



RESEARCH NOTES

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Turkey's Political Uncertainty

IMPLICATIONS OF THE JUNE 2015
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

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Studying the June 7 election results is useful, as it reveals interesting trends in Turkey's electoral behavior especially as Turkey prepares for potential early elections later this year. This paper evaluates the results through the micro lens of the provincial results, offering insight into the wide-ranging variables that significantly affected voter behavior. It maps the shifts of support bases for the country's main parties—AKP, CHP, MHP, and HDP—in order to determine where support was higher or lower than the national average. After defining the eight electoral regions that constitute Turkey's electoral landscape, the paper analyzes where the largest shifts in electoral support occurred and the sustainability of these changes in voter behavior. The study also presents the elections' potential short- and long-term implications for the AKP and President Erdogan; Turkish domestic politics, including the Kurds; and Turkish foreign policy, including Syria and the United States.

For the purposes of this study, the authors chose to use the provincial totals listed in Table 2 rather than published national totals displayed in Table 1.¹ All analysis in this paper reflects the figures listed in Tables 2 and 3.

1. All tables reflect official election results as published by Haberturk, <http://www.haberturk.com/secim/secim2015/genel-secim>.

Introduction

On June 7, 2015, Turkey's governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) lost its thirteen-year parliamentary majority in general elections, dropping 9.4 percentage points compared to the 2011 elections. This was the first time since the AKP's ascension to power in 2002 that support for the party decreased. Although the AKP had the highest number of total electoral votes, the party actually lost 69 parliamentary seats.

Meanwhile, Turkey's Kurdish population earned its biggest voice ever in national politics, as the HDP, which absorbed its sister Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in 2014, received 13.0% of overall votes. This surpassed the 10% electoral threshold required for parliamentary representation and translates into 80 parliamentary seats, tying the HDP and MHP as Turkey's third largest political group.

Table 1. 2015: Published National Tallies

| | NATIONAL VOTES | NATIONAL AVERAGE | PARLIAMENT SEATS | % NATIONAL LEGISLATURE |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| AKP | 18,864,864 | 40.9% | 258 | 46.9% |
| CHP | 11,518,070 | 25.0% | 132 | 24.0% |
| MHP | 7,519,168 | 16.3% | 80 | 14.5% |
| HDP | 6,057,507 | 13.1% | 80 | 14.5% |
| OTHER | 2,200,030 | 4.8% | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 46,159,639 | | | |

The rise of the HDP as a new player in parliamentary politics has created a complex political landscape, requiring the formation of a coalition or minority government. Previous legislatures since 2002 had had as few as two or three parties in them, affording the AKP enough seats to form a government on its own.

Several factors played a role in these surprising electoral shifts, primarily growing dissatisfaction with the AKP, particularly the leadership style of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, former prime minister and AKP leader, who was elected president in August 2014. Conservative Kurds, upset by Ankara's failure to help the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani when it came under Islamic State attack in October 2014, seem to have abandoned the AKP for the HDP. The HDP also benefited from a migration of CHP voters as well as first time voters, some of them attracted by the HDP's liberal message, and some of them secularists who seem to have voted tactically to help the HDP cross the 10% threshold. Furthermore, nationalist Turkish voters upset with Erdogan's efforts in the Kurdish Peace Process and negotiations with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) seem to have defected from the AKP to the MHP.

Upset by the election outcome, President Erdogan has been pushing behind the scenes for early elections. Some analysts suggest that Ankara's recent campaign against the PKK is intended to weaken the HDP in case of early polls. The HDP is the political arm of the Kurdish movement in Turkey, though both a product of and subservient to the PKK. The Turkish president is counting on the HDP being unable to renounce PKK violence, a stance he hopes could cost the HDP the electoral threshold in early elections, since its lib-

eral voters could flee the party. If the HDP fails to reach the threshold, the AKP would pick up its seats as the second most powerful party in the Kurdish provinces, endowing Erdogan's party once again with a legislative majority.

