini araştırmaktadır. Bulgular, seçim yıllarında seferberlik türünün oldukça önemli bir etken olduğunu göstermektedir. Seçim yıllarında militan olmayan azınlıkların yerel yönlendirmenin hedefi olma olasılığı daha düşükken, bu yıllarda bir ülkedeki makroekonomik koşullar kötüleştiğinde militan azınlıkların hedef olması daha olasıdır. İkinci ampirik bölüm, yerel yönlendirmenin oy verme davranışı üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktadır. Bu bölümde seçmenlerin yerel yönlendirmeye tepkisini analiz etmek için, Türkiye’de art arda iki seçim, Haziran ve Kasım 2015, arasındaki döneme odaklanılmaktadır. Türkiye, bu iki seçim arasında artan teröre ve çatışmaya tanık olmuştur. Bu bölümde CSES’in 4. Modülü verileri kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, mülakat tarihi alan araştırmasının son günlerine yaklaşırken, anket katılımcılarının güvenliği en önemli sorun (EÖS) olarak belirtme olasılığının arttığını göstermektedir. Sonuç olarak, güvenliği EÖS olarak görenlerin, özellikle siyaset hakkında bilgisizlerse hükümeti desteklemeleri daha olasıdır. Siyasi olarak bilgisiz kişiler, bayrak etrafında toplanma etkisine karşı daha duyarlı olma eğilimindeyken, bilgili kişiler hükümeti cezalandırma eğilimindedir.

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To my teachers...

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1. INTRODUCTION

“The best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion and civil war is to keep the subjects in amity one with another, and to this end, to find an enemy against whom they can make common cause.” (Bodin 1955, 168)

Vladimir Putin’s approval rate was a record-high 83% according to a poll conducted by Gallup in 2008 when Russia’s economy was growing for the last 10 consecutive years at 7% on average. However, Russia’s economy has contracted after 2008, and the decline in Putin’s approval rate followed. In 2013, a year before the annexation of Crimea, Putin’s approval rate has fallen to 54% percent. However, there was another dramatic shift in Putin’s approval rate after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. His approval rate has risen to 83% again (Ray and Esipova 2014). An international conflict seems to have helped Putin to restore his popularity. However, it was not clear whether Putin’s military actions against Ukraine were motivated by diversionary motives (Gerstel 2016). Although the annexation of Crimea may not be considered a diversionary conflict, the outcome was an increasing public support even among educated urban dwellers who are least likely to support Putin (Robertson and Greene 2017).

Not every leader benefits from international conflicts by increasing their public support like Putin. For instance, although the Falklands War initially induced a rally around the flag effect and increased the public support for the military regime, it eventually led to the demise of the regime in Argentina when the war was lost (Oakes 2006). The diversionary theory argues that leaders who face internal unrest initiate international conflicts to divert the public’s attention from internal matters (Levy 1998). Thanks to the “rally around the flag” effect, people would support their leader when an external enemy is found (Waltz 1967; Mueller 1970). The diversionary theory literature focuses on two main questions: 1) when does diversionary conflict occur?, 2) what are the outcomes of diversionary conflict? The empirical findings regarding the relationship between domestic factors and the use of force abroad are often inconsistent. While some scholars find that domestic factors like

economy and popular discontent affect the decision to divert (Ostrom and Job 1986; James and Oneal 1991), others argue there is little evidence for the link between domestic factors and foreign policy decisions (Miller 1995; Meernik and Waterman 1996). Similarly, empirical findings are ambivalent regarding the second question. Unlike the determinants of diversionary behavior, the outcomes of diversionary conflicts are rarely studied. While some authors present empirical support for the rally around the flag effect (Russett 1990; Derouen 2000), others argue that the effect of diversionary conflict on a leaders' popularity is of low magnitude (Lian and Oneal 1993) or even negative (Williams et al. 2010).

The literature on diversion had only examined external conflicts until Tir and Jasinski (2008) proposed the term "domestic diversion" by applying the same logic to domestic conflicts. The only difference here is the targets, which may be terrorist groups or any minority a country. Domestic diversion is thus operationalized as armed repression against a minority group (Tir and Jasinski 2008; Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018; Klein and Tokdemir 2019). External diversion is more costly than domestic diversion due to several factors. Firstly, attacking another country would trigger negative reactions from international organizations and other states. The aggressor state may face with serious sanctions that would undermine its economy (Gurvich and Prilepskiy 2015). Secondly, a military campaign against a state brings a considerable financial burden. Lastly, since the targets of external diversion are also states having regular armies, it is more likely to result in a defeat. External diversion may not be a viable strategy for leaders due to those higher costs. This may be the reason why despite the appealing logic, the empirical findings supporting the theory are weak.

Domestic diversion, on the other hand, is not as rare as external diversion due to its lower costs. States initiate conflicts against terrorist groups quite frequently. Those actions can be legitimized through the idea of national security. Consequently, international reactions to domestic diversion would be much less than an external diversion. This thesis focuses on domestic diversion due to two reasons. Firstly, domestic diversion, as a newer strand of in diversion literature, is understudied. Secondly, domestic diversion is a more feasible strategy due to its cost-efficient nature explained above. The possibility of using domestic diversion for leaders is thus substantially higher than an external diversion, which is often considered a rare phenomenon. Since the possibility of the occurrence of militarized disputes is practically almost zero in many country dyads, studying external diversion is also prone to selection bias. Therefore, I focus on domestic diversion in this thesis.

There are two main puzzles within the diversion literature: 1) which factors lead to

an increase in the likelihood of diversion?, 2) through which mechanisms conflicts bring more public support to leaders? This thesis is an attempt to put forth some answers to both of these puzzles. In the first empirical chapter, I address the first one by examining the factors affecting the decision to divert. I assume that leaders are rational actors who want to stay in power. While making a policy, leaders would calculate its costs and benefits. I argue that three factors make domestic diversion an appealing strategy for leaders by influencing their cost-benefit calculations. While elections and macroeconomic conditions affect the potential benefits of domestic diversion, mobilization type of minorities has an impact on the cost of domestic diversion. Leaders have more incentives to divert during election years since their survival depends on election outcomes. Hence the potential benefit from domestic diversion substantially increases in election years. Similarly, when macroeconomic conditions are worsening, domestic diversion may become a profitable strategy for leaders due to its potential reward, *i.e.*, restoring public support. However, the deteriorating macroeconomic conditions by itself may not be the only significant incentive for leaders to employ domestic diversion. The importance of public support is also higher in election years.

On the other hand, the organizational structure of the target of domestic diversion matters while calculating the costs of the domestic diversion. I classify organizational structures in two categories: the militant and non-militant mobilized minorities. Here, the militant mobilized minority term signifies a minority group whose members are organized as an armed group representing the minority's interests. The engagement with armed groups is the demarcation line, since it affects leaders' cost and benefit calculations severely. For instance, Kurds in Turkey are considered militant minority group since the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan, PKK) is an ethnic terrorist group claiming to represent their interests. Militant mobilized minorities can more easily be the target of a domestic diversion since those minorities have affiliations with violent groups. Justifying the initiation of armed repression against a minority group matters due to two reasons. It affects the level of negative reactions and pressures from the international community. Furthermore, if the repression is not justified in the eyes of the public, the domestic diversion may not induce the anticipated "rally around the flag" effect. Since domestic diversion against militant mobilized minorities is easier to justify compared to non-militant minorities, I expect that militant mobilized minorities will be the target of domestic diversion during election years. By following the same logic, I also expect that non-militant mobilized minorities are less likely to be the target of a domestic diversion. Along with the higher costs of targeting non-militant minorities, leaders may also need their electoral support during election years. Therefore

electoral incentives also prevent leaders to attack non-militant minorities in election years. In line with the above argumentation, I propose two hypotheses in the first empirical chapter. Firstly, the likelihood of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effects of mobilization type of minorities and election year. In election years, while the likelihood of domestic diversion against militant mobilized minorities increases, it decreases for non-militant minorities. Secondly, the interactive effects of mobilization type of minorities and inflation determines the likelihood of domestic diversion in election years. High inflation rates lead to an increase in the likelihood of domestic diversion against militant mobilized minorities during election years. Non-militant minorities are again less likely to be the target of a domestic diversion.

The second empirical chapter deals with the second puzzle: How do conflicts affect voting behavior? A domestic conflict does not necessarily produce more public support for a leader. There are intervening factors that mediate the effects of conflict on leaders' popularity. In the second empirical chapter, I focus on political sophistication as the mediating factor. Political sophistication signifies the level of political engagement and knowledge of an individual (Luskin 1990). To analyze the mechanism of how conflicts translate into more support for leaders, I examine the Turkish case. Turkey had two consecutive elections within 5 months in 2015. AKP got 41% of the votes in the June 2015 election. Interestingly, AKP's vote share rose to 49% in November 2015 elections. Turkey witnessed rising terror and conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK)) between those elections. My goal in the second empirical chapter is to illustrate the relationship between this conflict and voting behavior of Turkish citizens. To do so, I employ the post-election wave of the Turkish Election Study 2015 (CSES 2018). The interviews were conducted from July 18 to September 10 in 2015. This period corresponds to the rise in terror and conflict in Turkey. The frequency and intensity of the conflict had almost linearly increased within this period. Therefore, our data allow me to exploit a natural experiment like setting. Respondents who were interviewed at the first and last days of the interviewing period had varying exposure to the treatment, *i.e.*, rising conflict and terror.

I expect that those who were interviewed later on are more likely to state security/terror as the most important problem in Turkey. Thus, I argue that domestic diversion in our case led to the shift in electorates' perception about the most important problem (MIP) in Turkey. Then, political sophistication comes to the stage to help us explain the increase in the incumbent's vote share. I contend that politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to vote for the incumbent if they perceive security as MIP in Turkey. Perception of security as MIP could operate

two ways. A voter may think that the rising conflict and terror are the incumbent's fault. Consequently, she may punish the incumbent. In contradistinction, the voter may think that only the incumbent can bring back security and stability to the country. Criticizing the government in the first scenario, I argue requires more cognitive ability and politically relevant information. Therefore, I expect that politically unsophisticates are more sensitive to the "rally around the flag" effect. Lastly, I also expect that although those stating security as MIP are more likely to vote for MHP since rising terrorism lead to more electoral support for right-wing parties (Kıbrıs 2011; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Berrebi and Klor 2008), the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP does not affect the intention to vote for MHP. The interactive effect holds only for the incumbent.

This thesis proceeds as follows: in the next chapter, I firstly review the current literature on the causes of diversionary behavior. Then, I demonstrate the theoretical framework and expectations. After explaining the research design of the study, I present the empirical findings. The third chapter examines how domestic diversion leads to higher electoral support for the incumbent in Turkey. After reviewing the current literature on the outcomes of diversion, I present my theoretical framework and hypotheses. Then, I will provide the empirical findings regarding the hypotheses. Each chapter ends with a concluding section, where the respective findings and limitations of empirical analyses are evaluated and suggestions for further research are provided.

2. WHEN IS DOMESTIC DIVERSION MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR?

2.1 Introduction

The diversionary theory is one of the most prominent theories in the IR discipline. The theory states that leaders wage wars when face with internal unrest (Waltz 1967). The theory has developed in various ways like putting more emphasis on international conflicts than occurrences of war. Since wars are rare phenomena, the scope of the literature has expanded to international conflicts (Levy 1998). Lastly, by following a similar logic, some scholars propose a domestic variant of the diversionary theory (Tir and Jasinski 2008). While the main idea remains the same, the direction of diversion is not towards international rivalries but domestic opponents. By domestic opponents, I refer to both the groups that initiate armed resistance against central governments and ethnopolitical groups in a country. A politically mobilized minority that does not get involved in an armed conflict with the central government can also be a target of domestic diversion. However, the target of diversions is often the militant mobilized minorities that fight for regional autonomy. Many of those countries have civil war histories where the belligerent groups are composed of the dissenters of the regime.

Domestic diversion is a more viable strategy than external diversion for the leaders to distract the public's attention due to several reasons. Domestic diversion is a more cost-efficient strategy compared to an external diversion in which the conflict takes place outside of a state's territory. Firstly, since the target of domestic diversion is a less organized group compared to a state's regular army, it easier to defeat. Secondly, actions within the state's borders can be legitimized through the notions of national sovereignty and security. Therefore, the costs related to international pressures are also lesser. This chapter focuses on a largely overlooked aspect of the diversionary theory, domestic diversion. Here, the main aim is to examine when leaders initiate

domestic diversion. In which contexts, does the likelihood of domestic diversion increase?

The puzzle here is that while the expected benefits of domestic diversion for leaders exceed the expected costs in some cases, it is exactly the opposite in others. Thus, one should ask when domestic diversion becomes a more feasible strategy for leaders. More specifically, when do leaders appeal to domestic diversionary tactics? I contend that the answer lies in the cost-benefit calculations of the leaders. Relevant factors may be categorized under two classes: Those affecting the costs and the benefits. Some contexts may make domestic diversion more desirable by decreasing the costs of domestic diversion. Others may make it more appealing by increasing its expected benefits. For example, media can affect the calculations by decreasing the costs that a leader may face. The media frame the events, and framing influences the public opinion on the conflict to a considerable extent. When the media are controlled by the government, they tend to criticize a diversionary behavior of leader less, if at all.

In this chapter, I focus on three major factors which, I argue, have the greatest effects on the initiation of domestic diversion. I argue that the elections, mobilization type of minorities and macroeconomic conditions are the factors that provide leaders the greatest incentives to employ domestic diversion strategies. Specifically, election refers to the election year as a main independent variable in this study. I assert that leaders have more incentives to use the domestic diversion strategy in election years since they need to boost their popularity to win the elections. For example, if the next election is in 3 years, a leader will not have an urgency to boost their popularity. Without elections, decreasing popularity may not be an urgent problem requiring such a costly tool. However, when the election date approaches, unpopular leaders should do something to increase their support and may choose to employ a diversionary strategy (Shmuel 2020; Tir and Jasinski 2008; Mueller 1970). Elections increase the reward from domestic diversion. If the expected positive impact is realized, the leader will retain their post, which is one of the main goals of rational political actors. Therefore, I expect an increase in the likelihood of domestic diversion during election years.

My other main independent variable is macroeconomic conditions which are one of the major factors affecting leaders' popularity. There is a well-established literature, often referred as economic voting, on how macroeconomic conditions influence voting behavior. Since electorates' evaluations about the economic performance of the incumbent is a good predictor of election outcomes, leaders do care about the macroeconomic conditions in their country for securing their posts. When the

macroeconomic conditions are in decline, leaders start to lose their popularity and public support. Therefore, the deteriorating macroeconomic conditions may precede domestic diversion. Leaders facing decreased popularity would try to divert the public's attention from economic issues to something else. Here, domestic diversion may help leaders regain some of the support they lost. Rally around the flag effect may offset those negative impacts of the macroeconomic conditions on leaders' popularity. As indicated above, approaching elections push leaders to increase their popularity.

Lastly, the mobilization type of the minority groups also matters (Klein and Tokdemir 2019). The characteristics of the target of domestic diversion affect the viability of domestic diversion because the mobilization type of the minority groups influences leaders' cost-benefit calculations. Therefore, all models presented in this chapter are interactive and include the multiplicative interaction of the mobilization type. As noted above, minority groups are divided into two categories: militant and non-militant minorities. By militant mobilized minorities, I refer to minority groups whose members are members of an armed group representing the minority's interests. Here, having ties with armed groups is the demarcation line, since it significantly alters leaders' cost and benefit calculations. One of the main expectations in this study is that while the likelihood of domestic diversion against militant mobilized minorities increases in election years, it decreases for non-militant mobilized minorities. Finally, I also propose another model relying on the interactive effect of mobilization types of minorities and inflation during election years. During election years, non-militant mobilized minorities are less likely to be the target of domestic diversion when the inflation rate increases. On the other hand, the propensity of being the target of a domestic diversion is higher for militant minorities when macroeconomic conditions in a country worsen.

I utilize time-series-cross-sectional (TSCS) data to test my hypotheses. This chapter consists of six parts. I will present the current state of the literature on the diversionary theory in the next section. I will explain the hypotheses and arguments in the theory section. Then, I will elaborate on the characteristics of the data and main models in the research design part. The subsequent section will present empirical analyses. Lastly, I will summarize the main arguments, limitations, and suggestions for further research in the concluding section.

2.2 Previous Literature on the Diversionary Theory

The diversionary theory has been studying for decades. The theory envisions that a leader facing domestic dissent will wage a war to divert the public's attention from domestic issues. The main underlying mechanism is the famous "rally around the flag" effect, which presumes that international crises lead to short-term increases in leaders' popularity (Mueller 1970). As Waltz (1967, 272) notes, "in the face of such an event, the people rally behind their chief executive." Insights from psychology and sociology are often used in literature to explain the causal mechanisms behind this effect. The classical argument is the in-group/out-group hypothesis arguing that involvement in international conflict increases domestic cohesion (Stein 1976). The origin of the argument can be found in Simmel's work (1955), who asserts that conflicts bring together people without any commonalities; Even enemies can form a unified group against an external threat. However, Coser (1956) extends Simmel's argument in a way that to achieve internal cohesion, a group consensus should be formed before the conflict. The presence of the group must precede the conflict. Even in Durkheim's works, we can trace the in-group/out-group argument. Durkheim (1897) notes that suicide rates decrease in times of political crises because of the group integration accompanied by the crises. Similarly, many social psychology studies find that during extreme conditions like wars and disasters group integrity and solidarity tend to increase (Grinker and Spiegel 1945; Fritz and Williams 1957; Loomis 1967).

Many studies empirically examine the diversionary theory with the help of quantitative methods. However, the overall look of the findings is ambivalent. Ostrom and Job (1986) examine the effects of three types of factors on the decision to use force abroad. Among those international, domestic, and personal factors, the authors find that the absolute and relative levels of popular support are the greatest predictor of the political use of force. James and Oneal (1991) build on Ostrom and Job's model and reach the same conclusion. Domestic factors are most significant determinants of the use of force abroad. In contradistinction, Miller (1995) argues that the relationship between popular support and diversionary use of force is conditioned by domestic structures. When controlled for the political institutions, the relationship is significant and negative. Similarly, Meernik and Waterman (1996) show that there is little evidence in supporting the relationship between domestic political conditions and American foreign policy. The authors contend that the presidents of the US are motivated more about national security concerns than about political conditions including their popularity.

Since a leader's decision-making is at the center of the theory, some scholars design formal models to study the leader's incentives. Richard and his colleagues (1993) claim that competent executives have more incentive to divert than the incompetent since the diversion generates another opportunity to prove their abilities. The authors assert that this is the reason why empirical support for the diversionary theory is inconsistent. Another important implication of their model is that the "rally around the flag" effect is short-lived, and the use of force would not significantly change the public's perception of the competence of the leader. The long-term effect depends on the success of an operation. On the other hand, Smith (1996) proposes a formal model, which suggests that reelection incentives matter in foreign policy decisions. More specifically, no prospect for reelection and being assured for reelection lead to unbiased decision-making in foreign policy. However, leaders are biased towards adventurous foreign policy decisions in other cases. Chiozza and Goemans (2004a) also put leaders at the center in their analysis of the diversionary theory. The authors find that although wars are not ex-post inefficient for leaders, the defeat has a significant cost for leaders of both autocracies and mixed regimes. Furthermore, victory in war is not beneficial for leaders in the sense that it will not significantly extend their tenure. Finally, Chiozza and Goemans (2004b) contend that when the risk of losing the post for a leader increases, the leader avoids being the target of an international crisis.

Many scholars deal with the inconsistency of the empirical findings regarding the diversionary theory. Haynes (2017) argues that the problem lies in the conceptualization of the diversionary policies. There are two different mechanisms at work in diversionary behavior: 1) the rally around the flag; 2) the gambling for resurrection. These two theories have different implications regarding the target of a diversionary attempt. While rally around the flag argument predicts that traditional rivals are ideal targets, the gambling for resurrection theory envisions leaders would instead target powerful states to show their competency. After differentiating the types of diversions, Haynes found strong support for the gambling for resurrection theory. Likewise, Mitchell and Prins (2004) indicate that diversionary incentives are stronger for the countries with an enduring rivalry between each other. Mitchell and Thynne (2010) examine in which contexts diversionary behavior is more likely. The authors claim that the likelihood of initiating militarized international disputes increases if a state has a claim on contentious issues with another. If a state has a high inflation rates, it will also increase the likelihood. Similarly, Tir (2010) distinguishes the types of conflicts that the diversion theory covers. The author focuses on the theoretical mechanism explaining when the public reacts to diversionary crises. The main argument is that not all issues get the same attention from the public. While

the public gives a considerable reaction to territorial issues, other types of international crises do not produce a similar public attention. Therefore, leaders tend to initiate territorial conflicts when they choose to divert. Tir (2010) shows that if the dependent variable is territorial conflicts, there is strong empirical support for the relationship between government unpopularity and diversionary behavior.

Morgan and Bickers (1992) investigate which group's support matters in diversionary behavior. The argument is straightforward: If the loss of political support comes from the critical segment of the society that maintains a leader's winning coalition, a leader would react and use a diversionary strategy. While the literature on the diversionary theory revolves around the US, Morgan, and Anderson (1999) examine whether the theory holds in the British context as well. The authors differentiate between a government's approval and a prime minister's party support. The main finding is that while a high level of government approval is needed before diversionary action, the prime minister's party's support is negatively correlated the diversionary behavior. Here, government approval refers to whether electorates approve of government's performance whereas partisan support refers to whether electorates would vote for the prime minister's party if there were an election today.

Regime type's effects on diversionary behavior are also examined in literature. The leaders in democracies have different limitations and incentives than autocrats. Therefore, former's reaction to domestic events and tendency to initiate an international dispute differ. Bueno de Mesquita and Siverson (1995) argue that democratic leaders are more likely to lose their power after an unsuccessful war than are non-democratic leaders. Pickering and Kisangani (2005) find that leaders in established democracies, consolidating autocracies, and transitional polities tend to use diversionary strategies. Gelpi (1997) suggests that the difference between autocratic and democratic leaders lies in their options to silence domestic unrest. While autocratic leaders can directly repress the dissenters of the regime, democratic leaders do not have such an option. Therefore, democratic leaders tend to initiate an international dispute to divert the public's attention. Lastly, external diversion is a rare phenomenon since democracies usually do not fight with each other due to democratic norms and practices (Maoz and Russett 1993). For many country pairs, there is no real chance of a militarized dispute. For example, in Western Europe, external diversion with neighbors is almost an impossible case. Therefore, the datasets covering external diversion have many zeros including both theoretical and impossible zeros, i.e., absence of diversion. Overrepresentation of zeros may bias our estimates because those cases should not be included in the sample at all or a more appropriate estimator should be employed (. On the other hand, domestic diversion is less prone to have these biases.

Domestic diversion literature can be considered a new strand of the diversionary theory. Tir and Jasinski (2008) apply the logic of diversion targeting domestic opponent rather than an external rival. The authors find that unpopular leaders initiate the use of force against minorities. The domestic diversion literature examines the use of force against minorities in a country. By using the same dependent variable, i.e., use of force against minorities, Klein and Tokdemir (2019) argue that mobilization type of minorities also matters. The authors suggest a model of the interactive effects of unemployment and mobilization type of minorities on domestic diversion. Their conclusion is that when unemployment increases, the likelihood of armed repression against militant mobilized minorities increases as well. Likewise, Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg (2018) focus on the strategic behavior of minorities. The authors argue that minority groups, as a potential target of domestic diversion, exhibit conflict avoidant behavior when they realize that the incentives for domestic diversion are present.

2.3 Theoretical Framework and Expectations

I make two assumptions regarding domestic diversion in this chapter: 1) leaders prefer staying in power; 2) leaders expect domestic diversion to lead to an increase in internal cohesion to some extent. Consequently, it leads to a higher public support for them. As mentioned above, the decision to divert is a strategic action made by a leader. Leaders have varying limitations and cost-benefit calculations while making that decision. The context in which a leader is constrained affects those costs and benefits. The theoretical framework of this study relies on the rational choice theory, which assumes an individual's behavior is based on their cost-benefit calculations. I argue that three factors, namely the election year, macroeconomic conditions, and mobilization type of minorities groups significantly alter a leader's cost-benefit calculations. Here, the cost-benefit equation has two parts, i.e., factors that may affect the decision-making process of a leader through the manipulation of either side. While election year and economic crisis increase potential benefits of domestic diversion, the mobilization type may decrease the costs of the domestic diversion.

Clearly, popularity is always important for a leader, but it becomes vital during the election years for their survival. The leader may experience a loss in their popularity but do not react immediately to recover their support. However, if there is an upcoming election in that year, the leader should do something to boost their support. Therefore, the potential reward of a domestic diversion is higher in election

years. Similarly, when macroeconomic conditions are doing well in a country, a leader may not be willing to take the risks of a domestic diversion. However, if they worsens, the leader will have the necessary incentive to divert the public's attention from the deteriorating macroeconomic conditions to something else. Therefore, the decline in macroeconomic conditions gives a decisive incentive to a leader to employ a diversionary strategy. At that point, the risk/reward ratio is lower enough for the leader to take the risk of a domestic diversion. Worsening macroeconomic conditions lead to a decrease in the leader's popularity. Domestic diversion may thus be a good attempt for unpopular leaders to change the downward trend in their popularity.

As mentioned above, leaders prioritize election timing since their survival depends on the outcomes of elections. The effect of elections on diversion is studied by many scholars. Gaubatz (1991) shows a significant relationship between election cycles and war initiation for democratic states. Democratic states tend to wage war during the early election cycle. Fewer wars have occurred at the later stages in the election cycle. Likewise, Williams (2013) argues that minority and majority governments in parliamentary democracies behave less aggressively in the later stage of election cycles. If the possibility of an imminent election increases, governments tend to demonstrate less hostile behavior. Cederman and his colleagues (2013) contend that elections influence ethnic groups' tendency to use violence. The authors find that the likelihood of an outbreak of ethnic civil wars increases right after competitive elections. This effect is more eminent after the first and second elections following a long period of no election. However, Shmuel (2020) argues that not all leaders have the same incentives. While unpopular leaders tend to initiate militarized international conflict when elections are closer, popular leaders tend to avoid international conflicts.

The other side of the equation is the costs of the domestic diversion. While macroeconomic conditions and elections influence the benefits of domestic diversion, the organizational structure of the possible target affects the costs. There may be, broadly, two different types of minority groups according to their relations with the armed groups: 1) non-militant minorities mostly consisting of politically mobilized groups, and 2) militant mobilized minorities. Targeting those groups does not produce the same outcomes in terms of its costs. A leader needs to have *casus belli* to initiate extensive armed repression against a minority even in their territories. If the repression against the minority lacks sufficient justification, two plausible scenarios will emerge: 1) the international community could immediately react and demand from the country to terminate the diversionary action; 2) domestic audiences may criticize those operations and put pressure on the government to stop its action. In the second scenario, the internal cohesion anticipated by domestic diversion also fails

to be achieved. A lack of justification thus increases both domestic and international costs that leaders may face in engaging with diversionary behavior. In line with our expectations, Klein and Tokdemir (2019) show that minorities with different types of mobilizations have varying chances to be the target of domestic diversion.

Attacking non-militant minority groups is hard to justify because those groups have no previous records of armed resistance against the state. On the other hand, if a domestic opponent has affiliations with violent groups which do fight with the central government, they will easily be a target of an armed repression. Militant mobilized minorities present *casus belli* for leaders. In such cases, national security concerns may also be accepted by the international and domestic actors. Furthermore, a military campaign against a militant mobilized group could strengthen internal cohesion in the country because of the security threat posed by the group. In many cases, those groups are recognized as terrorist organizations. Therefore, the most cost-efficient strategy would be domestic diversion against militarized minorities. As Tir (2010) proposes, the public tends to react more to territorial disputes. Militant mobilized groups either challenge the central authority to gain regional autonomy explicitly or get involved in terrorist attacks. Terrorist attacks lead to growing security concerns within the public. This insecure environment can translate into more votes for the incumbent (Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019). To sum up, having informing our theoretical expectations by the previous literature, I argue that leaders are more willing to use the domestic diversion strategy against militant mobilized groups in election years.

In contradistinction, besides the costs of targeting non-militant minorities, a leader may need the electoral support of these groups. Electoral incentives for the leader may also push them not to attack non-militant minorities during election years. Therefore, I argue that both the relative costs of targeting non-militant minorities and the potential benefits brought by the electoral support of those groups make the domestic diversion against those groups less likely.

H1: *The propensity of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effects of mobilization type of minorities and election timing.*

The relationship between macroeconomic conditions and diversionary behavior is more straightforward. Macroeconomic conditions affect the likelihood of both external and domestic use of force (Ostrom and Job 1986; James and Oneal 1991; Tir and Jasinski 2008; Klein and Tokdemir 2019; Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018). As the economic voting literature suggests, macroeconomic conditions are one of the most salient issues determining the outcomes of an election (Lewis-Beck and Steigmaier 2000). Since economic performance is a good predictor of election

outcomes, leaders tend to care about macroeconomic conditions in their country. Although Williams and his colleagues (2010) argue that leaders pursuing costly foreign policy such as initiating a conflict are more likely to experience vote loss if macroeconomic condition in a country is deteriorating, Klein and Tokdemir (2019) indicate that the unemployment rate has a significant positive effect on domestic diversion initiation.

H2: *The propensity of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effects of mobilization type and macroeconomic conditions in election years.*

As the diversionary theory suggests, popular unrest creates a strong incentive for a leader to divert the public. Worsening macroeconomic conditions lead to popular discontent in a country. Therefore, I argue that when there is an economic crisis, the likelihood of domestic diversion increases. However, I expect to find this effect again to be mediated by the election year and mobilization type of minorities. Popular unrest by itself may not be a sufficient incentive. If it emerges during the election year, leaders will have to do something about such a popular discontent to secure their posts. Thus, I argue that the interactive effects of macroeconomic condition and mobilization type would be observable during election years.

A leader facing with a decreasing popularity during an election year may feel the urgency to do something to boost their popularity. At this point, domestic diversion may be a viable strategy since the expected benefits from a diversionary action may be higher in this case. However, as argued above, the type of the minority group (as a potential target) shapes the cost and benefits of such an action. Targeting non-militant minorities is a more costly one. Besides the relative costs of targeting non-militant minorities, electoral incentives may make the leader less likely to attack non-militant minorities. The leader may instead target their votes during the campaign period. If macroeconomic conditions are worsening, the need to appeal to a broader electorate will become more severe. Therefore, the unpopularity of the leader due to deteriorating macroeconomic conditions decreases the likelihood of targeting non-militant minorities. On the other hand, militant minorities are easy targets to divert the public's attention from macroeconomic problems. The leader is thus more likely to target them to increase their popularity during an election year.

2.4 Research Design

This section presents the research design. The model specifications, the main independent and dependent variables, the characteristics of the data set that I employed in this chapter will be presented. To date, the domestic diversion literature mainly relies on the Minorities at Risk Project (MAR) dataset (Tir and Jasinski 2008; Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018; Klein and Tokdemir 2019). Following the conventional practice, I mainly use the MAR data to test my hypotheses. The Minorities at Risk Project aims to track ethnopolitical minorities living in countries with a population of 500000 people at least. The project has long been hosted by the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland. The dataset includes an extensive list of variables related to the status, characteristics, and conflict behavior of the groups. Although the MAR data include observations from 1945 to 2006, some variables were added later on and do not have any observations before 1996. In total, there are almost 400 variables covering different periods in the dataset, and 287 different ethnopolitical groups are covered (Minorities at Risk Project 2009). Unfortunately, no data have been released after 2009 and the last year covered by the dataset is 2006.

The main dependent variable is armed repression against a minority group in a year. Domestic diversion is operationalized as violent repression against minorities in this thesis. The MAR data document whether a minority groups is repressed in a given year. A significant strength of the data is that it includes different levels of repression from non-violent actions to military campaigns against a group. The dependent variables is coded binary where a score of 1 indicates armed repression against a group. Six different uses of violence were considered as violent repression: limited use of force, unrestrained use of force, military campaigns, military massacres, and ethnic cleansing. This operationalization is the same with Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg (2018), and Tir and Jasinski (2008). The aim was to follow the previous literature while making these decisions. As noted above, the most important limitation regarding the dependent variable is that the MAR data only cover the period between 1996 and 2006. Since its coding changed in 2004, I only include the years between 1996 and 2003 as did Klein and Tokdemir (2019).

The main independent variable is election year. I took the data from the National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA) dataset. NELDA is one of the most comprehensive datasets on elections. Most other datasets only cover democracies. However, I need also data on elections in autocracies. Therefore, I chose to use the NELDA dataset, which presents information about the elections from 1945-

2015. Competitiveness of an election is not taken account of while compiling the data. However, indirect elections are accounted for. For an election to be included in the data, voters must directly elect the candidate. All independent countries are covered until 2015 (Hyde and Marinov 2012). Election year is a binary variable which indicates that an election took place in a given year. I include both parliamentary and executive elections since my theory dictates so. I do not differentiate between the relative importance of those elections. Leaders have similar incentives for these elections. Lastly, referendums and European Parliament elections were not included in the data because these elections are of secondary importance.

The other main independent variable is mobilization type of minorities. The MAR dataset provides information about groups' organization and representation. The MAR dataset classifies groups into 6 categories: 1) no political organization; 2) group interests promoted by umbrella organizations; 3) promoted by political parties; 4) promoted by mostly political and some militant organizations; 5) promoted by mainly militant and some political organizations; 6) promoted by only militant organizations. In line with my theoretical expectations, I recoded that variable to generate a two-category variable where 1 indicates non-militant mobilization, 2 corresponds to militant mobilization. Unfortunately, this variable is coded after 1997 in the MAR data. Therefore, the estimation sample includes the period between 1997-2003.

Another independent variable in this study is inflation. As indicated in the theory section, an economic crisis is one of my main explanatory variables. There are several indicators that would demonstrate the different aspects of the macroeconomic condition in a country. While some scholars prefer to use unemployment (e.g., Klein and Tokdemir 2019), others use GDP growth (Tir and Jasinski 2008) or inflation (Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018). I follow Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg (2018) by using inflation as the indicator of the macroeconomic condition in a country. High inflation leads to decrease in real wages, thus affects whole society (Braumann 2004). Therefore, I expect that the governments are punished more due to higher inflation rates compared to unemployment. I took inflation data from the World Bank dataset (World Bank 2020). World Bank is one of the most respectable international institutions in this respect. Most studies employ their data to measure the state of the macroeconomic conditions in a given country. Although there are missing data for the years before 1990 in the dataset, fewer are missing for the years between 1997-2003.

Informed by the previous literature, I introduce several control variables in the model equations. Firstly, ongoing civil war is a strong alternative explanation. If a

country is experiencing a civil war, armed repression against a minority in a given year can be a part of the ongoing civil war. A government may decide to retaliate or terminate the ongoing war by launching a military campaign. Therefore, we need to account for ongoing civil wars. Ongoing civil war data are taken from the PRIO/UCDP's Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002). It is a binary variable which indicates an ongoing civil war in a given country.

Secondly, GDP per capita is another important variable that may affect the dependent variable in several ways. GDP per capita may be a good indicator of state capacity. Higher per capita income signifies higher economic development and, consequently, higher state capacity. Furthermore, wealthier states have a higher propensity to survive from an economic crisis (Klein and Tokdemir 2019). The capacity to survive may affect leaders' cost and benefit calculations when making the decision to divert. GDP per capita data are taken from the World Bank dataset (World Bank 2020).

Thirdly, regime characteristics may also have an impact on the likelihood of armed repression against a minority. Leaders in different regime types have varying incentives to divert (Pickering and Kisangani 2005). One can expect authoritarian regimes tend to use domestic diversion more than democratic regimes due to relatively lower levels of executive constraints which can be a major factor affecting dispute initiation (Clark and Nordstrom 2005). To measure the effect of regime types, I employ the Polity IV dataset (Marshall et al. 2014). Polity IV data are rescaled to the range between 0-20 following others in previous literature (e.g., Klein and Tokdemir 2019).

Fourthly, another factor affecting the decision to divert can be the number of minority groups in the country (Tir and Jasinski 2008). When the number of minorities in a given country increases, a leader may have more opportunities to divert. Similarly, the size of the excluded population may influence leaders' cost and benefit calculations. The size of the groups may affect leaders' ability to label them as a legitimate threat to country (Klein and Tokdemir 2019). Moreover, targeting smaller groups may not be a more rewarding strategy since those groups may not be perceived as serious threats to states' security. The data on the number of minorities are coded from the MAR dataset (MAR 2009). The data on the size of the excluded population come from Wimmer and his colleagues (2009).

As Pickering and Kisangani (2007) propose, *Mass Unrest* and *Elite Disunity* can also affect the cost-benefit calculations of domestic diversion for leaders. Mass unrest signifies a decreasing popularity of a leader. Therefore, it provides a leader with an incentive to divert. Besides the popularity aspect, leaders may hope to deal with

the mass protests by distracting the public’s attention. Elite disunity also affects leaders’ decision to divert by altering the cost of repression of the mass protests. It is expected to increase the costs of repression of the population if the elites are not united (Pickering and Kisangani 2010). Consequently, leaders who cannot directly repress the mass protest are more likely to initiate a diversionary conflict. The data for these variables are taken from Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg (2018).

Lastly, the MAR dataset (MAR 2009) includes various variables which are used as control variables by previous researchers. Those are *Political* and *Economic Discrimination* (Tir and Jasinski 2008; and Klein and Tokdemir 2019). Political and economic discrimination may influence leaders’ cost and benefit calculations in a similar fashion. The cost of repression of discriminated minorities is lower. Therefore, leaders may be more likely to target them.¹

Because the dependent variable in all model specifications is binary, I estimate logistic regressions. The unit of analysis is the country-MAR dyad year, which means each country and minority group pair in a given year constitutes an observation. The main reason to use this type of a dyad is related to the structure of the MAR data. The MAR dataset lists variables at the country-minority group year level rather than the country-year dyad. With this unit of analysis, I can grasp whether the government represses a minority in a given year. Moreover, a state may initiate armed repression against multiple groups in a given year. Using this dyad type thus helps me to estimate the varying effects of the mobilization types of minorities on the likelihood of domestic diversion initiation.

2.5 Empirical Analyses

Table 1 presents the logistic regression estimates on domestic diversion. The three models presented below are designed to test our first hypothesis. The estimation sample consists of 1458 observations. The standard errors are clustered by country-MAR dyads to account for a possible clustering of observations due to the TSCS data we employ (also see: Klein and Tokdemir 2019). The effect of militant mobilization on domestic diversion is statistically significant in all models at 95% confidence level. The sign of the estimated coefficient of militant mobilization is also positive in all three models. While the election year variable does not have a significant effect on domestic diversion in the base model, the effect becomes statistically distinguishable

¹Descriptive statistics of the all variables are presented in Appendix A

from 0 at 90% confidence level after introducing our control variables. The estimated coefficient associated with the interaction term of election year and mobilization type is significant at 90% confidence level. Regarding the control variables, political discrimination and ongoing civil war have statistically significant effects on domestic diversion at 95% confidence level.

Figure 1 plots the predicted probability of observing domestic diversion as conditionally on election year and mobilization type of minorities. The predicted probability of domestic diversion varies across groups with varying mobilization types. While the predicted probability of domestic diversion against non-militant minorities is .11 in a non-election year, it is .08 in an election year. Note that our first hypothesis suggests that the propensity of armed repression against non-militant minorities would be lower in election years.



Table 2.1 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Militant Mobilization	1.929*** (0.248)	1.854*** (0.261)	1.341*** (0.314)
Election Year	-0.132 (0.149)	-0.292 (0.191)	-0.329* (0.190)
Militant Mobilization $\times$ Election Year		0.312 (0.300)	0.542* (0.313)
Mass Unrest			0.081 (0.058)
Elite Disunity			0.163 (0.142)
Number of Groups			-0.066 (0.048)
Political Discrimination			0.371*** (0.099)
Economic Discrimination			0.148* (0.076)
Polity			0.003 (0.030)
Excluded Population			0.123 (0.111)
GDP per capita			-0.186 (0.118)
Ongoing Civil War			1.074*** (0.282)
Constant	-1.989*** (0.190)	-1.949*** (0.193)	-3.604*** (0.725)
N	1458	1458	1458
Clusters	261	261	261
Log-likelihood	-678.360	-677.881	-589.666
AIC	1362.720	1363.762	1205.332
BIC	1378.574	1384.901	1274.035

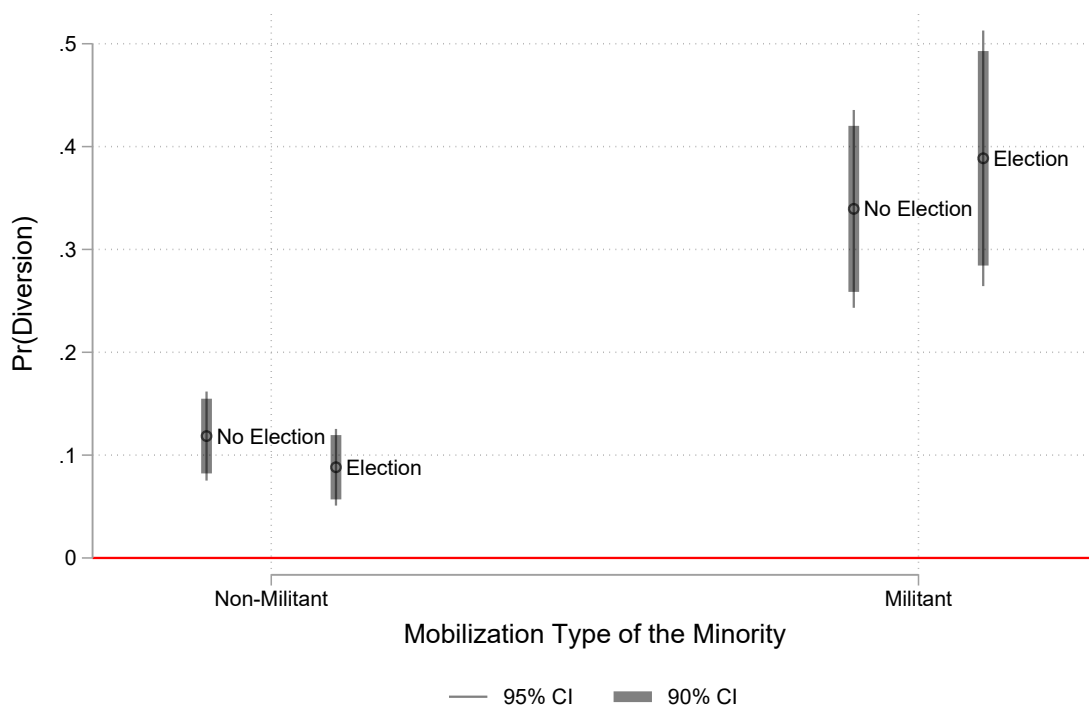
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

Considering our hypothesis, the first difference in the predicted probability of armed repression against non-militant groups conditionally on the election year, is in support of our expectations.

On the other hand, the predicted probability of domestic diversion against militant mobilized minorities is .33. However, the predicted probability of domestic diversion increases to .38 when there is an election. Figure 1 thus demonstrates that election year does not have a uniform effect on the predicted probability of domestic diversion for the two types of minorities. Similarly, the predicted probability of becoming the target of domestic diversion varies based on the mobilization type.

Figure 2.1 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Election Year and Mobilization Type

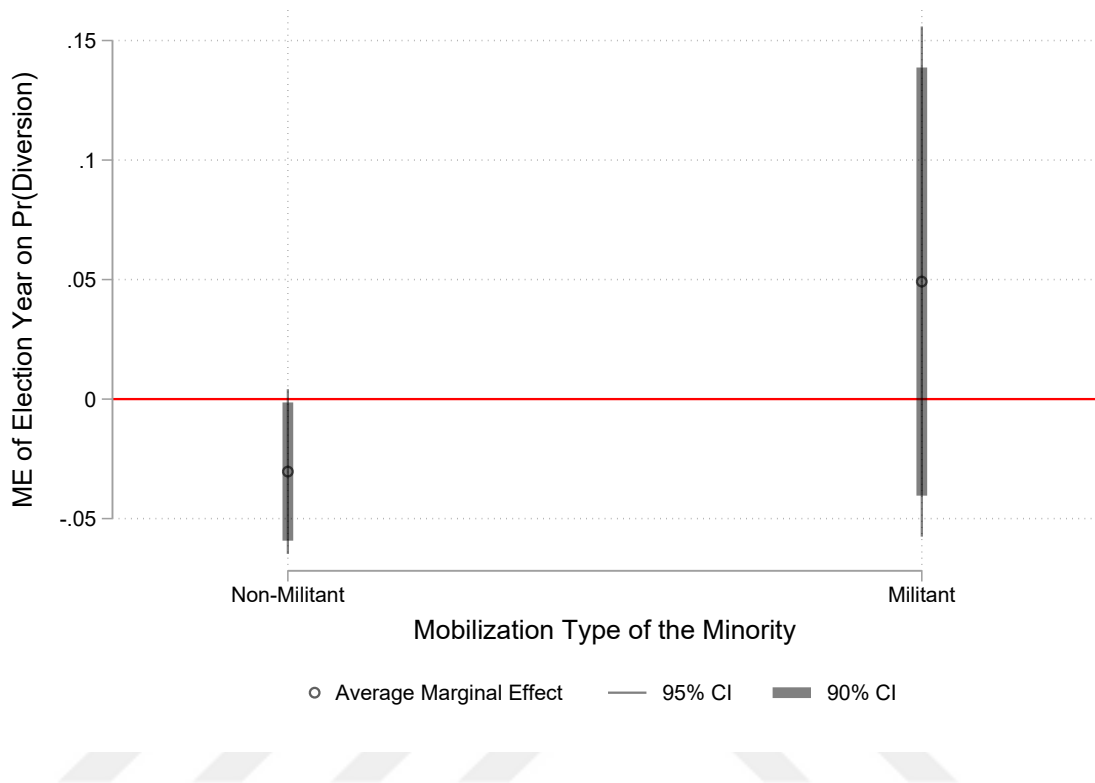


While the propensity of becoming the target of domestic diversion is at its highest for militant mobilized minorities, non-militant mobilized minorities are less likely to be a target considering the predicted probabilities of armed repression. Our theory suggests that targeting militant mobilized minorities is a less costly strategy for leaders. Therefore, these estimates are in line with our expectations. However, the differences in the widths of confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities for these two types of groups show that there are more observations for non-militant minorities. The estimates for the predicted probabilities of armed repression against non-militant minorities have less uncertainty compared to militant minorities.