June Results

Compared to the 2011 elections, decrease in vote share and parliamentary seats were the highest for the AKP. The CHP's national average decreased by .8 points and the party lost 3 seats. The MHP's national average increased by 3.5 points in 2015 and the party picked up 27 additional seats. The largest gains were for the HDP, whose support increased nearly twofold with 55 additional deputies.

Due to the rise of the HDP, conservative Kurdish voters defected from the AKP, creating the greatest AKP losses in Turkey's southeast and largely removing the AKP's presence in the Kurdish-dominated region. The AKP and MHP's ideological proximity and similarly conservative rhetoric allowed the MHP to gain where the AKP lost. Both parties share a similar rural, conservative, and nationalist voter base, with AKP supporters prioritizing Islamic values and MHP supporters prioritizing the Turkish identity. Historically, right-wing voters have shifted their allegiance between the two parties rather than shifting to Turkey's political left.

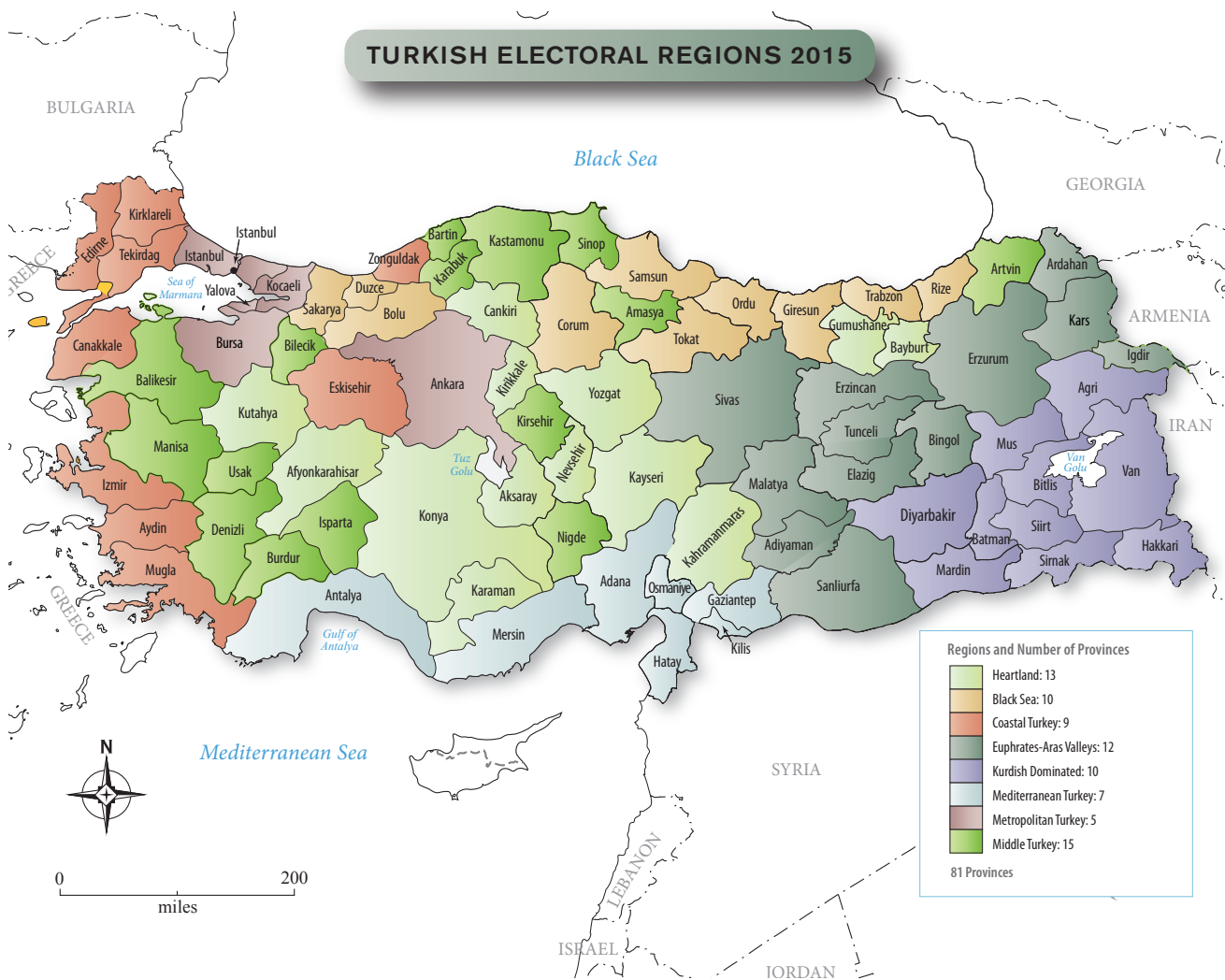
Voter turnout was 86.6%, the highest since the AKP's ascension to power, increasing 4.1% from 2011.