Figure 2 presents the average marginal effects of election year on domestic diversion. While the average marginal effect of election year is negative for non-militant minorities, it is positive for militant minorities. That is electoral expectations play different roles conditionally on their group type. However, the average marginal effect of election year on domestic diversion is not significant for militant minorities. The confidence interval around the estimated marginal effect for militant minorities is much more wider than that for the non-militant minorities. Unlike militant minorities, the average marginal effect of election year on domestic diversion against non-militant groups is distinguishable from 0 at 90% confidence level. It is -0.3 and considering that the baseline probability of armed repression against minorities is

.23 in the estimation sample, it is substantively significant.

Figure 2.2 Average Marginal Effects of Election Year on Domestic Diversion | Mobilization Type



To sum up, we find weak support for our first hypothesis. Although the hypothesized relationship holds regarding the varying propensities of being the target of domestic diversion for different mobilization types, the effect of an election year on domestic diversion is only significant for non-militant minorities. Nonetheless, the insignificant effect of an election year on domestic diversion for militant minorities does not contradict with our expectations since this effect is positive. Our directional hypothesis also holds for militant mobilized minorities.

Table 2.2 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1	Model 2 Non-Election Year	Model 3 Election Year
Inflation _{t-1}	-0.013 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.007)	-0.030 (0.019)
Militant Mobilization	1.323*** (0.351)	1.245*** (0.349)	1.125** (0.525)
Militant Mobilization × Inflation _{t-1}	0.011 (0.011)	0.007 (0.007)	0.064** (0.027)
Mass Unrest	0.103 (0.076)	0.075 (0.075)	0.262*** (0.093)
Elite Disunity	0.168 (0.165)	0.213 (0.209)	-0.319 (0.275)
Number of Groups	-0.060 (0.051)	-0.079 (0.056)	0.003 (0.062)
Political Discrimination	0.315*** (0.109)	0.294** (0.114)	0.371** (0.145)
Economic Discrimination	0.141 (0.086)	0.137 (0.088)	0.141 (0.126)
Polity	0.003 (0.032)	-0.020 (0.031)	0.133** (0.056)
Excluded Population	0.144 (0.121)	0.140 (0.125)	0.098 (0.150)
GDP per capita	-0.337** (0.138)	-0.281** (0.141)	-0.673*** (0.214)
Ongoing Civil War	1.185*** (0.312)	1.201*** (0.344)	1.111*** (0.421)
Constant	-3.269*** (0.847)	-2.811*** (0.840)	-5.152*** (1.316)
N	1302	953	349
Clusters	231	231	200
Log-likelihood	-517.203	-389.995	-115.016
AIC	1060.406	805.990	256.032
BIC	1127.637	869.165	306.148

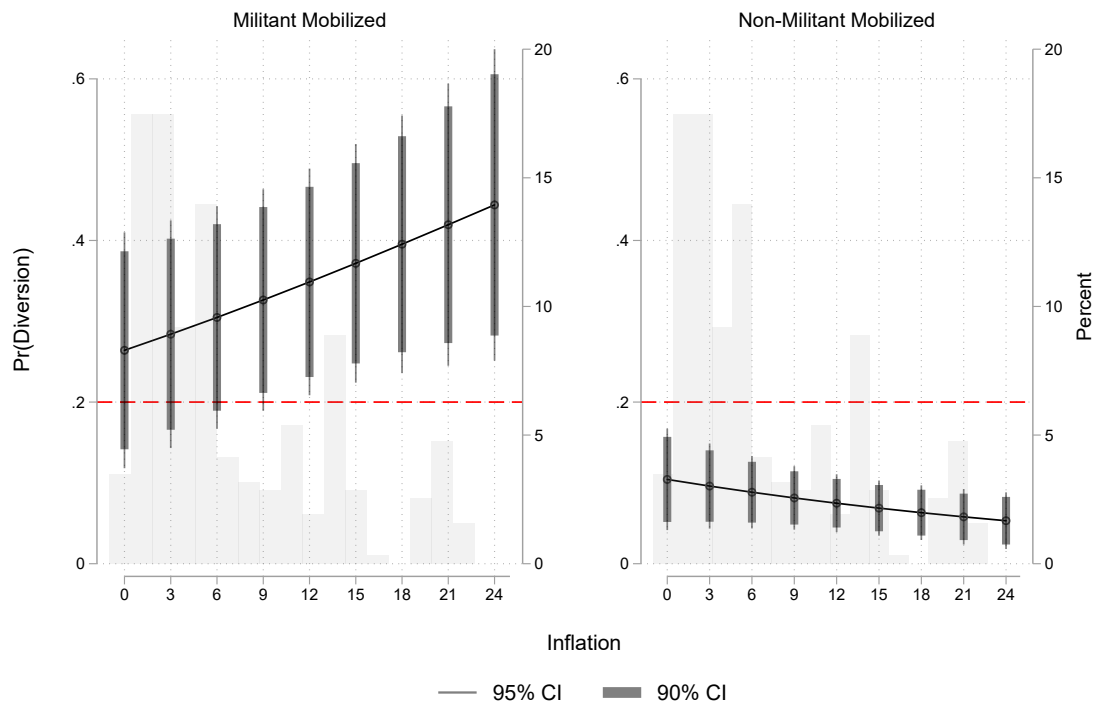
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.
Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

Table 2 demonstrates the logistic regression estimates on domestic diversion. These models are intended to evaluate our second hypothesis regarding the three-way interaction among the mobilization type, inflation, and election year. Inflation's effect on domestic diversion is statistically insignificant in all models. Militant mobilization, however, has a significant positive effect on domestic diversion in all models at 95% confidence level. The sample in the Model 1 is divided into two subsamples based on election year. While the estimated coefficient for the interaction term is not statistically distinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level in Model 2, it is statistically significant in Model 3 at 95% confidence level. This difference indicates that the interactive effect of inflation and militant mobilization on domestic diversion is only present when there is an election in a given year. In addition, the effects of

mass unrest and polity are significant in Model 3 whereas the coefficients of political discrimination, GDP per capita and ongoing civil war are distinguishable from 0 in all models at 95% confidence level.

Figure 3 plots the predicted probability of observing domestic diversion as conditionally on inflation and mobilization type in election years. Note that all other variables are set to their respective central tendencies. For non-militant minorities, predicted probabilities of being the target of a domestic diversion are statistically distinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level. The likelihood of being the target of domestic diversion decreases for non-militant groups when the inflation rate increases in election years. It is .10 when inflation is 0. It becomes .05 when inflation increases to 24. The baseline probability of domestic diversion against minorities, indicated by the red dashed line, is .2. Therefore, the predicted probability of being the target of domestic diversion substantially decreases when inflation increases.

Figure 2.3 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Inflation and Mobilization Type in Election Years



On the other hand, the predicted probability of domestic diversion against militant mobilized groups increases when inflation is higher. It is .26 when inflation is 0, it becomes .44 when inflation is 24. The likelihood of domestic diversion against militant minorities is lower when inflation is around 0. Confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities of domestic diversion for militant mobilized minorities are

wider than the minorities with non-militant mobilization. This is because we have fewer militant mobilized minorities in our estimation sample. The overwhelming majority of the minority groups are non-militant. Considering the baseline probability indicated by the red dashed line, the predicted probability of being the target of a domestic diversion differs conditionally on the mobilization type. The predicted probability of domestic diversion against non-militant minorities is below the baseline probability for the every values of inflation.

Figure 2.4 Average Marginal Effects of Inflation on Domestic Diversion in Election Years | Mobilization Type

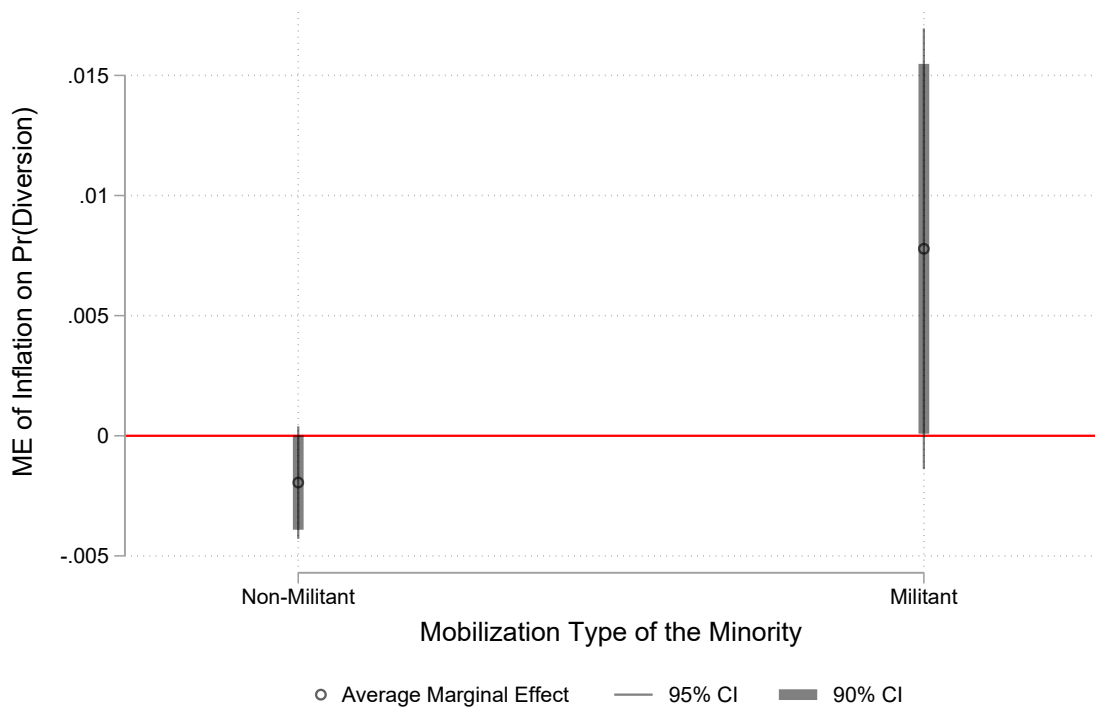
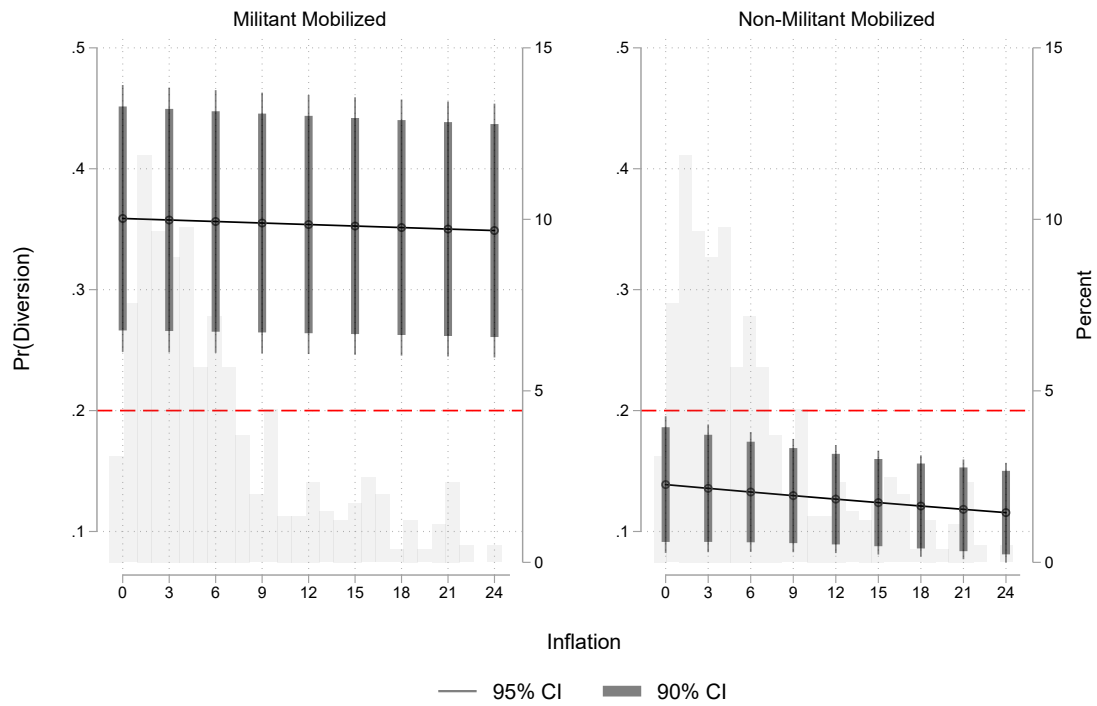


Figure 4 plots the average marginal effects of inflation on domestic diversion conditionally on the mobilization type in election years. The hypothesized relationship regarding the direction of the varying effects for different groups holds here. Unlike non-militant minorities, the average marginal effect of inflation is significant for militant minorities at 90% confidence level. The effect size is .8 percentage point. Note that the baseline probability of domestic diversion is .2. Therefore we can conclude that the average marginal effect of inflation on domestic diversion for militant groups is substantively mediocre.

On the other hand, Figure 5 demonstrates the predicted probability of observing domestic diversion in non-election years conditionally on the mobilization type and inflation. The predicted probability of being the target of domestic diversion for

militant mobilized minorities is almost constant when inflation varies. Similarly, the predicted probability of domestic diversion for non-militant minorities only varies incrementally when inflation is higher. The red dashed lines here show the baseline probability of domestic diversion.

Figure 2.5 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion in Non-Election Years | Inflation and Mobilization Type



To sum up, our two hypotheses are partly supported by the empirical analyses presented above. While we find support for only the hypothesized effect of the election on domestic diversion against non-militant minorities for our first hypothesis, the expected effect of the three-way interaction holds for militant minorities for our second hypothesis when we account for the conditioning effect of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions. Lastly, the confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities and marginal effects are reported at the 90% confidence level given that the phenomenon of interest is a quite rare event, even though domestic diversion is more frequently observed than external diversion.

2.6 Discussion and Conclusion

The diversionary theory has been attracting the scholarly interest of the political science community for a long while. Although the literature is well-established, the empirical findings regarding are inconsistent. The theory has two fundamental expectations: 1) leaders would initiate conflicts to divert the public's attention when there is a domestic crisis (Levy 1998); 2) diversionary action generates more public support for the incumbent thanks to the “rally around the flag” effect (Waltz 1967; Mueller 1970). Of course, these expectations have many implications such as the timing of international conflicts. This chapter focuses on one of such implications by asking when *domestic diversion* becomes more likely. Domestic diversion is a recent strand in the diversion literature. However, the logic is the same with the long studied external diversion. Leaders would initiate domestic conflicts in which the targets are domestic minorities to increase their popularity (Tir and Jasinski 2008).

Studying domestic diversion has an edge over the external diversion due to the practical problems regarding the latter. To begin with, international conflicts are rare phenomena because of several factors. The costs related to the initiation of international conflicts are substantially higher than those domestic diversionary acts. Targeting a country would bring huge material costs compared to targeting a domestic minority given the regular army of the former. Besides the economic costs caused by the military expenses, being an aggressor state may also lead to other costs incurred at the international arena. Economic sanctions or exclusion from international organizations may be the consequences of such an action for the aggressor state. Knowing these potential costs, leaders would hesitate to initiate international conflicts.

On the other hand, domestic diversion can be considered relatively less costly. Since the targets in many cases are deprived of the necessary resources to stand against the states, they can be more easily repressed by incumbents. Domestic diversion can thus bring an easy victory to leaders in these respects without bearing high costs. Therefore, the frequency of domestic diversions is much higher than that of external diversions. I argue that the assumptions of the diversionary theory are more likely to hold for domestic diversion than the external diversion. In light of the above explanations, I prefer to study domestic diversion in this chapter.

This chapter seeks to present explanation for the onset of domestic diversion. Our theoretical framework centers on the rational choice theory. Accordingly, I assume

that leaders are rational actors whose main interest is to stay in power. Leaders calculate the relative costs and benefits of a possible action, while deciding on what to do to increase their electoral support. Relying on these assumptions, I propose three factors with the expectation that those significantly alter leaders' cost-benefit calculations. Such factors are macroeconomic conditions, mobilization type of minorities, and elections. While macroeconomic conditions and elections affect the potential rewards of domestic diversion, mobilization type primarily may influence the expected costs of domestic diversion. Expectedly, a deteriorating macroeconomic condition would lead to a decrease in a leader's popularity. However, a loss in their public support in a non-election year may not force the leader to take on urgent action on that matter. I argue that elections provide the necessary incentives for leaders to recover and increase their public support. Moreover, when deciding on domestic diversion, leaders must consider its relative costs. Here, I expect that targeting the militant mobilized minorities has less costs. In contradistinction, targeting non-militant groups such as political groups are more costly since justification in this case is harder. Having an affiliation with armed groups would make a minority an easy target of domestic diversion. Attacking an armed group can easily be justified through a national security argument. By presenting a solid justification, a leader can thus deal with two different potential sources of resistance: the electorates and the international community.

In line with the above argumentation, I present two main hypotheses in this chapter. Firstly, the likelihood of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effects of election timing and mobilization type of minorities. While the propensity of domestic diversion against a militant-mobilized group increases, it decreases for non-militant minorities in an election year. In fact, it is more likely that leaders would appeal to the electoral support of non-militant minorities during the electoral campaigns. Along with the higher costs of targeting non-militant groups, electoral incentives also make domestic diversion against non-militant minorities less likely. Secondly, I argue that the likelihood of domestic diversion is determined by mobilization type of minorities and macroeconomic conditions during election years. While non-militant groups are less likely to be the target of a diversionary act, militant minorities have a higher propensity for being targeted when macroeconomic conditions worsen in election years.

However, the empirical support for our two hypotheses is weak. Both hypotheses are partly supported by the empirical analyses. Considering the previous findings in the diversionary literature, such weak support is not surprising. Inconsistent findings in the previous literature suggest that although the diversionary theory is appealing, the relationship between the internal unrest and diversionary behavior is possibly

conditioned by varying factors in different contexts. Further research should help us better understand the contextual differences. Two such candidates for instance are the fragmentation of the party system and that of the society. Ethnic and political heterogeneity as well as the size of potential target groups can be a mediating factor here.

The most important limitation of this study is related to the data employed. Although the MAR is the only dataset employed in the domestic diversion literature, it suffers from some weaknesses. Firstly, our main dependent variable is covered in the dataset for only 11 years. No update has been made since 2009. Moreover, the dataset does not provide extensive information regarding the nature of conflicts. The duration and exact date of the conflicts are not coded. Having more detailed information could help scholars to test their expectations in using more appropriate measures and estimators.

Although large-N studies covering many countries increase our knowledge about the general patterns, case studies also have some advantages such as the opportunity to exploit a natural experiment. This chapter concentrates on one side of the relationship between conflicts and elections by examining the impact of election timing on the initiation of domestic diversion from a comparative perspective. However, the other side of the relationship is also worth investigating. The next chapter is thus designed to analyze the effect of domestic diversion on leaders' electoral fate. By exploiting a natural experiment-like setting, it also aims to demonstrate the effect of rising domestic conflict on voting behavior. Considering that individual-level studies are not common in the domestic diversion literature, the next chapter complements the first empirical chapter and contributes to the literature by investigating the individual-level determinants of incumbents' electoral success with a particular emphasis on causal inference.

3. DOMESTIC DIVERSION IN TURKEY

3.1 Introduction

Although the conflict literature is well-established, the relationship between conflicts and voting behavior is an understudied topic. This chapter aims to bridge two different strands of research by exploring the effects of armed conflicts on the fate of an incumbent in upcoming elections. The well-known diversionary theory argues that when there is domestic discontent in a country, leaders initiate conflicts to divert the public's attention (Levy 1998). In line with the diversionary theory, many studies examine the effects of international conflicts on incumbent support.

In the last decades, the scope of the diversionary theory has expanded. The domestic diversion that implies targeting domestic minority groups is one of such new paths (Tir and Jasinski 2008). This chapter aims to contribute to the domestic diversion literature by examining the effects of internal armed conflicts on the electoral success of leaders. While the existing literature on domestic diversion focuses on the causes of domestic diversion (Tir and Jasinski 2008; Martinez- Machain and Rosenberg 2018; Klein and Tokdemir 2019), its effects are rarely studied (Russell 2005; Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019). Moreover, individual-level studies are also rare in the diversionary theory (Singh and Tir 2018; Lai and Reiter 2005).

The puzzle addressed in this chapter is that if the expected positive effect of a conflict on an incumbent's electoral fate finds empirical support, leaders will initiate more conflicts. In other words, armed conflicts should have been more desirable if the diversionary theory holds. However, we observe that while some conflicts produce positive impacts on leaders' electoral support and popularity, others do not. For example, the Falklands War between Argentina and the UK in 1982 led to the dissolution of the military regime in Argentina, and consequently the civilian rule

was restored.¹ While the Second Chechen War generated more public support for Putin (Petersson 2009), Tansu Çiller's war on terror campaigning during 1993-1995 did not help her win the 1995 Turkish general elections. Examples can be multiplied.

The main question here is what determines the direction of the effect of domestic diversion on leaders' electoral success. When a leader initiates a military campaign, or armed repression, toward a minority group, it is also likely that increasing tension and security threats may damage the incumbent's popularity. I propose an interactive model in this chapter to explain the positive effects of conflicts on incumbent's electoral fate. I argue that two intervening variables are at play: political sophistication of an individual and media environment. The argument for the media's effect on generating public support for the incumbent is straightforward. When the media in a country are substantially slanted toward the incumbent, the media would criticize the incumbent's decisions less and conceive armed conflicts as a national cause. Here, the media function as a consent-generating tool and work to convince the public to support the incumbent. However, studying the effects of the media is challenging due to endogeneity bias in survey data. Hence, I take political sophistication as the main independent variable. Rising conflicts lead to a sense of security threat for the people living in the country. Here, an individual has two options. Firstly, they may decide to support the incumbent, i.e., the rally around the flag effect. Secondly, they may punish the incumbent due to the high cost of conflict or perceived incompetence of the incumbent to handle the emerging threat. I argue that choosing one of these options depends heavily on one's level of political sophistication. While the first option is a reflexive reaction to an insecure environment, the second option requires processing more information and higher cognitive ability to assess the competence of the incumbent and the role of the incumbent in the rising conflict. Therefore, I assert that politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to vote for the incumbent as a response to domestic diversion. In other words, the rally around the flag effect is more influential on politically unsophisticated individuals since their voting decisions depend less on rational calculations.

This chapter relies on a case study, the Turkish case. I will examine Turkey in the post-June 2015 Elections period to test the hypothesized relationship. Turkey fits perfectly into this study's focus. Firstly, Turkey has been witnessing armed conflicts for almost half a century. In the last 20 years, the scope and intensity of the armed conflict has changed. The post-June 2015 period is specifically important for our purposes since this period presents a natural experiment-like opportunity

¹Note that the Falklands War represents both positive and negative impacts of a diversionary conflict on an incumbent's fate. At the beginning, the war had led to rally around the flag effect. However, losing the war had eventually led to the termination of the military rule (see Oakes 2006).

to researchers. Turkey had two consecutive elections in 2015, i.e., the June and November 2015 elections. Between the two, Turkey had witnessed rising conflict and terrorism. Therefore, we have an opportunity to study directly the effects of domestic conflicts on individuals' voting behavior. The post-election component of the Turkish Election Study 2015 was conducted during this period. While field research was continuing, the level of conflicts was also increasing steadily. The opportunity to exploit this natural experiment was thus one of the most important factors in case selection. Lastly, Turkey's fight against the PKK in 2015 is one of the most prominent examples given to domestic diversion in the literature by many scholars (Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018; Klein and Tokdemir 2019).

Turkey has been fighting with the ethnic separatist terrorist organization the PKK since the 80s. The intensity and frequency of the conflicts with the PKK have also changed in these years. While the conflicts peaked during the 90s, they slowed down after the PKK's leader was captured in 1999. When the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, ethnic violence was relatively lower than in the 90s. Within this environment, AKP as a continuation of an anti-system religious movement, i.e., political Islam, presented itself as a liberal-conservative reformist party (Altınordu 2016). Taking concrete steps about the Kurdish question represented an important milestone for the ongoing civil war. AKP initiated the so-called "Peace Process" aiming to solve the Kurdish question in 2013 (Öniş 2016). The government and PKK reached an agreement on the ceasefire during the "Peace Process". From 2013 to 2015, the conflicts were almost absent. In June 2015, AKP suffered from a significant loss in its vote share compared to the previous election. After June 2015, the party had to deal with many problems, most importantly its declining electoral support. A significant incidence occurred on July 22, 2015. Two policemen were assassinated by the PKK in the Ceylanpınar district of Şanlıurfa. This marked the end of the "Peace Process" and ceasefire. The era of terror and conflict had begun.

In this chapter, I design a two-stage study to account for the effects of this conflict on Turkish citizens' voting behavior. In the first stage, I will examine how conflicts affect people's perception of the most important problem (MIP) in Turkey. In the second stage, I will analyze how the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP determine one's propensity to vote for the incumbent.

3.2 Previous Literature on the Relationship between Diversion and Voting Behavior

What determines the vote choice of an individual is the fundamental question that political scientists has long sought to answer. The voting behavior literature has a vast array of answers to that question. Economic voting is one of the most prominent of those theories. It investigates the link between economic conditions and electoral outcomes. Fiorina (1978) argues that elections are like a referendum about the incumbents' economic performance. Similarly, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2000) suggest that a shift in economic evaluations of voters instead of a shift in their partisan attachments may lead to the fall of a government. Here, both arguments rely on the assumption that voters evaluate past performances while voting, which is called retrospective voting. Key (1966, 66), one of the pioneering figures in the retrospective voting theory, states that electorates are the "appraiser of past events, past performance, and past actions." On the other hand, Downs (1957) asserts that voters make comparisons of the future utilities they expect from the candidates, i.e., prospective voting.

To explain which factors may also affect voting preferences, scholars link foreign policy and domestic politics. However, most previous studies on this topic concentrate on the US politics. Aldrich and his colleagues (1989) show that Americans also consider foreign policy when deciding on whom to vote for. Some scholars argue that the rally around the flag effect leads to an increase in an incumbent's popularity because of militarized international conflicts (Levy 1998; Russett 1990; Derouen 2000). On the other hand, Lian and Oneal (1993) examine 102 cases of use of force by the US and conclude that the effect of using force on the president's popularity is of low magnitude. The median change in the president's approval rating is in fact zero percent. Similarly, Williams and his colleagues (2010) find that voters are more likely to punish incumbents for initiating an international conflict during economic decline.

In a cross-national study, Miller and Elgün (2011) demonstrate that militarized interstate disputes (MID) decrease the likelihood of the removal of an incumbent by a coup. Boehmer (2007) also shows that militarized interstate disputes help leaders retain their incumbency. Lastly, Singh and Tir (2018) indicate that MIDs affect vote choices of electorates. However, the authors find that this effect is mediated by partisanship, conflict side, and the level of conflict hostility.

Although the literature on diversionary theory is well-established, domestic diversion

can be considered a relatively burgeoning literature. Studies on domestic diversion mostly focus on the causes of domestic diversion rather than its consequences (Klein and Tokdemir 2019; Martinez-Machain and Rosenberg 2018; Tir and Jasinski 2008). In other words, the effects of domestic diversion on voting behavior are understudied. Moreover, there are opposite arguments stating that domestic diversion may not be as useful as an external diversion, since targeting an internal enemy would divide the public by exacerbating internal cleavages rather than unifying the public against an external enemy (Mueller 1970). Although large-N studies are absent in literature, some case studies focus on the effects of internal diversions. Russell (2005) argues that Putin's successful military campaign against Chechen fighters and his tough stance against terrorism had increased his public support. Considering that Putin was an unknown figure who surprisingly became the president, the Chechen war contributed to his public image as a strong charismatic leader. To achieve that, scapegoating of Chechens was a strategy he employed. The Chechens were associated with all sorts of ills that Russia has experienced during the 90s (Petersson 2009). Likewise, Kanat (2012) argues that China also used the war on terror strategy to divert the public attention from domestic problems. The Uyghur minority was thus demonized and became the target of scapegoating to unify the Chinese.

The concept of domestic diversion is closely related to the fight against terrorism since most of the above exemplified domestic diversion cases correspond to armed conflicts with domestic terrorist groups. Therefore, the effect of terrorism on voting behavior must be examined. Terrorism leads to an increase in security concerns within the society. Right-wing parties then are argued to benefit from an insecurity context by increasing their vote shares (Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Berrebi and Klor 2008). Getmansky and Zeitzoff (2014) examine the effects of the rocket threat on Israeli electorates by exploiting the variation in the range of rockets across time. The authors conclude that right-wing parties have 2 to 6 percent higher vote shares in the districts within the range of rockets. In a similar study, Berrebi and Klor (2008) investigate the effects of terror events on right-wing vote share. Terrorist attacks in a district increase the vote share of right-wing parties in the district by 1.35%. Moreover, terror fatality has an impact beyond the localities. This effect's magnitude is determined by the proximity to the election. The closer the election day, the higher the effect of terrorist attacks. Kıbrıs (2011) follows a similar logic while examining the relationship between the burial place of Turkish soldiers and voting behavior of its inhabitants. The author concludes that while voters punish the incumbent for their losses, right-wing support increases in those districts. On the other hand, in a cross-national study, Economou and Kollias (2015) demonstrate that rising terrorism also leads to a shift to the right in an individual's own stand

on the ideological spectrum.

To understand the individual-level effects of armed conflicts and terror on voting behavior, we may also consult the psychology research. Rising terrorism and internal conflicts induce a rise in the level of perceived threat in people’s minds. Fear affects individuals’ evaluations and judgments about political actors. Albertson and Gadarian (2016) argue that anxious citizens look for expertise instead of a threatening rhetoric. The authors hence assert that terrorism anxiety would lead to more votes for Hillary Clinton against Trump because Clinton had more expertise in foreign policy. In an experimental study, Cohen and her colleagues (2005) demonstrate the effect of reminders of death on support for George Bush. After a mortality salience induction, participants were more likely to favor Bush against John Kerry. Similarly, in another experimental study, Landau and his colleagues (2004) found that both mortality and the salience of the 9/11 led to a substantial increase in right-wing votes.

Finally, Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) analyze the Turkish Elections in 2015. AKP increased its vote share substantially within 5 months in between the two elections held in 2015. The authors examine which parties’ supporters switched the most and why. The main argument is that terrorist attacks between the two elections had led to a change in people’s perception of the most important problem in Turkey. Terror became the most significant issue and some voters thought that AKP could solve this problem. The vote switches among different parties between the two consecutive elections are examined by employing an extensive and unique dataset. This study may thus be considered an attempt to build on Aytaç and Çarkoğlu’s work. My aim is to extend their work by exploiting a natural experiment-like setting and proposing an interactive model to explain the effect of domestic diversion on the incumbent’s electoral support. In the first stage of this study, I will illustrate how the conflict had gradually changed voters’ perception of MIP in Turkey. Examining the variation in the answers for MIP question in time is an extension. In the second stage, I will demonstrate how voters’ perception of MIP translates into their intended votes for the incumbent. Here, I argue that politically unsophisticates are more likely to vote for AKP if they state security as MIP in Turkey.

3.3 Theoretical Framework and Expectations

The diversionary theory has several implications. An important one is that leaders who initiate diversionary conflicts will experience an increase in their popularity.

A good measure of increasing popularity may be election outcomes. If a conflict leads to an increase in the vote share of an incumbent, we can argue for empirical support in favor of the diversionary theory. However, between election years, there may be fluctuations in the popularity of an incumbent. Therefore, comparing two consecutive elections with 4-5 years intervals is likely to bias our findings. The incumbent may experience a vote loss between two consequent elections but a conflict may have still increased their electoral support. To estimate the effects of conflicts on the incumbent's electoral success, we have to narrow the intervals between our measurements. Otherwise, we cannot adjust for other variables' effects on the incumbent's vote share, and previous election outcomes may not be a good indicator of the level of support for the incumbent before the conflict takes place. Within these limitations, the Turkish case presents a suitable case for our purposes. The time interval between the two consecutive elections in 2015 is short enough, and the high-intensity domestic conflict had occurred between the two elections. Therefore, the Turkish case can be utilized to design a study measuring the effect of domestic conflict on the popularity of an incumbent.

In line with the diversionary theory, I expect to find that conflicts that took place between the June 2015 and November 2015 elections led to an increase in the popularity of the AKP leadership. The party increased its vote share drastically in the November 2015 election compared to the June 2015 election from 40,87% to 49,5%. However, what exactly caused that electoral success deserves scientific research.

I use the Turkish Election Study (TES) 2015 to examine the relationship between domestic conflict and electoral success of the incumbent. The TES 2015 was conducted between July 18 and September 10, which corresponds to the rising domestic conflicts and terror in Turkey. July 22 marked the beginning of the turmoil. The intensity and frequency of the conflicts had steadily increased after then, allowing us to exploit this natural experiment-like setting. Here, the treatment is rising terror and conflict. Based on the interview date, participants had different levels of exposure to the treatment. As the time passes, the effects of the conflict and terror on participants' most important problem evaluations become more substantial. Since the sample selection is random, we can safely assume that assignment to different interview dates was random as well. Thus, our study meets the "as if" randomization in natural experiments. Similar studies exploiting a natural experiment with survey data are also available in literature (Schaffner and Roche 2016; Lassen 2005).

As mentioned above, respondents who were interviewed later in the campaign period were exposed to the treatment more due to the rising intensity and frequency of the conflict. Moreover, we can also assume that there is a threshold for the threat

perception of an individual. Increasing intensity and frequency of terrorist attacks trigger stronger reaction from the public (Berrebi and Klor 2008). Thus, while the level of conflicts increases, a threshold should be passed at one point. After that individuals would get the feeling that there is a serious security threat to their country. Consequently, I expect to find more respondents stating that security/terror is the most important problem in Turkey as time passes.

H1: *The likelihood of stating security/terror as the most important problem in Turkey increases as the interview day approaches the last day of the field research.*

Here, an important puzzle is how security as MIP translates into votes. I investigate which parties got the benefits and why. Individuals may choose to vote for another party than the incumbent even if they perceive security/terror as MIP. Therefore, the relationship between security threats and voting for the incumbent has to be explained. This relationship is not straightforward. While some electorates think that the AKP leadership can deal with the threat, others may think the opposite. The factors that generate positive effects of the domestic diversion for the AKP leadership may be classified under two broad categories: 1) the factors related to incumbency advantage; 2) the factors specific to the characteristics of the AKP leadership.

Firstly, one of the main assumptions of the diversionary theory is that conflicts with the out-groups increase social cohesion. Psychology and sociology studies demonstrate that disasters and serious threats bind people and increase solidarity among social groups (Grinker and Spiegel 1945; Fritz and Williams 1957; Loomis 1967). The social cohesion in our case would translate into more votes for AKP because it is the incumbent party. The rally around the flag effect applies to the incumbent party, not the others. Similarly, high levels of perceived threats make voters support the incumbents' aggressive military campaigns against terrorism (Huddy et al. 2005). Likewise, voters may tend to vote for the government or a charismatic leader due to heightened anxiety and threat perception (Erişen 2016). Another dimension could be avoiding political uncertainty during the crisis. Security is a vital issue, and voters may be afraid of a future political crisis due to the possibility of the need for a coalition government. In that case, voters' first reaction would be to support the incumbent with the expectation that a strong executive can better handle the issue.

Secondly, factors related to voters' evaluations about the characteristics of the AKP leadership may also be decisive in their support for AKP. Here, the issue voting literature can be illuminating. According to the issue ownership theory, candidates own their issues which they heavily emphasize during their campaigns. In these

issues, candidates expect to have an advantage over their opponents, and voters would evaluate candidates based on candidates' perceived competence over the issues (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996). Previous literature suggests that right-wing parties enjoy issue ownership in security-related topics (e.g., Mayer and Tiberj 2004; Petrocik 1996). May AKP as a right-wing party receive higher support because of its perceived issue ownership by electorates? However, Belanger and Meguid (2008) show that the effect of issue ownership is conditioned by issue salience. In other words, if the issue is not salient, a party's issue ownership will not translate into votes. In our case, our first hypothesis tests whether the security issue became salient between the two elections. Therefore, the interactive effect of issue ownership and issue salience may explain the boost in AKP's vote share in the 2015 November Elections. Voters who perceive AKP as the competent party in security issues would prefer to vote for AKP (Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019). Lastly, voters evaluate the candidates' traits while deciding whom to vote for (Fridkin and Kenney 2011). Erdoğan's leadership and personality traits may also attract voters in the time of the escalating crisis.

On the other hand, rising terrorism and conflict may be seen as the incumbent's fault. Here, an intervening factor can be proposed: the political sophistication of an individual. Thus, I will focus on the sophistication dimension. Political sophistication can be defined as having a more elaborate political belief system (Luskin 1990). People's knowledge of and engagement with politics tend to vary. Political sophistication takes account of this variance. The effect of political sophistication on voting behavior has been studied for decades. Macdonald and her colleagues (1995) argue that while more sophisticated individuals rely on the traditional spatial proximity model in voting, the less sophisticated rely more on the directional model in voting. Besides its direct effects, political sophistication may be an intervening variable in voting behavior as well. Godbout and Belanger (2007) demonstrate that economic voting is conditioned by political sophistication. Varied levels of political sophistication cause varying types of judgments. As indicated above, candidates' characteristics may have a large role in voters' evaluations and consequently their vote choice. Political sophistication can affect voters' ability to assess and differentiate candidates' traits (Funk 1997). Likewise, Coffe and Schoultz (2021) demonstrate that electorates with higher levels of political sophistication are more likely to consider a broader range of candidate attributes.

To explain the intention to vote for AKP, I propose an interactive model. I argue that the perception of security as MIP increases the tendency to vote for AKP conditionally on voters' level of political sophistication. I expect to find that politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to ignore the incumbent's role

in the rising conflict. Their initial reaction to the conflict would be to support the incumbent. Being critical to the incumbent requires more political knowledge and engagement. Similarly, a voter has to have higher political engagement and knowledge to hold the government accountable and evaluate its responsibility in the conflict. I expect that the demand for accountability would be more pervasive in highly politically sophisticates. Naturally, the demand for accountability would lead to the tendency to punish the incumbent. Furthermore, politically unsophisticated individuals are more sensitive to potential manipulations of media (Weitz-Shapiro and Winters 2017; Vegetti and Mancosu 2020). Hence, their evaluations can be shaped more easily than those of highly politically sophisticates.

H2: *While politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to support the incumbent if they perceive security/terror as the most important problem in Turkey, the sophisticates are more likely to punish the incumbent.*

As indicated in the literature review section, rising security threat leads to higher support for right-wing parties (Kıbrıs 2011; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014; Berrebi and Klor 2008). Right-wing parties are natural owners of security issues. Because I assert that the security issue became salient between the two consecutive elections in 2015, I expect that those stating security as MIP tend to vote for the right-wing parties. Two parties could be more attractive for those who have security concerns: AKP and Nationalist Action Party (MHP). Those who blamed AKP for the rising insecure environment could instead vote for MHP. Here, although MHP could enjoy higher public support as a right-wing party due to the security threat, being in the opposition could mediate the effect of security as MIP on the intended vote for MHP. In other words, the tendency to support the incumbent during an escalating crisis might be more decisive on the vote choice of the respondents stating security as MIP.

Lastly, the argument regarding the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP(security) on the intended vote for AKP relies on the expectation that electorates' reaction to the domestic diversion initiation would differ based on their levels of political sophistication. While politically sophisticates tend to demand accountability and punish the incumbent, politically unsophisticates are more likely to rally around the flag. However, a similar division between politically sophisticates and unsophisticates as conditionally on MIP would not be observed for the intention to vote for the opposition parties. Therefore, I argue that the effect of political sophistication on the intended vote for MHP would be similar for those perceiving security and other issues as MIP. While politically unsophisticates tend to vote for the incumbent, politically sophisticates are more likely to vote for MHP.

3.4 Research Design

I use the Turkish Election Study 2015 conducted as a part of CSES Module 4 (CSES 2018) to estimate the effects of conflict on Turkish citizens' voting behavior in this chapter. The Turkish Election Study 2015 is composed of three waves. However, I only employ one of those which is conducted after the June 2015 election. In line with our hypothesis, we do not need to examine the pre-June period. The natural experiment occurs between the two consecutive elections, i.e., in June 2015 and in November 2015. Therefore, I only examine the survey conducted within that period. The number of respondents is 1086 in the survey. The respondents were interviewed from July 18 to September 10, 2015.

The main independent variable is the number of days passed since the first day of the fieldwork. The number of days passed varies between 0 to 54. It is calculated by subtracting the interview date from the first date of the interviews, *i.e.*, July 18. The distribution of the respondents over the interviewing period is not skewed to any side. While the mean value is 26.6, the median value is 26 in the effective sample.

MIP is the dependent variable in the first hypothesis which evaluates the effect of conflict on people's perception of MIP their country had been facing. The related question measures what is perceived as the most important issue in Turkey by respondents. Since this is not a close-ended question, I had to recode the answers given by the respondents. MIP question was re-coded, and a new variable named MIP(security) was generated. MIP (security) is binary, which can take on two values: 0 and 1. An answer is coded as 1 if a respondent's answer is related to security and terrorism. The answers that are not security-related issues were coded as 0. Two issues were overwhelmingly frequent among the answers to this question: security and economy. Therefore, most of the observations coded as 0 indicate economy related issues as MIP. MIP variable is also one of the main independent variables in the models estimating our second hypothesis.

Since our second hypothesis requires accounting the political sophistication, it is another main independent variable in this study. How to measure political sophistication has long been debated in the literature on public opinion. There are some methods accepted by the political science community. One strategy can be using an index coded from a battery of factual knowledge questions asked in surveys to measure one's political knowledge (Moral 2016). For example, a question in the TES 2015 asks the name of the current general secretariat of the UN. The TES 2015 had

four questions aiming to measure the respondents' level of political sophistication. I will instead measure political sophistication by comparing respondents' answers to place parties on the ideological spectrum with the actual ideological position of the parties determined by the experts. In other words, to the extent a respondent correctly places a party on the left-right ideological spectrum constitutes this measure. The variable is created by calculating the average distance between respondents' perception of the ideological position of the major parties and the actual ideological position of these parties. Therefore, the higher the value, the lower the political sophistication it indicates. I reverse-coded the variable to make higher values correspond to higher levels of political sophistication. I use the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES) to find out the actual ideological position of the parties (Bakker *et al.* 2015).

While measuring the political sophistication of an individual, missing values are challenging to deal with. For instance, some respondents place AKP, CHP, and MHP but not HDP. Missing values, hence a smaller sample size could affect our estimates. There are four options under the category of invalid answers: 1) haven't heard of left-right; 2) refused; 3) don't know where to place the party; 4) system missing. Those options are likely to indicate varied levels of political sophistication. A uniform approach to impute them would thus bias our estimates. Options 1 and 3 indicate the lowest level of political sophistication. I assume that those people are the most unsophisticated respondents so I assign them a value corresponding to the 99th percentile in terms of political sophistication. I calculate those values by using the summary statistics of the difference between all respondents' placement of parties and the actual positions. Another way to impute missing values could be taking the mean values of the difference between all respondents' placement of parties and the actual position of the parties, then adding one standard deviation to the mean. This was practiced by Gordon and Segura (1997). However, I think this method can be meaningful for only the options of refused and missing. Those options do not reveal any meaningful information regarding respondents' political sophistication unlike options 1 and 3. Therefore, I used their method only for refused and missing answers. I also present models based on alternative measures of political sophistication including the ones without any imputations in Appendix B section.