Table 2. Summary 2015/2011: Published Provincial Data

| | 2015 | | | | 2011 | | | |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | NATIONAL VOTES | NATIONAL AVERAGE | PARLIAMENT SEATS | % NATIONAL LEGISLATURE | NATIONAL VOTES | NATIONAL AVERAGE | PARLIAMENT SEATS | % NATIONAL LEGISLATURE |
| AKP | 18,135,262 | 40.4% | 258 | 46.9% | 21,399,281 | 49.8 | 327 | 59.5% |
| CHP | 11,338,730 | 25.2% | 132 | 24.0% | 11,154,972 | 26.0 | 135 | 24.5% |
| MHP | 7,423,011 | 16.5% | 80 | 14.5% | 5,585,513 | 13.0 | 53 | 9.6% |
| HDP | 5,846,255 | 13.0% | 80 | 14.5% | 2,709,029 | 6.3 | 35 | 6.4% |
| OTHER | 2,187,482 | 4.9% | 0 | 0.0% | 2,092,978 | 4.9 | 0 | 0.0% |
| TOTAL | 44,930,740 | | | | 42,941,773 | | | |

Table 3. Regional Analysis 2015/2011

| | 2015 ELECTION 44,930,740 TOTAL VOTES | | | | | | 2011 ELECTION 42,941,773 TOTAL VOTES | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | REGIONAL VOTES | % NATIONAL VOTE | % REGIONAL VOTE | PROVINCIAL SUPPORT (%) | PARLIAMENT SEATS | % NATIONAL LEGISLATURE | % REGIONAL LEGISLATURE | % NATIONAL VOTE | % REGIONAL VOTE | PROVINCIAL SUPPORT (%) | PARLIAMENT SEATS | % NATIONAL LEGISLATURE | % REGIONAL LEGISLATURE |
| Metropolitan Turkey | 14,439,571 | 32.1% | | | 151 | 27.5% | | 31.9% | | | 147 | 26.7% | |
| AKP | 6,023,221 | | 41.7% | 39-46 | 70 | 46.4% | | 50.0% | 47-52 | 82 | 55.8% | | |
| CHP | 4,169,558 | | 28.9% | 24-29 | 48 | 31.8% | | 30.1% | 24-32 | 48 | 32.7% | | |
| MHP | 1,993,566 | | 13.8% | 11-19 | 20 | 13.2% | | 11.3% | 9-14 | 14 | 9.5% | | |
| HDP | 1,383,870 | | 9.6% | 5-12 | 13 | 8.6% | | 3.5% | 0-5 | 3 | 2.0% | | |
| OTHER | 869,356 | | 6.0% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 5.1% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Coastal Turkey | 6,175,859 | 13.7% | | | 66 | 12.0% | | 13.7% | | | 66 | 12.0% | |
| AKP | 1,778,468 | | 28.8% | 23-37 | 21 | 31.8% | | 37.1% | 27-47 | 29 | 43.9% | | |
| CHP | 2,725,990 | | 44.1% | 39-53 | 33 | 50.0% | | 42.7% | 37-52 | 31 | 47.0% | | |
| MHP | 984,802 | | 15.9% | 13-21 | 10 | 15.2% | | 13.1% | 6-18 | 6 | 9.1% | | |
| HDP | 436,392 | | 7.1% | 1-10 | 2 | 3.0% | | 2.7% | 0-4 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| OTHER | 250,207 | | 4.1% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 4.4% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Middle Turkey | 4,343,752 | 9.7% | | | 55 | 10.0% | | 9.9% | | | 56 | 10.2% | |
| AKP | 1,772,631 | | 40.8% | 36-48 | 25 | 45.5% | | 49.1% | 42-57 | 33 | 58.9% | | |
| CHP | 1,248,848 | | 28.8% | 17-35 | 17 | 30.9% | | 28.0% | 14-35 | 16 | 28.6% | | |
| MHP | 1,000,416 | | 23.0% | 16-32 | 13 | 23.6% | | 16.9% | 8-27 | 7 | 12.5% | | |
| HDP | 146,551 | | 3.4% | 0-6 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0.6% | 0-2 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| OTHER | 175,306 | | 4.0% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 5.4% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Euphrates-Aras Valleys | 3,211,590 | 7.1% | | | 52 | 9.5% | | 7.2% | | | 53 | 9.6% | |