Our control variables consist of context-specific and socio-demographic variables which are commonly used in voting behavior research. Demographic variables are gender, age, education, religiosity. These socio-demographic factors are likely to influence individuals' perceptions and voting behavior. For example, older people may be more likely to perceive security as MIP while the younger generations consider economic issues as the most important problem in Turkey. Similarly, education

level and religiosity may be correlated with voting preferences. It can be expected that education level and vote intention for AKP are negatively correlated (Çarkoğlu 2012). Likewise, it is well-known that AKP voters are more religious than CHP voters. I did not include the income variable in the model specifications due to high numbers of missing values. If we were to include the income variable, we would have sacrificed more than 10 percent of the estimation sample. The models with the income variable are presented in the Appendix B. Religiosity is a six-category ordinal variable where higher values demonstrate higher levels of religiosity. Similarly, education is a five-category ordinal variable, which higher values signify higher levels of education.

Besides demographic variables relevant to every context, I also include a context-specific variable, namely being Kurdish. There is a question asking which language is usually spoken at home in the TES 2015. If a respondent states Kurdish, the variable takes the value of 1. Considering ethnic and nationalist parties, ethnicity is likely to affect vote choice (Fisher et al. 2015; Cain and Kiewiet 1984; Huber 2012). The Kurds may be more likely to vote for HDP but less likely to vote for the Turkish nationalist MHP. However, the Kurdish variable is not included in the model estimating the intention to vote for MHP. Since there were no Kurds who reported an intended vote for MHP.

Moreover, as Kalaycıoğlu (2014) indicates, the ideological position of an individual on the left-right spectrum can influence voting behavior. Ideological voting is one of the main explanations regarding voting behavior. I also include the ideological position of a respondent on the left-right spectrum as a control variable in the main models. I expect that people would vote for the parties closer to them on the ideological spectrum (Downs 1957). For example, those who placed themselves on the right of the party system center would vote for either AKP or MHP. Therefore, the ideological position is likely to be a good predictor of vote choice. Lastly, economic evaluations can have an impact on individuals' preferences (Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019). In the TES 2015, a question measures economic evaluations of the respondents about the AKP government's economic performance during the last 12 months. The respondents were given three response options: good, neutral, and negative. I recoded that question as a binary variable measuring the negative economic evaluations. The variable marks respondents whose evaluations regarding the economic performance of AKP is negative. We can expect that negative economic evaluation is negatively correlated with the intention to vote for the incumbent. All these control variables are coded from the TES 2015 dataset (CSES 2018).

The main dependent variable for our second hypothesis is a respondent's vote inten-

tion at the time of the interview. Specifically, four different models are employed to estimate the intention to vote for major parties, *i.e.*, AKP, CHP, MHP, and HDP. The question in the TES 2015 is: “If there was an election today, which party would you vote for?”. I recoded the answer to this question to generate a variable measuring whether a respondent considers voting for AKP at that moment. Thus, the variable is binary where 0 corresponds to intended vote for another party than AKP, and 1 corresponds to an intended vote for AKP. By following the same procedure, I generate binary variables for the other major parties. The options that do not contain information about party preferences like invalid vote and do not know are coded as missing. Lastly, I generated a variable measuring vote intention for right-wing parties by pooling together the AKP and the MHP voters. If a respondent has an intention to vote for either party, the variable scores 1, 0 otherwise. The models on intended vote for right-wing parties are presented in Appendix B.

While the TES 2015 has 1086 total respondents, for the models testing our first hypothesis the sample size is 882. The models testing our second hypothesis have 763 observations in the estimation samples. Because the dependent variables are binary in all model specifications, I estimate logistic regressions.

3.5 Empirical Analyses

Table 1 shows that the estimated coefficients associated with the interview date are statistically significant in all models at 95% confidence level. Moreover, the coefficients associated with the squared interview date and the coefficient of the cubed interview date are distinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level in all models. Thus, our main independent variable, *i.e.*, the number of days passed since the first date of the interviewing period, has a significant non-linear effect on stating security as the most important problem (MIP) in Turkey. The direction of the coefficient of interview date is positive, which indicates that over the course of this period, respondents become more likely to state security as MIP in Turkey. There are several control variables introduced in Model 4. The coefficient estimates for the Kurdish, religiosity, and ideological position variables are statistically significant at 95% confidence level. The coefficient of religiosity is positive, which means that more religious people are more likely to state security/terror as MIP. The direction of the coefficient for the Kurdish variable is negative, which indicates Kurdish people are less likely to state security/terror as MIP. Lastly, the ideological position has a positive significant effect on the perception of the most important problem. To

reiterate, the ideological position variable varies between 0 and 10, 0 indicating the left-most position. Therefore, people who stand at the right end of the ideological spectrum are more likely to perceive security as MIP.

Table 3.1 Logistic Regression Estimates on Stating Security as the Most Important Problem in Turkey

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Interview Date	0.018*** (0.006)	0.128*** (0.025)	0.268*** (0.070)	0.227*** (0.082)
Interview Date ²		-0.002*** (0.000)	-0.008*** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)
Interview Date ³			0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Age				0.002 (0.005)
Female				-0.032 (0.146)
Education				0.104 (0.071)
Ideological Position				0.065*** (0.025)
Religiosity				0.112** (0.046)
Kurdish				-1.616*** (0.365)
Constant	-0.560*** (0.160)	-1.793*** (0.307)	-2.758*** (0.526)	-3.414*** (0.828)
N	882	882	882	882
Log-likelihood	-605.375	-595.672	-593.947	-567.688
AIC	1214.751	1197.344	1195.895	1155.378
BIC	1224.315	1211.691	1215.024	1203.199

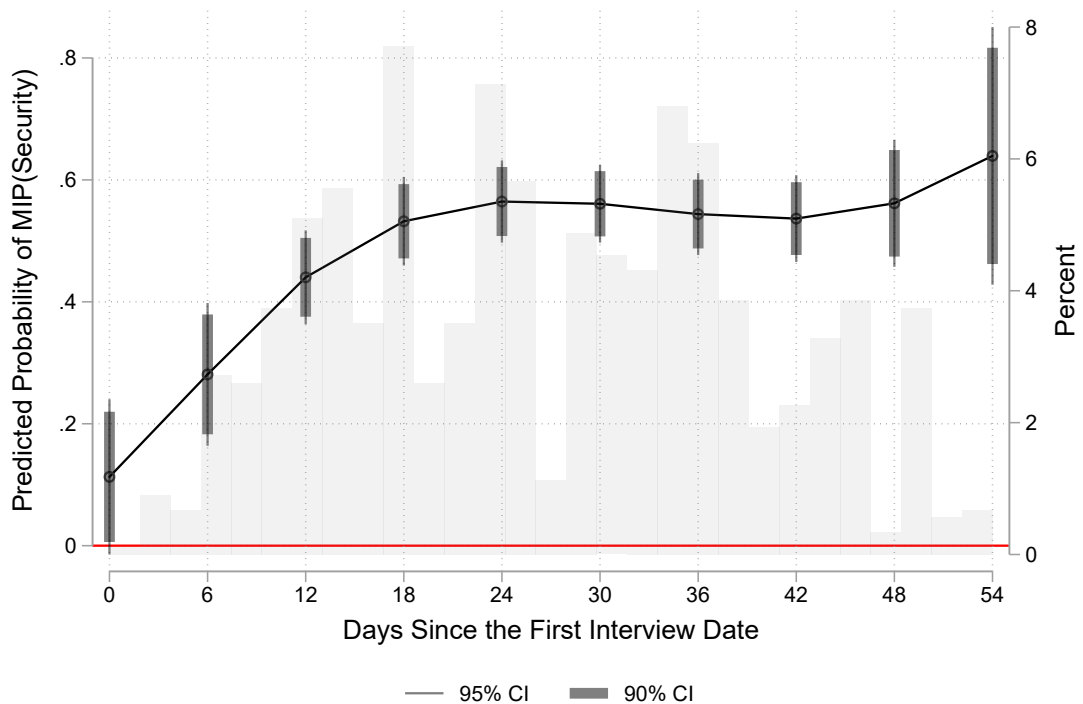
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 1 plots the predicted probabilities of stating security/terror as the most important problem in Turkey. The plot demonstrates the positive non-linear effect of interviewing days on the dependent variable. We can infer from that over the course of this period, the likelihood of stating security/terror as the most important problem increases. The predicted probability of stating security as MIP sharply

increases until about the 24th day after the first interview date. Between days 24 and 42, the predicted probability of stating security as MIP slightly decreases. The predicted probability of stating security as MIP starts to increase again for the respondents interviewed after the 42nd day of the field research. Indeed, these dates corresponds well with the terror attacks and their coverage in media, which provide support for our expectations. To sum up, the likelihood of stating security as MIP in Turkey varies based on the interview date and the predicted probability is higher for the respondents who were interviewed later during the field research.

Figure 3.1 Predicted Probability of Stating Security as the Most Important Problem



Estimates from Table 1 and the plotted relationship between interview date and stating security as MIP in Turkey provide strong empirical support for our first hypothesis. During the interview period, Turkey witnessed rising terror and conflict. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), 422 terrorist attacks occurred in 2015 (START 2021). Here, we focus on a specific period, between July 18, 2015-September 10, 2015. Within this period, there were 214 terror incidents, 216 terror-related deaths, and 393 terror-related injuries. In addition, Turkish security forces launched dozens of operations against the PKK and ISIS in this period. Besides the number of incidents and deaths, there is another significant event that made people feel more insecure. On August 12, 2015, The Kurdish Union Communities Union (KCK), one of the PKK-related organizations, declared a so-called “democratic autonomy” in several districts where the PKK had substantial *de facto*

power. The ongoing conflicts with the PKK and democratic autonomy declarations signified a serious security problem for Turkey. Those who were interviewed in the later stages of the interviewing period were thus exposed to the treatment, *i.e.*, rising terror and conflict, more.

Figure 1 also demonstrates the distribution of the main independent variable in our estimation sample. The independent variable takes values from 0 to 54. There are more observations for the values of the independent variable between 12 and 24, which means more people were interviewed between those days. There are fewer observations for the two ends of the spectrum, *i.e.*, the first and the last days of the interviewing period. Confidence intervals of the predicted probabilities for the values located at the middle are thus narrower.

The positive effect of the interview date is also substantively significant. While the predicted probability of stating terror as MIP is .11 for the first date of the field research, it increases to .63 for the last date. That is, the estimated probability almost increased by a factor of 6. After evaluating the regression estimates and the predicted probabilities, we can thus reject the null hypothesis. The interview date has a non-linear positive effect on stating security/terror as the most important problem in Turkey. Over the course of this period, Turkish citizens have become more and more likely to perceive security as the most important issue.

Table 2 presents the logistic regression estimates on the intended vote for the major parties in Turkey, namely AKP, CHP, MHP, HDP. Regarding our second hypothesis, both MIP(security) and political sophistication variables' effects on the intended vote for AKP are statistically indistinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level. Moreover, the coefficient associated with the interaction term of MIP(security) and political sophistication is statistically indistinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level in the main model on the intended vote for AKP.

Furthermore, all control variables except gender have statistically significant effects on vote intention for AKP. The effect of MIP(security) is statistically indistinguishable from 0 at 95% confidence level in the model on the intended vote for MHP. The estimated coefficient of the variable has a positive sign, which means that the respondents stating terror/security as MIP are more likely to vote for the Turkish nationalist MHP.

On the other hand, the interaction of MIP(security) and political sophistication is not statistically significant multiplicative, which suggests that sophistication does not mediate the effect of MIP on voting for MHP. Furthermore, political sophistication's effect is statistically significant at 95% confidence level in the same model.

Table 3.2 Logistic Regression Estimates on Intended Vote for AKP, CHP, HDP, and MHP

	AKP Vote	CHP Vote	MHP Vote	HDP Vote
MIP(Security)	1.330 (0.957)	-0.813 (1.372)	0.728 (1.335)	-2.991** (1.410)
Political Sophistication	-0.020 (0.120)	0.048 (0.180)	0.431** (0.205)	-0.115 (0.149)
Political Sophistication $\times$ MIP(Security)	-0.265 (0.183)	0.098 (0.255)	-0.047 (0.251)	0.418 (0.299)
Age	-0.020** (0.008)	0.027** (0.011)	-0.001 (0.008)	-0.036* (0.020)
Religiosity	0.205*** (0.069)	-0.257*** (0.087)	-0.125 (0.081)	0.059 (0.125)
Ideological Position	0.428*** (0.041)	-0.755*** (0.073)	0.457*** (0.055)	-0.462*** (0.074)
Female	0.124 (0.203)	0.434 (0.288)	-0.052 (0.236)	-1.485*** (0.457)
Education	-0.454*** (0.103)	0.209 (0.142)	0.405*** (0.114)	-0.433* (0.251)
Kurdish	-1.763*** (0.479)	-5.500*** (1.060)		5.125*** (0.577)
Negative Economic Evaluations	-1.751*** (0.205)	0.783*** (0.290)	1.280*** (0.255)	0.459 (0.450)
Constant	-0.768 (0.970)	1.472 (1.369)	-8.928*** (1.357)	2.150 (1.680)
N	763	763	763	763
Log-likelihood	-318.529	-175.732	-248.834	-92.942
AIC	659.058	373.465	517.669	207.884
BIC	710.068	424.475	564.041	258.894

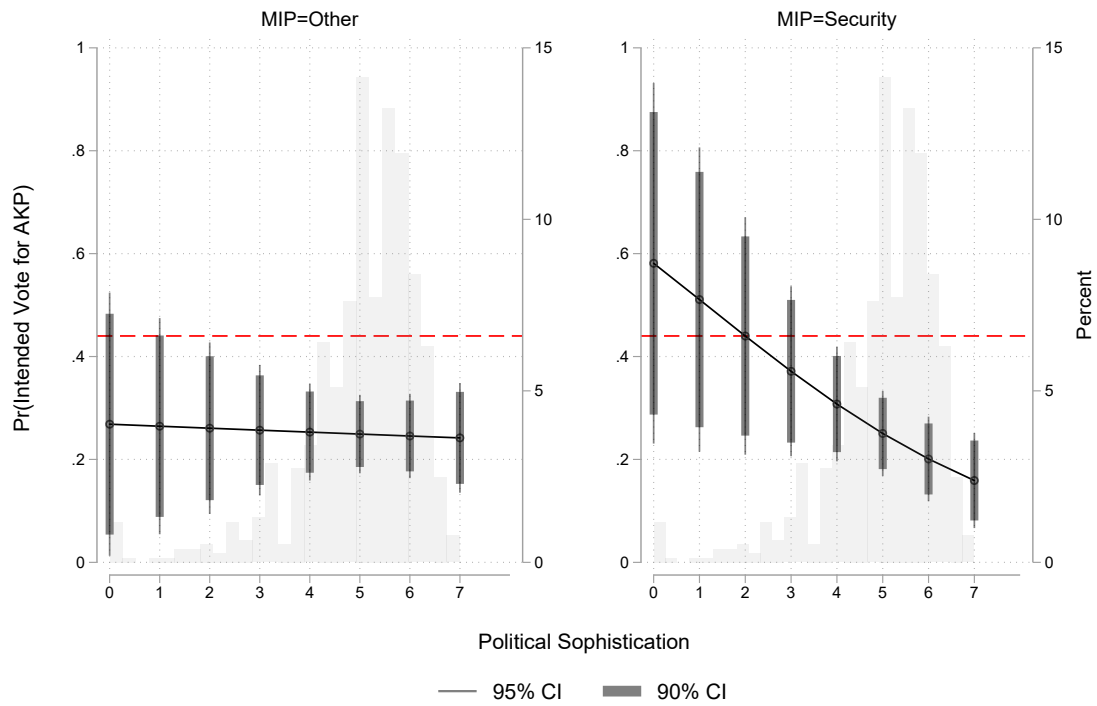
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.
Robust standard errors in parentheses.

A positive sign of the coefficient associated with political sophistication indicates that politically unsophisticated individuals are less likely to vote for MHP.

Figure 2 demonstrates the predicted probabilities of vote intention for AKP as conditionally on political sophistication and MIP(security). Predicted probabilities of vote intention for AKP increase when political sophistication is lower for those stating security as MIP. Figure 2 shows that politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to state a vote intention for AKP. The predicted probabilities of the intended vote for AKP are lower for politically sophisticated individuals who state security as MIP than those who state other issues. This is an important finding in

support of our second hypothesis. Figure 2 shows that the variation in the political sophistication level of the respondents does not affect the predicted probability of the intended vote for AKP for those stating other issues as MIP. The predicted probability line is almost flat for the plot located on the left.

Figure 3.2 Predicted Probability of Intended Vote for AKP | Political Sophistication and MIP



On the other hand, variation in political sophistication matters for those stating security as MIP. For the politically unsophisticated, the perception of security as MIP leads to an increase in vote intention for AKP. While the predicted probability of vote intention for AKP is .58 when the value of political sophistication is 0 for those perceiving security as MIP, it decreases to .16 when the value of political sophistication is 7. This variation is substantively significant considering the baseline probability of intending vote for AKP, which is .44, indicated by the red dashed lines. However, the confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities corresponding to lower values of political sophistication become wider. This is due to fewer observations taking on these values, the histogram overlaid in the plot shows. When the political sophistication variable takes values higher than 3, the number of observations increases substantially.

Figure 3 plots the average marginal effects of political sophistication on the intended vote for AKP as conditional on the perception of the most important problem in

Turkey. In line with our hypothesis, political sophistication's average marginal effect on the intended vote for AKP varies conditionally on stating security as MIP in Turkey. The average marginal effect of political sophistication on the intended vote for AKP is statistically indistinguishable from zero at 95% confidence level when MIP is stated as an issue other than security. On the other hand, political sophistication's average marginal effect on the intended vote for AKP is statistically significant at 95% confidence level for those stating security as MIP. The average marginal effect of political sophistication on the intended vote for AKP is negative. This effect is substantively significant considering its magnitude. The average marginal effect of political sophistication for respondents stating security as MIP is -.05.

Figure 3.3 Average Marginal Effects of Political Sophistication on Intended Vote for AKP | MIP

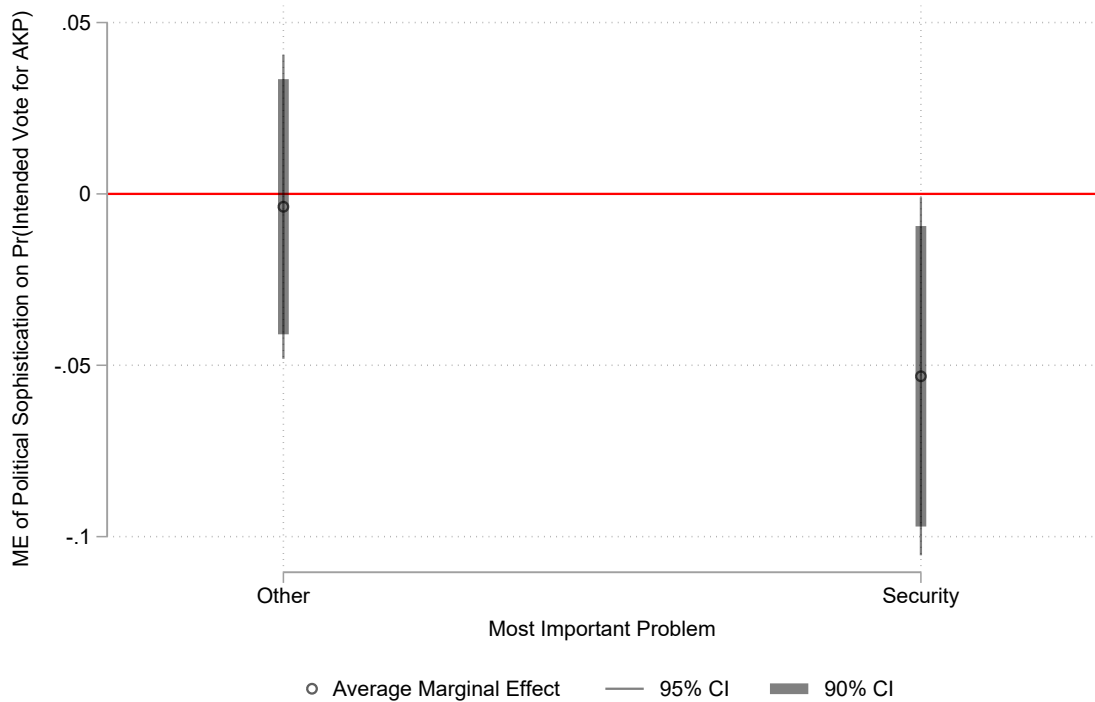


Figure 4 demonstrates the marginal effects of MIP on the intended vote for AKP conditionally on political sophistication. Although the hypothesized relationship holds in the sense that the average marginal effect of MIP decreases when political sophistication increases, the marginal effects are not statistically significant at the conventional levels for any values of political sophistication. Moreover, the confidence intervals around the estimated marginal effects are wider for lower values of political sophistication due to the fewer observations taking on these values in our estimation sample. One reason for that is our small sample size.

Figure 3.4 Average Marginal Effects of MIP on Intended Vote for AKP | Political Sophistication

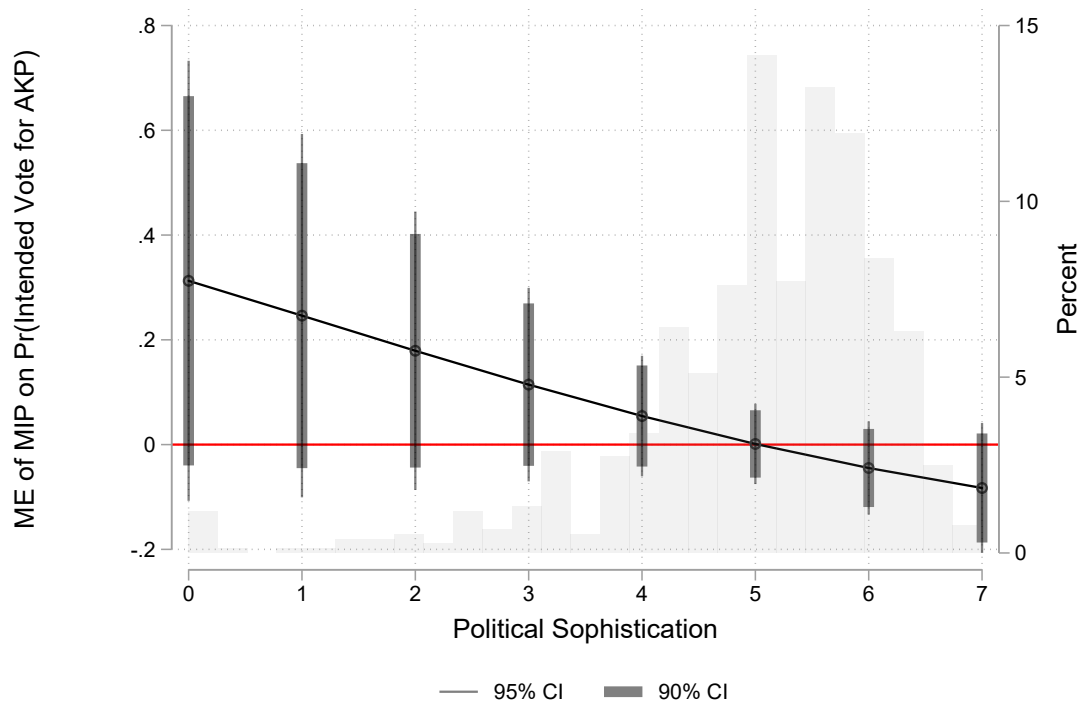


Figure 5² plots the predicted probability of the intended vote for MHP. Depending on the answers given to the most important problem in Turkey question, the likelihood of an intended vote for MHP varies. The respondents stating security as MIP are more likely to report a vote intention for MHP. However, this difference is not significant considering the confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities. The confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities overlap for almost every value of political sophistication. Political sophistication's effect on the intended vote for MHP is also in the same direction for those stating security and those stating other issues as MIP.