| AKP | 1,578,727 | | 49.2% | 10-58 | 31 | 59.6% | | 62.5% | 15-69 | 40 | 75.5% | | |
| CHP | 305,629 | | 9.5% | 1-25 | 3 | 5.8% | | 12.6% | 1-57 | 7 | 13.2% | | |
| MHP | 413,014 | | 12.9% | 2-27 | 3 | 5.8% | | 9.1% | 1-34 | 2 | 3.8% | | |
| HDP | 751,768 | | 23.4% | 1-60 | 15 | 28.8% | | 11.4% | 0-31 | 4 | 7.5% | | |
| OTHER | 162,452 | | 5.1% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 4.4% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Heartland | 4,521,707 | 10.1% | | | 61 | 11.1% | | 10.3% | | | 61 | 11.1% | |
| AKP | 2,629,082 | | 58.1% | 50-65 | 43 | 70.5% | | 65.9% | 57-69 | 50 | 82.0% | | |
| CHP | 500,111 | | 11.1% | 2-16 | 3 | 4.9% | | 12.1% | 3-18 | 4 | 6.6% | | |
| MHP | 1,065,052 | | 23.6% | 16-32 | 15 | 24.6% | | 16.3% | 13-24 | 7 | 11.5% | | |
| HDP | 120,779 | | 2.7% | 0-5 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0.0% | 0-0 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| OTHER | 206,683 | | 4.6% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 5.7% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Black Sea | 3,744,553 | 8.3% | | | 49 | 8.9% | | 8.7% | | | 50 | 90.9% | |
| AKP | 2,056,339 | | 54.9% | 51-66 | 33 | 67.3% | | 60.8% | 55-68 | 37 | 74.0% | | |
| CHP | 784,440 | | 20.9% | 15-28 | 10 | 20.4% | | 20.2% | 12-24 | 9 | 18.0% | | |
| MHP | 660,525 | | 17.6% | 8-21 | 6 | 12.2% | | 13.1% | 7-16 | 4 | 8.0% | | |
| HDP | 54,032 | | 1.4% | 0-2 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0.0% | 0-0 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| OTHER | 189,217 | | 5.1% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 5.9% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Kurdish Dominated | 2,275,804 | 5.1% | | | 49 | 8.9% | | 6.0% | | | 50 | 9.1% | |
| AKP | 279,668 | | 12.3% | 8-30 | 7 | 14.3% | | 36.2% | 16-48 | 25 | 50.0% | | |
| CHP | 23,579 | | 1.0% | 0-1 | 0 | 0.0% | | 3.2% | 0-4 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| MHP | 41,743 | | 1.8% | 1-3 | 0 | 0.0% | | 1.7% | 0-4 | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| HDP | 1,824,551 | | 80.2% | 60-85 | 42 | 85.7% | | 55.5% | 40-79 | 25 | 50.0% | | |
| OTHER | 106,263 | | 4.7% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 3.5% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |
| Mediterranean Turkey | 6,217,904 | 13.8% | | | 67 | 12.2% | | 12.3% | | | 67 | 12.2% | |
| AKP | 2,017,126 | | 32.4% | 29-49 | 27 | 40.3% | | 42.3% | 32-61 | 34 | 50.7% | | |
| CHP | 1,580,575 | | 25.4% | 7-36 | 18 | 26.9% | | 29.8% | 11-38 | 19 | 28.4% | | |
| MHP | 1,263,893 | | 20.3% | 14-41 | 15 | 22.4% | | 19.2% | 9-41 | 12 | 17.9% | | |
| HDP | 1,128,312 | | 18.1% | 3-17 | 7 | 10.4% | | 4.9% | 0-9 | 2 | 3.0% | | |
| OTHER | 227,998 | | 3.7% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | 3.9% | NA | 0 | 0.0% | | |



Turkey's Electoral Geography

Although Turkey is divided into 81 provinces that are usually named after the largest city and administrative center, it does not have official electoral regions. In order to understand the dynamic shift in electoral behaviors, the authors defined eight electoral regions: Metropolitan Turkey, Coastal Turkey, Middle Turkey, Heartland, Black Sea, Mediterranean Turkey, Kurdish-Dominated, and Euphrates-Aras Valleys.

Metropolitan Turkey

- 5 provinces: Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul, Kocaeli, and Yalova

- This region, comprising the megalithic Istanbul conurbation and Ankara, has the largest electorate. It includes Turkey's key metropolitan areas, including its largest city, Istanbul; second largest city, Ankara, and fourth largest city, Bursa; as well as Kocaeli, the country's most industrialized province, and the nearby smaller Yalova province, both sandwiched between Istanbul and Bursa.

Although the AKP performed best in the region, it suffered the greatest loss of support, 8.3%, compared to 2011. The CHP performed above its national average, tallying 4–5 percentage points higher in Ankara, Istanbul, and Yalova.

Both the MHP and HDP vastly increased their presence in Metropolitan Turkey, a departure from 2011. Conservative migrants from the Heartland and Black Sea regions as well as AKP defectors have helped the MHP establish a much stronger presence in the region.

Traditionally, regional support for the MHP varies among provinces, particularly in the instances of Ankara and Istanbul; whereas in Istanbul, the MHP performs under its national average due its large middle class, and in Ankara, above its national average due to its majority conservative central Anatolian and nationalist demographic. While regional HDP support remains low, it exceeds that of the MHP in Istanbul, where the HDP received 12.4% of the vote to the MHP's 11.1%.

At least some of the uptick in HDP support seems to have come from CHP losses, which occurred in all of Metropolitan Turkey, save for Bursa. The Metropolitan region remains contested between the winner, AKP, and close runner-up, CHP.

Coastal Turkey

- 9 provinces: Aydin, Canakkale, Edirne, Eskisehir, Izmir, Kirklareli, Mugla, Tekirdag, and Zonguldak
- This region includes Izmir, Turkey's third largest city, urban areas along Turkey's Aegean coast and immediate interior, as well as the provinces in European Turkey (Thrace). In addition, Eskisehir, a liberal university town in Central Turkey, and Zonguldak, a Black Sea coastal province known for its strong working class and mining traditions, are included.

Many Coastal Turkish provinces have sizable populations of Balkan immigrants, descendants of Turks and other Muslims expelled from the Balkan Peninsula, intermixed with the local ethnic Turkish community. In some cases, such as Kirklareli, Canakkale, Tekirdag, and Edirne provinces, the Balkan immigrants constitute a plurality and even majority of the population, endowing the region with a liberal and open brand of Islam. The economy in this region is among Turkey's most advanced and is responsible,

next to Metropolitan Turkey, for much of Turkey's international trade, tourism, and service industries, as well as export-oriented farming. These two regions have been the recipients of much immigration in recent years due to the variety of economic prospects.