The propensity of intending to vote for MHP increases when the level of political sophistication increases regardless of the variation in MIP. The predicted probability of an intended vote for MHP is .1 when political sophistication takes a value of 5 for the respondents perceiving other issues as MIP. On the other hand, it is .16 when political sophistication scores the same for the respondents perceiving security as MIP. As seen from the histogram, there are no observations for some values of political sophistication, which means that we extrapolate those predictions given that no respondents with such levels of political sophistication report to have

²The confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities exceed 0 because the default delta method in Stata is used to calculate the associated standard errors.

intended vote for MHP.³ The red dashed lines indicate the baseline probability of intending vote for MHP. It is .14.

Figure 3.5 Predicted Probability of Intended Vote for MHP | Political Sophistication and MIP

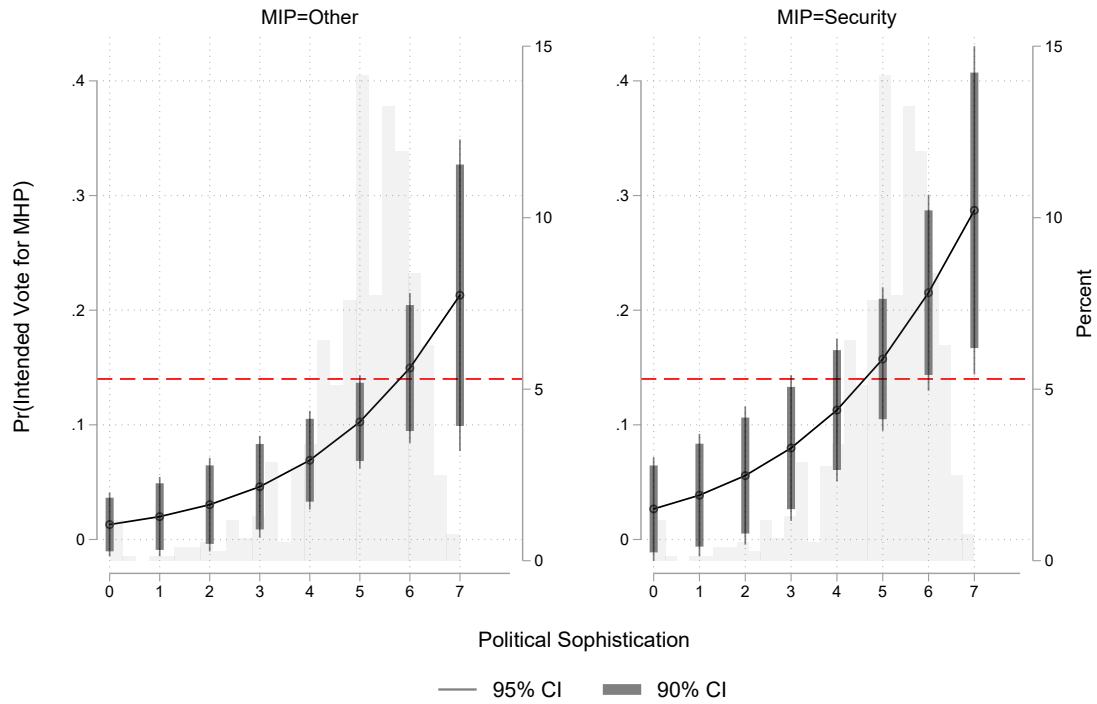


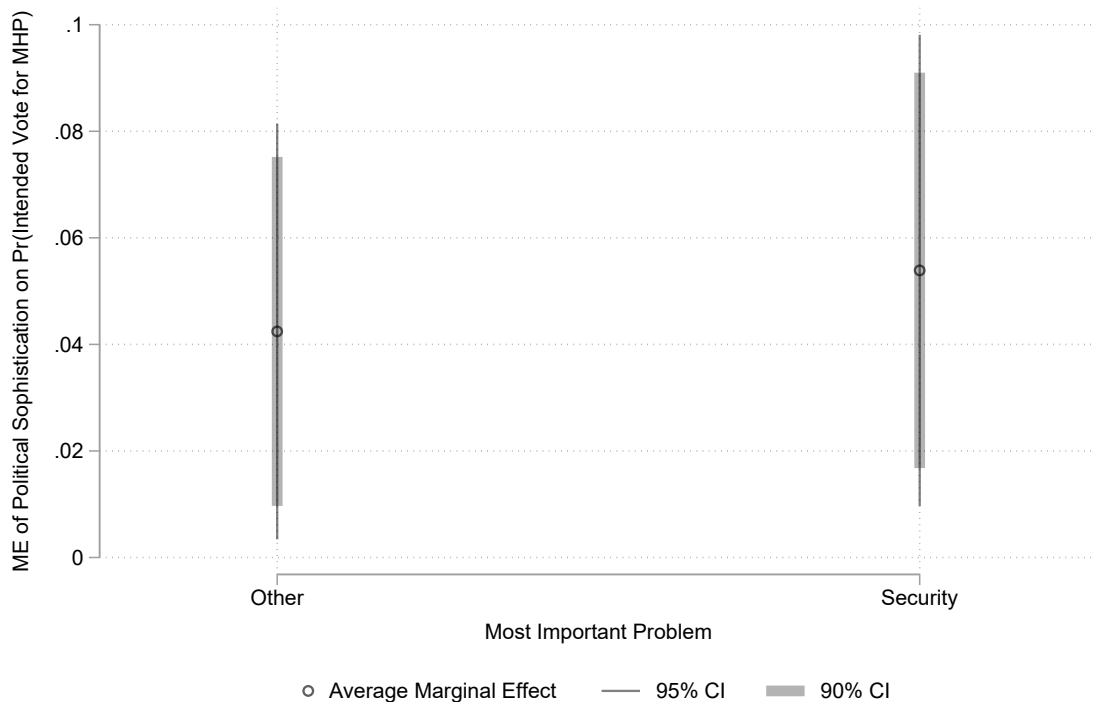
Figure 6 demonstrates the average marginal effects of political sophistication on the intended vote for MHP conditionally on MIP. Although the average marginal effects of political sophistication on the intended vote for MHP are significant at both points, the confidence intervals around the marginal effects of political sophistication are overlapping to a large extent. Therefore, political sophistication's effect on the intended vote for MHP does not significantly vary as the answers given to MIP do. The average marginal effect of political sophistication on the vote intention for MHP is .04 for those stating other issues as MIP. On the other hand, it is .05 for those stating security as MIP. These findings support our second hypothesis in the sense that the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP is only significant for the intended vote for the incumbent.

To sum up, although we find strong empirical support for our first hypothesis, the empirical support for our second hypothesis is weak. For our second hypothesis, there may be two main reasons for the lack of support. Firstly, the model testing

³Political sophistication values are determined for the all sample including the other party voters like AKP and CHP. It ranges from 0 to 7.

our second hypothesis is on a sample with relatively fewer observations. Although the survey has 1086 observations, the estimation sample only consists of 763 observations. Moreover, we do not have access to the post-November election survey covering reported votes in the November 2015 election. Intended vote for a party and reported vote for a party are two different things. The intended vote variable is expectedly prone to many missing data due to those making their minds later during the campaign period (Jennings and Wlezien 2018). The overwhelming majority of those who reported being undecided had voted for a party in the November 2015 election. Unfortunately, our data are insufficient to tackle these problems. Lastly, the confidence intervals around the predictions are also reported at the 90% confidence level due to the small sample size.

Figure 3.6 Average Marginal Effects of Political Sophistication on Intended Vote for MHP | MIP



Regarding our second hypothesis, empirical analyses presented here show that the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP on the intended vote for MHP is not significant neither statistically nor substantively. Political sophistication by itself affects the likelihood of intending to vote for MHP. Politically sophisticates are more likely to report an intention to vote for MHP than the unsophisticates. However, that effect is not conditioned by MIP. Considering our second hypothesis, we expected to find that the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP holds for the incumbent. While politically unsophisticates stating security as MIP

are more likely to be affected by the rally around the flag effect, politically sophisticateds stating security as MIP seem to be more likely to consider the incumbents' responsibility in the rising conflict and demand accountability from the government. Therefore, the two groups significantly differ in their vote choice. This difference for the intended vote for AKP between the voters conditionally on their level of political sophistication, however, is not observed for those stating other issues as MIP. Therefore, we can conclude that political sophistication's effect on the intended vote for AKP is conditioned by MIP. In line with our expectations, the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP is not statistically significant for the intended vote for other major parties in the opposition.

3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter investigates the effect of domestic diversion on voting behavior. The literature on domestic diversion mostly focuses on the causes of domestic diversion. Therefore, the outcomes of domestic diversion are understudied. By exploiting a natural experiment that occurred between the two consecutive Turkish general elections in 2015, I demonstrate the effects of domestic conflict/terror on individuals' vote choices. I employ the TES 2015 post-June election survey conducted between July 18 and September 10. During the field research, Turkey witnessed rising conflict and terror. Thus, I expect that more respondents stating security/terror as the most important problem (MIP) in Turkey while the interview date was approaching the last day of the field research. This argument constitutes our first hypothesis, for which I found strong empirical support.

The next stage was to examine how the perception of MIP translates into vote choices. An individual may think of security as MIP, but they can vote for another party than the incumbent, in our case AKP. Here, I propose political sophistication as the intervening factor. More specifically, I argue that politically sophisticated individuals are more likely to punish the incumbent due to the rising conflict and terror. While politically unsophisticated individuals are more sensitive to the "rally around the flag" effect, highly politically sophisticateds tend to be more critical of the government's policies. As a result, I expect to find that politically unsophisticated individuals stating security as MIP are more likely to vote for AKP. On the other hand, political sophistication's effect on the intended vote for AKP does not significantly differ for those stating other issues as MIP. Considering the average marginal effect of MIP and the coefficient estimate associated with the interaction term of

political sophistication and MIP, the empirical support for our second hypothesis however is weak.

Moreover, in line with our expectations, the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP(security) on the intended vote for MHP is not statistically significant. In other words, political sophistication's effect on the intended vote for MHP is not significantly conditioned by MIP. When political sophistication increases, the likelihood of stating an intention to vote for MHP increases, regardless of the voters' MIP considerations. This finding provides support for our second hypothesis since the interactive effect does not hold for the opposition right-wing party.

The biggest limitation of the study is related to the data utilized. I had to rely on vote intention rather than actual vote while testing the second hypothesis. Many respondents did not report their intended votes due to the large numbers of undecideds for a hypothetical election. As a result, the sample for the model used to test our second hypothesis consists of 763 observations, whereas the TES 2015 data have 1086 observations. Further research using the reported vote as its dependent variable may present stronger support for the second hypothesis (e.g., Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019).

Further research may also investigate the effects of media outlets as the intervening variable on voting behavior. As mentioned above, media shapes voters' perceptions. Conditionally on media consumption, the effect of conflict on incumbent's support may thus vary. When the media in a country are substantially slanted toward the incumbent, the media would criticize the incumbent's decisions less and present armed conflicts as a national cause. Here, the media function as a consent-generating tool and work to convince the public to support the government. The media both use and create a sentimental atmosphere to generate more support for the incumbent. On the other hand, when the media are impartial, they would criticize the incumbent's actions, and the costs of an armed conflict would have been emphasized more.

4. CONCLUSION

The diversionary theory has evolved in two separate lines: External and domestic diversion. Although the studies on the theory date back to the 1960s (Waltz 1967; Mueller 1970), domestic diversion can be considered a new strand in the theory. The theory suggests that leaders experiencing domestic unrest initiate conflicts to distract public attention from the domestic problems (Levy 1998). The main puzzle regarding the theory is that although it envisions increased public support for leaders initiating a conflict, not all conflicts lead to high levels of public support. While some leaders retain their power thanks to the conflicts, others fail to do so. For instance, George Bush did not achieve to stay in power after the Gulf war. However, his son George W. Bush was reelected after the Iraq war. Therefore, it is important to explain the factors leading to diversion and those making the outcomes of diversionary conflict beneficial for the leaders. In these respects, this thesis aims to answer two fundamental questions: 1) when is domestic diversion more likely to occur? 2) how does domestic diversion lead to more more electoral support for the incumbent?

The second chapter focuses on the first question by examining the determinants of domestic diversion. Here, I assume that leaders are rational actors whose main goal is to stay in power. Their foreign policy decisions would also comply with their self-interest, *i.e.*, securing their post. This assumption makes our theoretical framework straightforward. If the potential benefits of domestic diversion outweigh its costs, a leader will engage in diversionary behavior. This equation has two parts, the benefits and the costs. A factor may affect a leader's calculations by manipulating either side. I argue that two factors are of considerable importance regarding the potential rewards of domestic diversion. During election years, leaders have the necessary incentives to boost their popularity since their survival depends on the outcomes of the elections. The potential reward from increasing popular support is thus higher in election years. Another factor is macroeconomic conditions. If they are worsening, leaders will have the motivation to first divert the public's

attention, secondly to restore their popular support undermined by the worsened macroeconomic conditions. However, again in non-election years, leaders do not have to make something potentially to boost their popularity. Therefore, election year is a main independent variable in all models designed to explain the determinants of domestic diversion.

On the other hand, mobilization type of minorities affects the costs of the domestic diversion. Choosing the right target is vital for a diversionary strategy to produce the desired results for a leader. How a domestic diversion is justified affects both the external and internal costs of the diversion. I argue that targeting a militant mobilized minority is the most cost-efficient, and therefore the most viable strategy. Since those have affiliations with armed groups, an attack against them can be justified more easily than an attack on non-militant mobilized groups. Such a solid justification also strengthens the rally around the flag effect within the society. Consequently, I propose two hypotheses. Firstly, the likelihood of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effects of mobilization type and election timing. Secondly, the likelihood of domestic diversion is determined by the interactive effect of mobilization type and macroeconomic conditions during election years.

My hypotheses in the second chapter are partly supported by the empirical analyses. While the effect of election year on domestic diversion is not significant for militant minorities, it is significant and negative for non-militant minorities. Considering our second hypothesis, the interactive effects of mobilization type of minorities and inflation on the outset of domestic diversion is only significant in election years. The hypothesized relationship does not hold when the sample consists of solely non-election years. Therefore, we can conclude that an increase in the inflation rate by itself does not produce sufficient incentives for leaders to employ a diversionary strategy. However, if there is an upcoming election, leaders are more likely to use domestic diversion against militant-mobilized minorities as a response to deteriorating macroeconomic conditions.

The third chapter investigates the mechanisms of how voters react to domestic diversion. More specifically, the main question in the third chapter is why some voters punish the incumbent and others do not. The aim of the chapter is to better understand why some electorates are more sensitive to the rally around the flag effect. A two-stage study is designed for the third chapter. In the first stage, I exploit a natural experiment that occurred during the interviewing period of the post-June election wave of the Turkish Election Study 2015 (CSES 2018). While the respondents were being interviewed, Turkey was experiencing rising terror and conflict with the PKK. The respondents had thus varied levels of exposure to the

treatment, *i.e.*, rising terror and conflict. Therefore, I expect to find that those who were interviewed later were more likely to state security/terror as the most important problem (MIP) Turkey had facing due to their higher exposure to the treatment. In line with our expectation, the interview date has a significant and positive effect on stating security as MIP. In other words, when the interview date was closer to the end of the interviewing period, the respondents are found to be more likely to perceive security as MIP.

In the second stage, I examine how perceiving security as MIP translates into the intended vote for the incumbent. I argue that political sophistication determines the direction of the vote for those stating security as MIP. While politically sophisticated individuals tend to punish the incumbent for its role in the conflict, politically unsophisticated individuals are more likely to support the incumbent. Empirical support for our second hypothesis in this chapter is not very strong. In other words, the interactive effect of political sophistication and perceiving security as MIP on the intended vote for AKP is not statistically significant at conventional levels. However, after a careful evaluation of the predicted probabilities of the intended vote for AKP and average marginal effects of political sophistication, we can conclude that we find some support for our second hypothesis. The average marginal effect of political sophistication on the intended vote for AKP is negative and statistically significant for those stating security as MIP.

Similarly, I also expect that although those who state security as MIP are more likely to support the Turkish nationalist MHP, the effect of political sophistication on the intended vote for MHP is not conditioned by MIP as it is for the incumbent. The empirical findings also support this expectation. The interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP only holds for the incumbent.

The biggest limitations of this thesis come from the datasets employed. In the second chapter, the Minorities at Risk (MAR 2009) data are utilized. The time period covered by the MAR dataset are confined to 1996-2006. Due to the difference in coding procedures and the availability of the data, the effective sample covers the years between 1997 and 2003. Moreover, the dataset does not specify the exact start date of armed repressions. Without knowing the exact date, it is difficult to estimate the effect of elections on armed repression. That is because the election-year variable does not account for the possibility that armed repression against a minority may take place after the election in a given year. With more precise and comprehensive data on armed repression against minorities, further research could provide us with a better understanding of the phenomenon.

Likewise, the most important problem in the third chapter is related to the dataset

utilized. The intended and the reported votes are two different things. Given the high voter turnout in Turkey it is quite likely that some respondents who reported to be undecided during the interviews, would vote for a party in the upcoming elections. Due to such missing data, the effective sample in the third chapter decreases to 763 from a total of 1086. With a larger sample with fewer missing values, our estimates could be more precise. Moreover, considering the “so called” shy Tory effect, the missing values for the question measuring the intended vote might be dominated by the voters who intended to vote for AKP. If this were the case, missing values would also bias our estimates. Further research relying on more extensive data could present stronger support for our second hypothesis. Moreover, the effect of the frequency of domestic diversion can be examined in further research. For instance, an intriguing question is what happens when a leader uses domestic diversion repeatedly during his long tenure? The strength of the rally around the flag effect of domestic diversion to produce public support can be decreased by a high frequency.

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APPENDIX A

Models with the Sample Excluding almost Impossible Cases

Table A.1 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Militant Mobilization	1.769*** (0.249)	1.681*** (0.262)	1.298*** (0.317)
Election Year	-0.092 (0.158)	-0.286 (0.207)	-0.385* (0.212)
Militant Mobilization $\times$ Election Year		0.370 (0.321)	0.601* (0.337)
Mass Unrest			0.058 (0.047)
Elite Disunity			0.156 (0.146)
Number of Groups			-0.071 (0.050)
Political Discrimination			0.378*** (0.102)
Economic Discrimination			0.145* (0.076)
Polity			0.006 (0.029)
Excluded Population			0.067 (0.102)
GDP per capita			-0.085 (0.123)
Ongoing Civil War			1.038*** (0.292)
Constant	-1.753*** (0.190)	-1.705*** (0.192)	-3.413*** (0.668)
N	1189	1189	1189
Clusters	248	248	248
Log-likelihood	-612.881	-612.260	-538.624
AIC	1231.763	1232.520	1103.248
BIC	1247.005	1252.844	1169.300

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

To determine which cases can be considered almost impossible, I rely on the CIRI Human Rights Data Project data (Cingranelli *et al.* 2014). The dataset includes a variable called the Physical Integrity Rights Index. It is an additive index, which

takes account of the Torture, Extrajudicial Killing, Political Imprisonment, and Disappearance indicators. It takes values from 0 to 8, where 8 indicates the highest level of government respect for human rights.

I exclude the cases in which the index score is equal to or higher than 7. Those cases can be safely considered almost impossible ones for the initiation of a domestic diversion.