This is Turkey's secular stronghold and responsible for most of the CHP's electoral support, performing 18.9% above its national average with 44.1% of the vote, an increase of 1.5 percentage points from 2011.

Despite performing second-highest and 3.7% above its national average, AKP support dropped by 8.3 points from 2011. Its loss in the region was mirrored by increased support for the MHP, which is now a close third party in the province. MHP support is up by 2.9 points since the 2011 election, while the HDP, still a distant fourth, nevertheless saw a 4.4 point gain in support, compared to 2011, when the party ran as the BDP.

The HDP successfully gained a foothold in Izmir, where it pulled one parliamentary seat from the AKP and another from the CHP, earning 10.3% of the Izmir vote. Eskisehir, a geographic outlier, experienced an 8.2% decrease in AKP support and a 3.8% increase in CHP support, which made the CHP the dominant party in Eskisehir with 39.3% of the vote.

Middle Turkey

- 15 provinces: Amasya, Artvin, Balikesir, Bartin, Bilecik, Burdur, Denizli, Isparta, Karabuk, Kastamonu, Kirsehir, Manisa, Nigde, Sinop, and Usak
- Middle Turkey is Turkey's economic and social median. The provinces in the region are economically diverse, yet united in their electoral trends and ethnic composition. Provinces such as Bilecik, Manisa, Usak, Isparta, and Burdur in the west have growing industrial economies. Middle Turkey's provinces along the Black Sea coast have mixed agricultural and industrial economies. Kirsehir, Nigde, and Artvin have underdeveloped, predominantly agrarian economies, performing similarly to the Heartland region. Overall, Middle Turkey is more prosperous than the Heartland and Black Sea regions, but less so than Coastal

or Metropolitan Turkey. All of the provinces have a Sunni Turkish majority, though Artvin has an Azeri community that supports the MHP and a Georgian community that supports the CHP. Kirsehir has a sizable Kurdish community. And in the inner Aegean provinces, Balkan immigrants mix with Sunni Turks.

This region is a three-way between the AKP, CHP, and MHP, with a minimal HDP presence. Three-way races were the strongest in Middle Turkey's westernmost provinces—Balıkesir, Bilecik, Manisa, and Uşak—with the AKP receiving 36–38% of the vote share, CHP receiving 28–34%, and MHP 20–27%. HDP support increased in all four provinces but remained minimal with 1–6% of vote share.

Overall the AKP is the dominant party, retaining 36–48% of the vote in each province, though performing below the national average in Burdur. Although the AKP is often the strongest party, the combination of CHP and MHP votes is greater than the number of AKP votes, and AKP support is overall declining.

The CHP performed at 3.6% above the party's national average, with minimal gains compared to 2011. Support for the MHP is strongly increasing, as overall the party performed 6.5% above its national average. HDP support is among the lowest, less than a quarter of its national average.

Euphrates-Aras Valleys

- 12 provinces: Adiyaman, Ardahan, Bingöl, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Iğdir, Kars, Malatya, Sanliurfa, Sivas, and Tunceli
- This is Turkey's most diverse and complicated electoral region, a mostly rural area with some industrial base wherein votes are cast along ethnic lines in numerous permutations. The region itself spans the Euphrates and Aras River belts from Sanliurfa in the south to Ardahan in the north, and includes Kurdish, Turkish, Azeri, Arab, Sunni, Alevi, and Shiite populations.

The Kurds are linguistically divided into Kurmanchi and Zaza-speaking communities, and then divided again religiously as Sunni and Alevi communities

within the respective Kurmanchi and Zaza populations. The Turks are divided into Sunni and Alevi communities, while the Azeris in Kars, Iğdir, and Ardahan are Shiite. The Arabs in Urfa are Sunni.

Broadly speaking, Sunni Turks in this region vote for nationalist, Islamist, and conservative parties, namely the AKP and MHP, while Alevi Turks have supported secular political movements, namely the CHP. Traditionally speaking, Sunni Zazas in this region vote for the AKP and Alevi Zazas for the CHP. In 2015, the majority of the Alevi Zazas voted for the HDP, a first for that party, as did an overwhelming majority of the Sunni Zazas. Traditionally speaking, Alevi Kurds here have voted for the secular CHP, but in 2015, at least some of them moved from that party to throw their lot behind the HDP, joining the Sunni Kurds. Smaller populations of Azeris, particularly in the Aras River belt, support the MHP, while the Arabs in Urfa vote for the AKP.

In the provinces of Adiyaman, Ardahan, Erzincan, Iğdir, Kars, Malatya, and Sivas, Sunni Turks and Kurds mix with Alevi Turks and Kurds. In each of these provinces, with the exception of Ardahan, Iğdir, and Kars along the Aras Valley, the AKP is the dominant party due to the conservative Sunni Turkish majority, earning between 52% and 58.6% of the vote. However, in Ardahan and Kars, Sunni and Alevi Kurds are more numerous, and in Iğdir Sunni Kurds are the majority, rendering the HDP the dominant party with 30.4%, 44%, and 56.7%, respectively. In addition, the CHP and MHP presence in these provinces is attributed to Alevi Turks strongly supporting the CHP, and the Azeris, along with a nationalist minority of the Sunni Turkish population, backing the MHP.

Voting in Sanliurfa amounts to a competition between Sunni Arabs and Sunni Kurmanchi- and Zaza-speaking Kurds. Arabs increasingly support the conservative policies of the AKP, as well as its Syria policy, while the Kurds in the province have been shifting their support from the AKP to the HDP in reaction to the AKP's failure to help Kobani when that town came under attack by the Islamic State. This response also included shifting Sunni Zaza Kurdish support from the AKP to the HDP. The AKP lost support in all thirteen of Sanliurfa's districts, and the

following six districts flipped from being AKP dominated to HDP dominated: Birecik, Bozova, Ceylanpinar, Hilvan, Siverek, and Viransehir. On June 7, the AKP earned 46.7% and the HDP 38.5% of the vote in Sanliurfa. This breakdown almost mirrors the Arab-Kurd (Zaza and Kurmanchi) ratio in this province.

Bingol and Tunceli are where Sunni and Alevi Zazas mix, with Alevis a solid majority in the first province and Sunnis in the latter. In Tunceli and Bingol, Alevi Zazas had traditionally supported the CHP due to its secular policies. However, the shift in support of the Alevi Zazas from the CHP to the HDP led to the CHP's defeat in the province; the HDP took 60.9% of the vote in Tunceli compared to 22.2% in 2011. In Bingol, Sunni Zazas mostly remained faithful to the AKP, allowing the party to garner 46.9% of the vote in comparison to the HDP's 41%. Notably, the AKP still has some support among the Sunni Zazas in Bingol, allowing the party to win that province.

The Euphrates-Aras Valley's most conservative provinces, Elazig and Erzurum, are mainly comprised of Sunni Turks and Alevi Kurds. However, the former are much more numerous in these provinces. The AKP earned 52.9% and 52% and the MHP garnered 20.9% and 23.5% in Elazig and Erzurum, respectively. The Alevi Kurdish population supported the HDP, helping them become the third player in these provinces. The Euphrates-Aras Valley Region is increasingly becoming a battleground between the AKP and HDP, given the ethnic and religious mix of its provinces and the additional impact of the Syrian war in Urfa.

Heartland

- 13 provinces: Afyonkarahisar, Aksaray, Bayburt, Cankiri, Gumushane, Kahramanmaras, Karaman, Kayseri, Kirikkale, Konya, Kutahya, Nevsehir, and Yozgat
- Comprising most of the provinces in Turkey's rural, conservative, and right-wing nationalist interior, the Heartland region is Turkey's politically and culturally conservative core. The economy is overwhelmingly agrarian, though with a

rising industrial component in provinces such as Konya, Kutahya, Karaman, Kirikkale, Kahramanmaras, and Kayseri. Konya is Turkey's largest conservative city and is among the "Anatolian Tigers," or cities in Anatolia that have experienced a great deal of industrialization. The Heartland has a solid Sunni Turkish majority interspersed with communities of Alevi Turks.