Figure A.1 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Election Year and Mobilization Type (Model 3 in Table A.1)

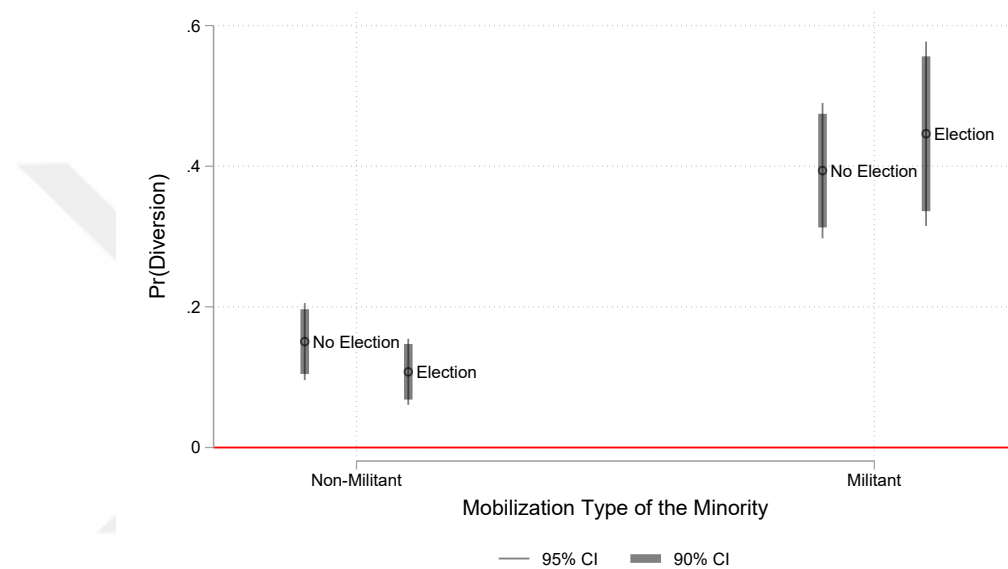


Figure A.2 Average Marginal Effects of Election Year on Domestic Diversion | Mobilization Type (Model 3 in Table A.1)

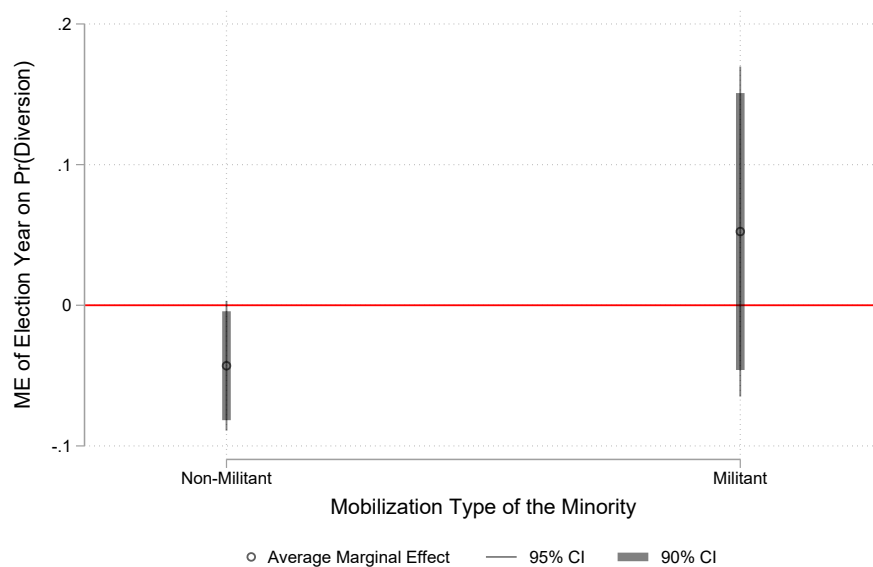


Table A.2 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1	Model 2 Election Year=0	Model 3 Election Year=1
Inflation _{t-1}	-0.013 (0.012)	-0.007 (0.009)	-0.027* (0.016)
Militant Mobilization	1.279*** (0.355)	1.200*** (0.350)	1.148** (0.541)
Militant Mobilization × Inflation _{t-1}	0.011 (0.012)	0.005 (0.009)	0.058** (0.025)
Mass Unrest	0.080 (0.065)	0.061 (0.065)	0.191** (0.089)
Elite Disunity	0.180 (0.174)	0.212 (0.232)	-0.201 (0.271)
Number of Groups	-0.067 (0.053)	-0.082 (0.056)	-0.019 (0.065)
Political Discrimination	0.323*** (0.112)	0.302*** (0.116)	0.363** (0.155)
Economic Discrimination	0.145* (0.086)	0.144 (0.088)	0.135 (0.132)
Polity	0.004 (0.030)	-0.021 (0.030)	0.136** (0.054)
Excluded Population	0.081 (0.108)	0.084 (0.108)	-0.015 (0.153)
GDP per capita	-0.209 (0.144)	-0.152 (0.144)	-0.467* (0.261)
Ongoing Civil War	1.115*** (0.318)	1.172*** (0.352)	0.875** (0.439)
Constant	-3.099*** (0.761)	-2.714*** (0.734)	-4.782*** (1.275)
N	1044	771	273
Clusters	219	219	164
Log-likelihood	-473.366	-357.489	-104.093
AIC	972.732	740.977	234.186
BIC	1037.092	801.397	281.109

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

Figure A.3 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Inflation and Mobilization Type in Election Years (Model 2 in Table A.2)

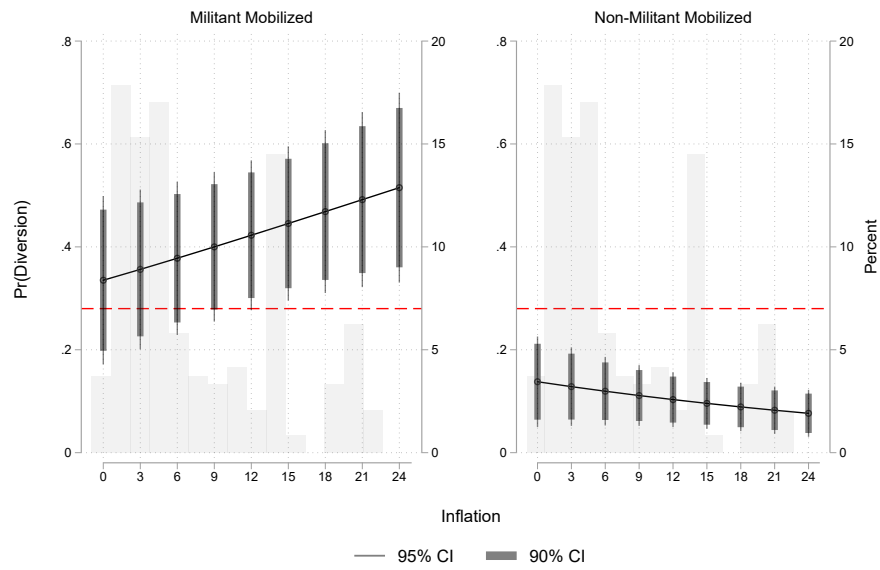
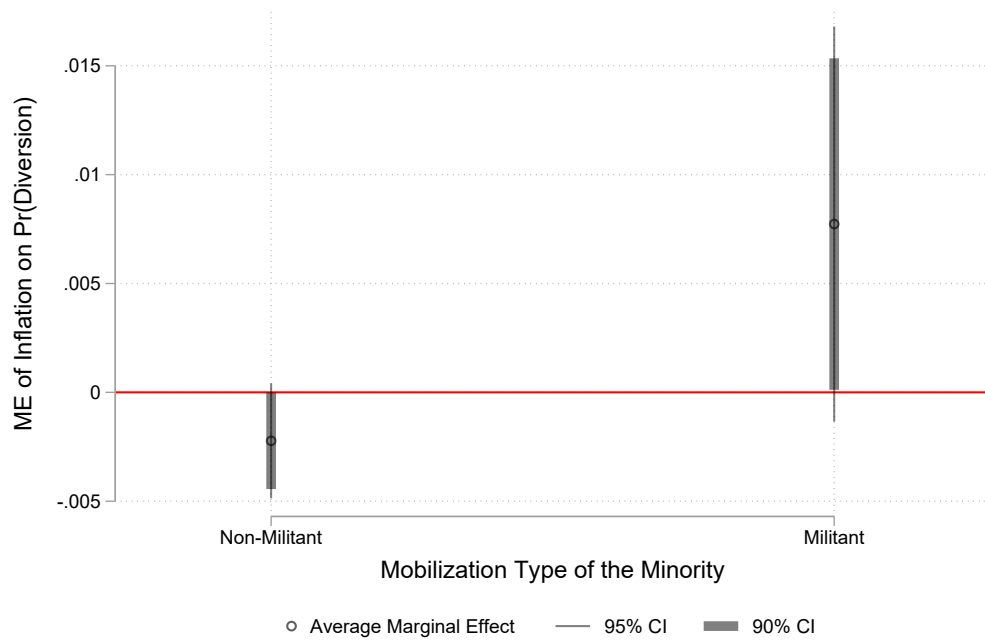


Figure A.4 Average Marginal Effects of Inflation on Domestic Diversion in Election Years | Mobilization Type (Model 2 in Table A.2)



Models on the Sub-sample Limited to Democracies

Table A.3 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1
Militant Mobilization	2.442*** (0.443)
Election Year	0.059 (0.234)
Militant Mobilization $\times$ Election Year	0.271 (0.381)
Mass Unrest	0.082 (0.060)
Elite Disunity	0.291* (0.166)
Number of Groups	-0.065 (0.076)
Political Discrimination	0.360*** (0.132)
Economic Discrimination	0.259** (0.109)
Polity	0.156 (0.157)
Excluded Population	0.499** (0.212)
GDP per capita	-0.613*** (0.201)
Ongoing Civil War	0.957* (0.494)
Constant	-7.439** (3.089)
N	766
Clusters	151
Log-likelihood	-242.468
AIC	510.936
BIC	571.271

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, two tailed tests.

Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

Figure A.5 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Election Year and Mobilization Type

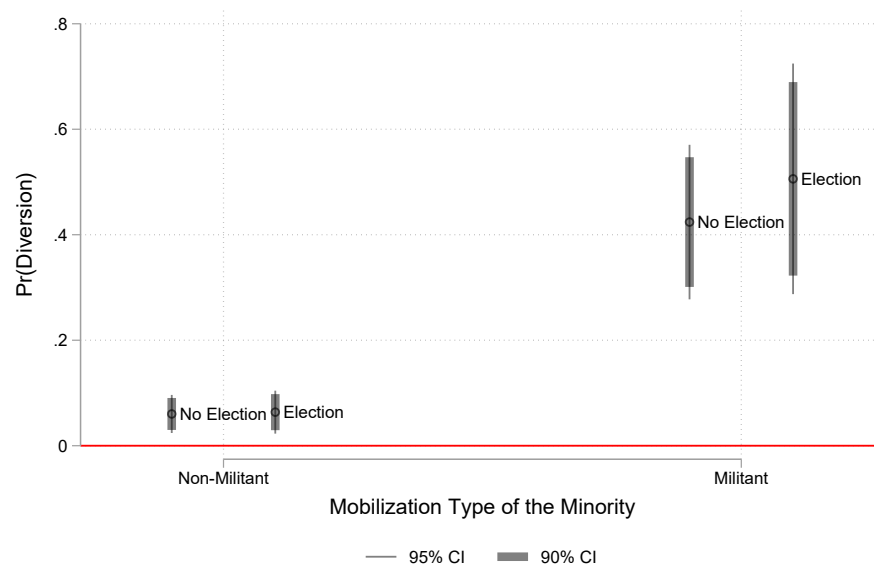


Figure A.6 Average Marginal Effects of Election Year on Domestic Diversion | Mobilization Type

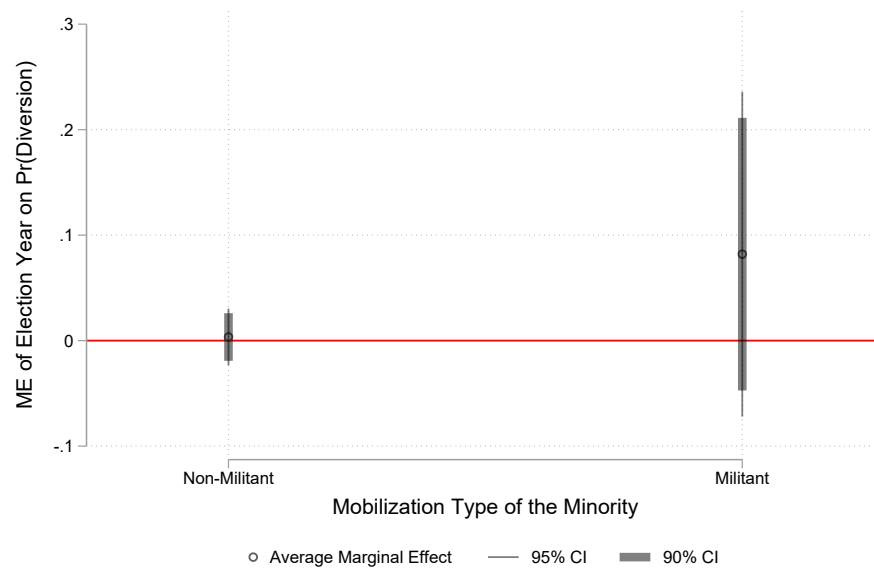


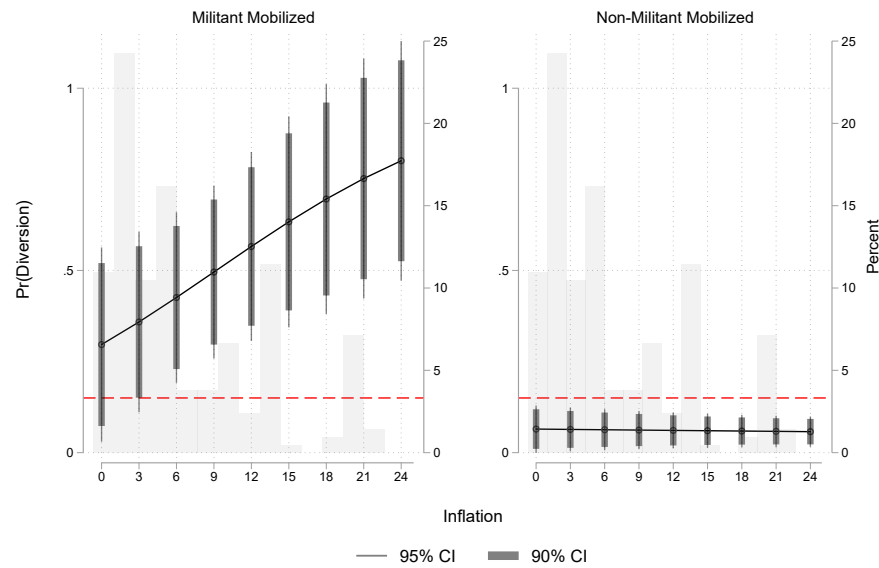
Table A.4 Logistic Regression Estimates on Domestic Diversion

	Model 1	Model 2
	Election Year=0	Election Year=1
Inflation _{t-1}	0.000 (0.001)	-0.005 (0.015)
Militant Mobilization	2.466*** (0.653)	1.808** (0.849)
Militant Mobilization × Inflation _{t-1}	0.021 (0.035)	0.099* (0.058)
Mass Unrest	0.091 (0.079)	0.161 (0.131)
Elite Disunity	0.436* (0.257)	0.043 (0.345)
Number of Groups	-0.078 (0.088)	0.001 (0.096)
Political Discrimination	0.342** (0.167)	0.469** (0.182)
Economic Discrimination	0.227* (0.121)	0.246 (0.188)
Polity	0.105 (0.213)	0.349 (0.245)
Excluded Population	0.584** (0.269)	0.451* (0.257)
GDP per capita	-0.675*** (0.232)	-0.681** (0.267)
Ongoing Civil War	0.956* (0.572)	0.859 (0.529)
Constant	-6.473 (4.131)	-11.133** (5.106)
N	489	221
Clusters	142	132
Log-likelihood	-148.031	-62.343
AIC	322.063	150.687
BIC	376.564	194.863

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Standard errors clustered by country-MAR are in parentheses.

Figure A.7 Predicted Probability of Observing Domestic Diversion | Inflation and Mobilization Type in Election Years



In the plot on the left, the confidence intervals around the predicted probabilities exceed 1 because Stata's delta method is used to calculate the associated standard errors.

Figure A.8 Average Marginal Effects of Inflation on Domestic Diversion in Election Years | Mobilization Type

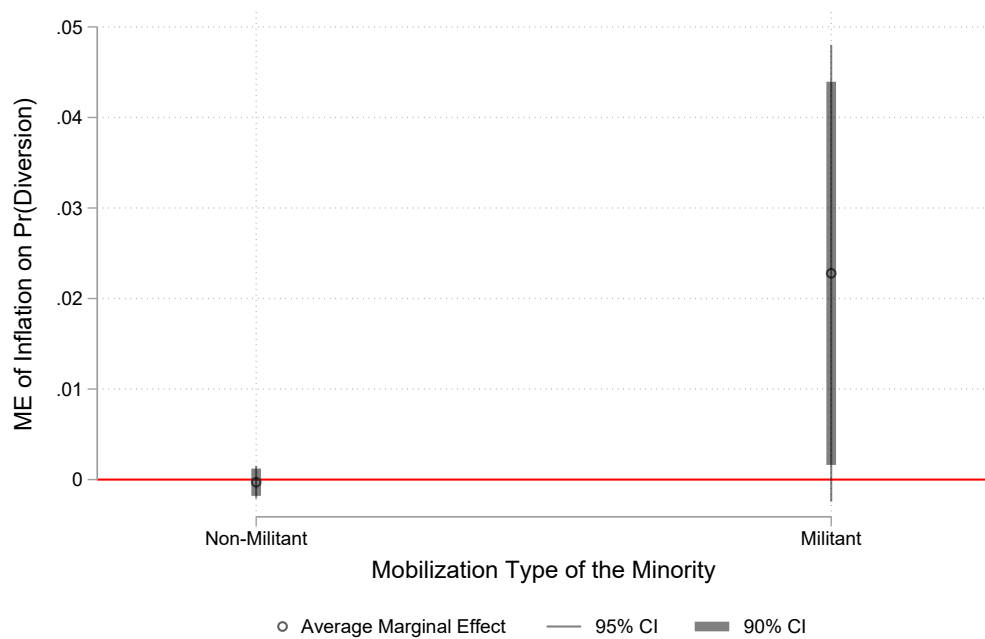


Table A.5 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Model 3 in Table 2.1)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Armed Repression	0.231	0.422	0	1	1458
Mobilization Type	1.318	0.466	1	2	1458
Election Year	0.265	0.442	0	1	1458
Mass Unrest	1.104	2.648	0	37	1458
Elite Disunity	0.198	0.529	0	4	1458
Number of Groups	4.021	2.815	1	11	1458
Political Discrimination	1.733	1.493	0	4	1458
Economic Discrimination	4.817	1.937	1	7	1458
Polity	13.32	6.059	0	20	1458
Excluded Population	2.453	1.342	0	4.484	1458
GDP per capita	1.301	1.245	-1.716	3.7	1458
Ongoing Civil War	0.266	0.442	0	1	1458

Table A.6 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Model 1 in Table 2.2)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Armed Repression	0.233	0.423	0	1	1309
Election Year	0.267	0.442	0	1	1309
Inflation	16.657	48.186	-8.525	513.907	1309
Mobilization Type	1.31	0.463	1	2	1309
Mass Unrest	1.128	2.679	0	37	1309
Elite Disunity	0.198	0.504	0	3	1309
Number of Groups	4.086	2.881	1	11	1309
Political Discrimination	1.759	1.504	0	4	1309
Economic Discrimination	4.851	1.92	1	7	1309
Polity	13.606	6.025	0	20	1309
Excluded Population	2.42	1.35	0	4.484	1309
GDP per capita	1.401	1.211	-1.716	3.7	1309
Ongoing Civil War	0.254	0.435	0	1	1309

Table A.7 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Model 2 in Table 2.2)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Armed Repression	0.203	0.403	0	1	349
Inflation	12.239	22.704	-2.302	168.62	349
Mobilization Type	1.284	0.451	1	2	349
Election Year	1	0	1	1	349
Mass Unrest	1.063	1.788	0	11	349
Elite Disunity	0.264	0.611	0	3	349
Number of Groups	4.223	3.238	1	11	349
Political Discrimination	1.585	1.48	0	4	349
Economic Discrimination	4.917	1.862	1	7	349
Polity	15.123	5.072	1	20	349
Excluded Population	2.321	1.26	0	4.484	349
GDP per capita	1.593	1.107	-1.103	3.683	349
Ongoing Civil War	0.309	0.463	0	1	349

Table A.8 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Model 3 in Table 2.2)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Armed Repression	0.244	0.43	0	1	960
Inflation	18.263	54.499	-8.525	513.907	960
Mobilization Type	1.32	0.467	1	2	960
Election Year	0	0	0	0	960
Mass Unrest	1.151	2.937	0	37	960
Elite Disunity	0.174	0.457	0	3	960
Number of Groups	4.036	2.74	1	11	960
Political Discrimination	1.822	1.508	0	4	960
Economic Discrimination	4.827	1.941	1	7	960
Polity	13.054	6.247	0	20	960
Excluded Population	2.456	1.38	0	4.484	960
GDP per capita	1.331	1.24	-1.716	3.7	960
Ongoing Civil War	0.233	0.423	0	1	960

APPENDIX B

Estimations on Intended Vote for Right-Wing Parties

Considering the estimates from Table 1, and the plotted predictions from Figure 1 and estimated marginal effects from Figure 2, the interactive effect of political sophistication and MIP on the intended vote for the right-wing parties are both statistically and substantively significant. However, since our theoretical framework for our second hypothesis relies on the government/opposition dichotomy, other theoretical expectations have to be proposed for the hypothesis regarding the intended vote for the right-wing parties.

Here, I argue that politically sophisticates are more likely to vote for left-wing parties which advocate for dovish policies to deal with domestic security/terror, since those individuals are more likely to evaluate the proposed solutions of the parties rigorously. Right-wing parties have the issue ownership in security-related matters (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996). However, those parties, in many cases, promote easy solutions by favoring violent repression against the groups which are responsible for the threat. Politically unsophisticates are more likely to be convinced and consequently support the easy solutions than are politically sophisticates. Therefore, in the case of a security crisis, politically unsophisticates would tend to support the parties putting an offer hawkish policies and security oriented solutions.

On the other hand, those who are highly politically sophisticated are more likely to blame the repressive policies put forth by the right-wing parties as contributing to the escalation of the issue. In that sense, supporting the dovish policies to deal with domestic terror may require higher levels of cognitive ability and political engagement. A more reflexive reaction to a security crisis would be supporting the right-wing parties putting an offer repressive policies.

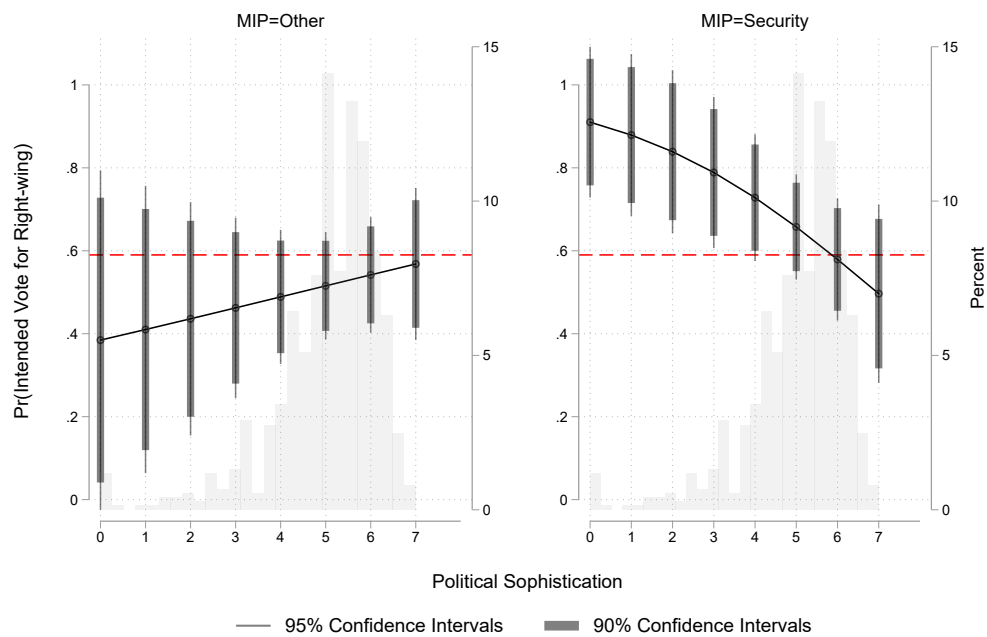
Table B.1 Logistic Regression Estimates on Intended Vote for Right-Wing Parties

	Model 1	Model 2
MIP(Security)	0.527* (0.274)	2.786** (1.369)
Ideological Position	0.911*** (0.088)	0.915*** (0.087)
Political Sophistication	-0.063 (0.129)	0.106 (0.160)
Age	-0.022** (0.010)	-0.021** (0.010)
Religiosity	0.100 (0.078)	0.128 (0.081)
Female	0.154 (0.294)	0.189 (0.296)
Education	-0.173 (0.149)	-0.139 (0.154)
Kurdish	-2.795*** (0.559)	-2.768*** (0.567)
Negative Economic Evaluations	-1.336*** (0.267)	-1.366*** (0.269)
MIP(Security) $\times$ Political Sophistication		-0.439* (0.254)
Constant	-2.947** (1.358)	-4.098*** (1.481)
N	763.	763.
Log-likelihood	-179.979	-178.215
AIC	379.958	378.429
BIC	426.330	429.439

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, two tailed tests.

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure B.1 Predicted Probability of the Intended Vote for Right-Wing Parties | Political Sophistication and MIP (Model 2 in Table B.1)



In the plot on the right, the confidence intervals around the estimated probabilities exceed 1 because Stata's delta method is used to calculate the standard errors of the estimates.

Figure B.2 Average Marginal Effects of MIP on Intended Vote for Right-Wing Parties | Political Sophistication (Model 2 in Table B.1)

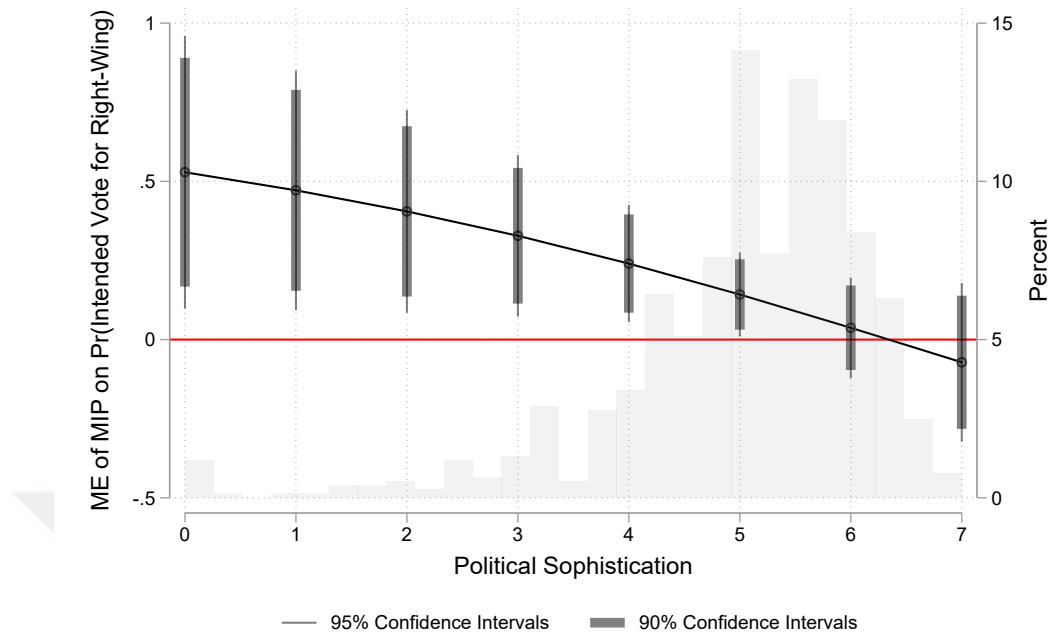


Figure B.3 Average Marginal Effects of Political Sophistication on Intended Vote for Right-Wing Parties | MIP (Model 2 in Table B.1)

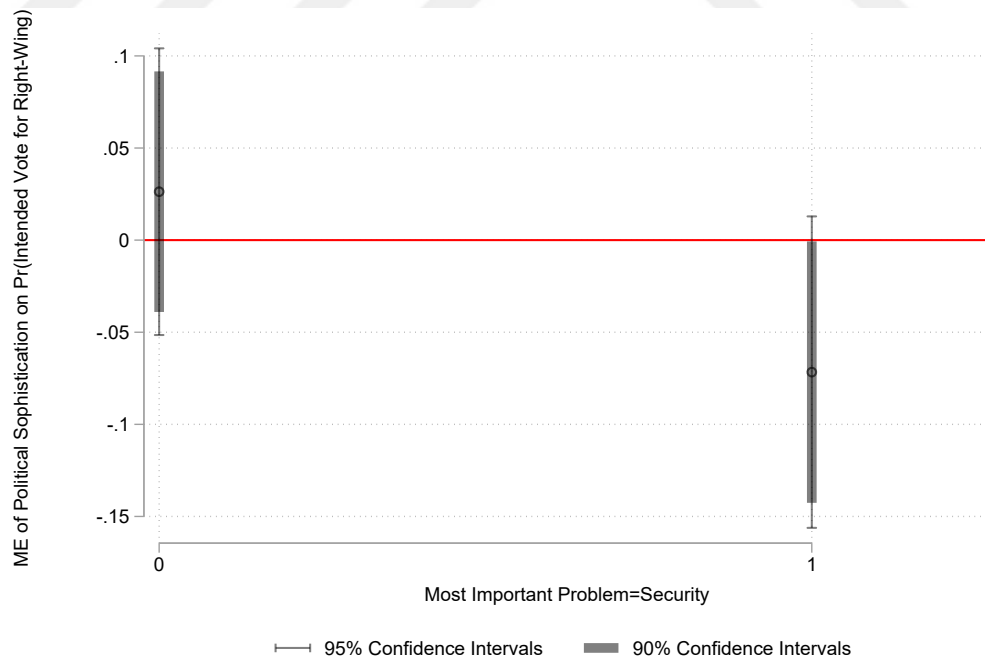


Table B.2 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Model 4 in Table 3.1)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
MIP(Security)	0.48	0.5	0	1	882
Interview Date	26.707	12.301	0	54	882
Age	40.253	15.671	18	90	882
Female	0.468	0.499	0	1	882
Education	3.076	1.217	1	5	882
Ideological Position	6.054	3.165	0	10	882
Religiosity	4.556	1.739	1	6	882
Kurdish	0.096	0.295	0	1	882

Table B.3 Summary Statistics of the Variables (Table 3.2)

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Intention to Vote for AKP	0.446	0.497	0	1	763
MIP(Security)	0.478	0.5	0	1	763
Political Sophistication	5.032	1.18	0	7	763
Age	39.913	15.671	18	90	763
Religiosity	4.49	1.763	1	6	763
Ideological Position	6.046	3.266	0	10	763
Female	0.456	0.498	0	1	763
Education	3.083	1.196	1	5	763
Kurdish	0.092	0.289	0	1	763
Negative Economic Evaluations	0.524	0.5	0	1	763



Table B.4 Logistic Regression Estimates on Intended Vote for AKP, CHP, HDP, and MHP (w/ Political Sophistication and w/o Imputation)

	AKP Vote	CHP Vote	HDP Vote	MHP Vote
MIP(Security)	0.579 (1.273)	-0.718 (2.087)	-1.729 (2.214)	4.398** (1.903)
Political Sophistication	-0.172 (0.156)	-0.043 (0.257)	-0.029 (0.235)	1.336*** (0.293)
MIP(Security) × Political Sophistication	-0.145 (0.246)	0.058 (0.391)	0.192 (0.451)	-0.700** (0.350)
Age	-0.021** (0.009)	0.035*** (0.012)	-0.051** (0.022)	-0.003 (0.009)
Religiosity	0.183** (0.076)	-0.228** (0.103)	0.048 (0.129)	-0.111 (0.085)
Ideological Position	0.498*** (0.049)	-0.840*** (0.089)	-0.449*** (0.078)	0.485*** (0.060)
Female	0.222 (0.226)	0.494 (0.331)	-1.341*** (0.477)	-0.168 (0.266)
Education	-0.503*** (0.114)	0.402** (0.163)	-0.545** (0.265)	0.417*** (0.121)
Kurdish	-1.322*** (0.440)	-5.771*** (1.076)	4.633*** (0.523)	
Negative Economic Evaluations	-1.738*** (0.228)	0.602* (0.330)	0.690 (0.527)	1.188*** (0.276)
Constant	-0.133 (1.226)	1.462 (1.830)	2.412 (2.080)	-14.095*** (1.913)
N	656	656	656	656
Log-likelihood	-263.522	-138.414	-80.357	-202.669
AIC	549.043	298.829	182.714	425.339
BIC	598.391	348.176	232.061	470.200

* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure B.4 Predicted Probability of Intended Vote for AKP | Political Sophistication w/o Imputations and MIP (Model 1 in Table B.4)

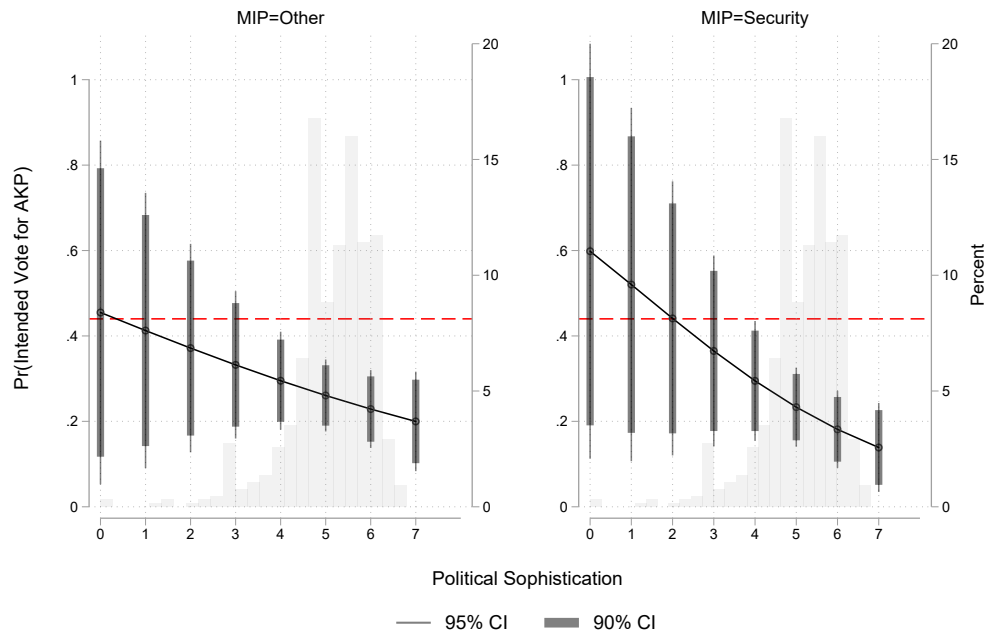


Figure B.5 Average Marginal Effects of Political Sophistication w/o Imputations on Intended Vote for AKP | MIP (Model 1 in Table B.4)

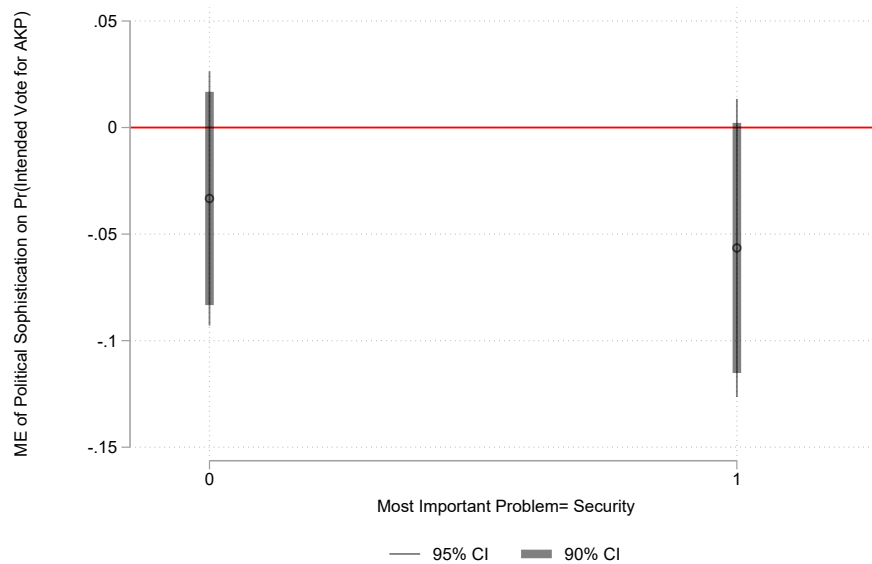


Table B.5 Logistic Regression Estimates on Intended Vote for AKP (w/ Political Sophistication)

	Model 1
MIP(Security)	0.927 (1.203)
Political Sophistication	-0.156 (0.152)
MIP(Security) $\times$ Political Sophistication	-0.186 (0.234)
Age	-0.020** (0.008)
Religiosity	0.199*** (0.069)
Ideological Position	0.423*** (0.041)
Female	0.115 (0.203)
Education	-0.462*** (0.103)
Kurdish	-1.870*** (0.484)
Negative Economic Evaluations	-1.729*** (0.204)
Constant	0.018 (1.138)
N	763
Log-likelihood	-318.163
AIC	658.326
BIC	709.336
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests	
Robust standard errors in parentheses.	
Political sophistication is imputed based on Gordon and Segura (1997).	

Figure B.6 Predicted Probability of Intended Vote for AKP | Political Sophistication (Gordon and Segura 1997) and MIP (Model 1 in Table B.5)

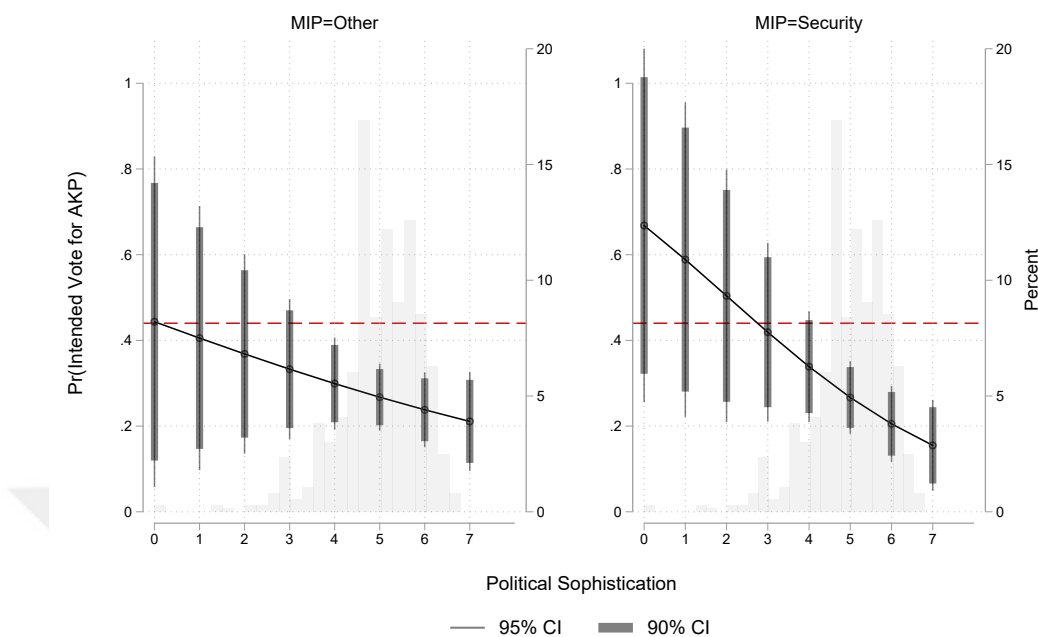


Figure B.7 Average Marginal Effects of Political Sophistication on Intended Vote for AKP | MIP (Model 1 in Table B.5)

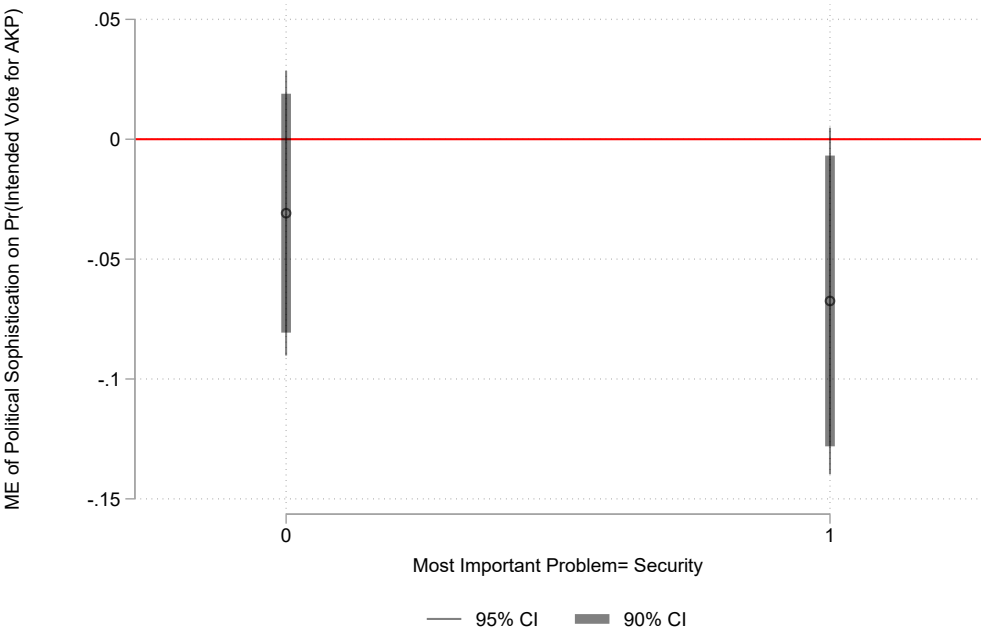


Table B.6 Logistic Regression Estimates on Stating Security as the Most Important Problem in Turkey (w/ Income Variable)

	Model 1
Interview Date	0.209** (0.087)
Interview Date ²	-0.006* (0.003)
Interview Date ³	0.000 (0.000)
Age	0.005 (0.006)
Female	-0.064 (0.157)
Education	0.057 (0.080)
Income	0.100* (0.059)
Ideological Position	0.075*** (0.027)
Religiosity	0.093* (0.049)
Kurdish	-1.604*** (0.396)
Constant	-3.625*** (0.906)
N	776
Log-likelihood	-496.100
AIC	1014.200
BIC	1065.395
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.	
Robust standard errors in parentheses.	

Figure B.8 Predicted Probability of Stating Security as the Most Important Problem (Model 1 in Table B.6)

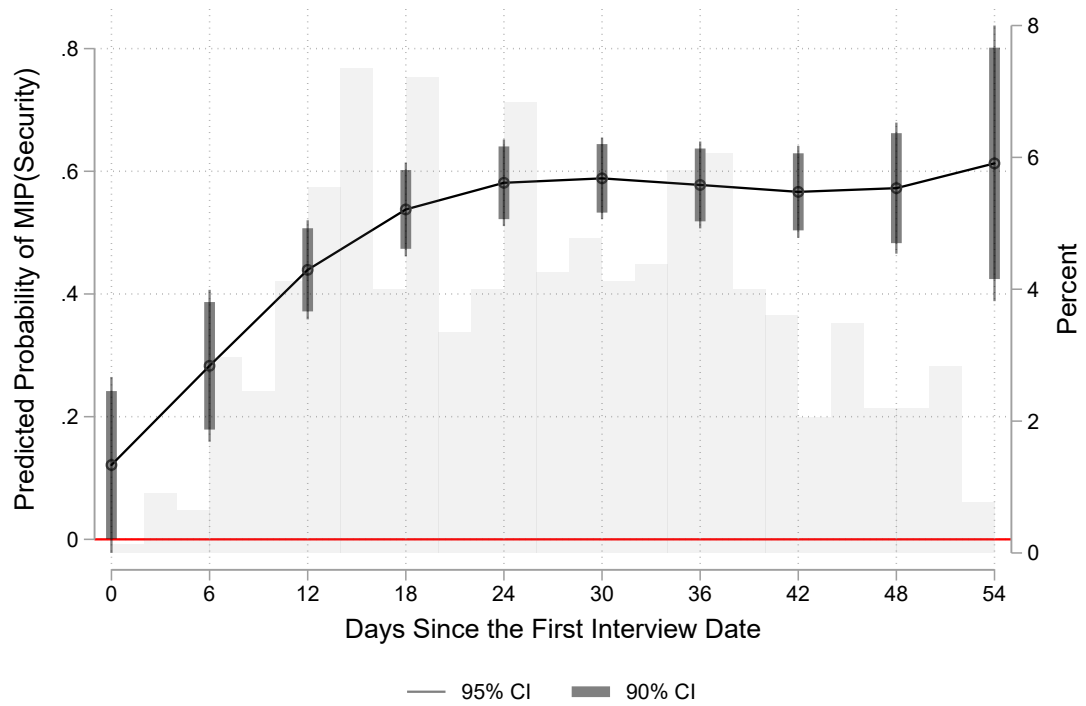


Table B.7 Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimates on Intended Vote for Major Parties

	CHP Vote	MHP Vote	HDP Vote
MIP(Security)	-2.771 (1.760)	0.602 (1.323)	-4.396** (1.832)
Political Sophistication	-0.085 (0.209)	0.319 (0.207)	-0.148 (0.193)
MIP(Security) $\times$ Political Sophistication	0.468 (0.327)	-0.043 (0.252)	0.683* (0.359)
Age	0.029** (0.013)	0.010 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.022)
Religiosity	-0.374*** (0.115)	-0.221** (0.090)	-0.229 (0.162)
Ideological Position	-1.149*** (0.146)	0.108 (0.073)	-1.197*** (0.169)
Female	-0.229 (0.395)	-0.145 (0.245)	-1.930*** (0.616)
Education	0.174 (0.185)	0.528*** (0.120)	-0.276 (0.300)
Kurdish	-0.297 (1.153)	-14.399*** (0.527)	5.558*** (0.857)
Negative Economic Evaluations	1.898*** (0.356)	1.761*** (0.258)	2.043*** (0.526)
Constant	5.269*** (1.967)	-5.562*** (1.506)	6.564*** (2.306)
N		732	
Log-likelihood		-396.244	
AIC		858.488	
BIC		1010.149	
* p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01, two tailed tests.			
Robust standard errors in parentheses			
Note: Intended vote for AKP is the base outcome			