Since 2011, the Heartland has changed from being an AKP stronghold to being shared by both the AKP and MHP. In the Heartland, Turkey's political left is almost nonexistent, with the combined vote of the AKP and the MHP at or above 80%, making this the most conservative region. While the Heartland has not yet become a two-way split between the AKP and MHP, the MHP's large gains in this region indicate AKP vulnerability and the possibility for future two-party competition.

Most notably, combined AKP-MHP votes topped 88% in the Bayburt, Aksaray, Gumushane, and Cankiri provinces, respectively, and within Bayburt, the aggregate AKP-MHP vote reached 92.3%. Within the four provinces, several districts reached a 90% combined AKP-MHP vote, including Cankiri's district Kizilirmak, Orta, and Yaprakli; Bayburt's central district; Aksaray's district Sariyahsi; and Gumushane's districts Kelkit, Kose, Kurtun, and Siran. Moreover, in the provinces of Aksaray, Kahramanmaras, Kayseri, Kirikkale, Kutahya, Nevsehir, and Yozgat, the AKP lost 7.7–12.5 percentage points and the MHP gained 6.7–2.3 points.

In the provinces of Aksaray, Gumushane, Kayseri, Kirikkale, and Nevsehir, the MHP's gains were enough to draw away six MP positions from the AKP. Indeed, AKP losses were nearly equal (within 1%) to MHP gains in Afyonkarahisar, Cankiri, Gumushane, Kahramanmaras, Konya, and Kutahya.

Overall the CHP remains weak, receiving less than 15% of the vote in all of the Heartland provinces save for Afyonkarahisar, Karaman, and Kirikkale. Notably, in the Kose district of Gumushane, the CHP only garnered 0.7% of the vote. The HDP, however, is nearly absent, apart from Kahramanmaras and Konya, the first home of a small native

Kurdish community and the second home of Kurds settled in this province during the Ottoman Empire.

Black Sea

- 10 provinces: Bolu, Corum, Duzce, Giresun, Ordu, Rize, Sakarya, Samsun, Tokat, and Trabzon
- Comprising two main areas, provinces along the Central-Eastern Black Sea and those in the Sakarya River Valley, this electoral region is Turkey's rural, conservative north. The economy is primarily a mix of industry, agriculture, and fishing, as in Trabzon, although the provinces in the Sakarya River Valley—Sakarya, Duzce, and Bolu—are more industrialized. The region has a Sunni Turkish majority, with large Alevi communities on the central Black Sea coast, Circassian, Abkhaz, and Georgian communities in the Sakarya River Valley and Central Black Sea provinces, as well as Laz and Georgian communities in the Eastern Black Sea littoral. The Black Sea region is more developed than the Kurdish-Dominated region, yet overall poorer and less industrialized than Middle Turkey.

In terms of voter behavior, the conservative-leaning Black Sea region appears similar to the similarly conservative Heartland. However, the relatively stronger presence of left-wing nationalism in this region, hence support for the CHP, renders the provinces in this region distinct, as does the nature of very strong AKP support: the Black Sea region is the AKP's strongest base among all electoral regions. However, the provinces of the Black Sea region are clustered differently than those of Middle Turkey because AKP support is greater than combined CHP and MHP support.

Because the Black Sea region is conservative-nationalist (left- and right-wing), the provinces are AKP bastions with support far above the party's national average, although the AKP experienced a 5.9 point decrease from 2011. The CHP, coming in second, increased slightly from 20.2% in 2011 to 20.9% in 2015 and support for the MHP increased from 13.1% in 2011 to 17.6% in 2015. Unlike other regions, the HDP presence in the Black Sea region remains minor. Eth-

nically, these provinces are dominated by nationalist Turks, and as an electoral region, the Black Sea region can be defined by the near absence of the HDP.

Kurdish-Dominated

- 10 provinces: Agri, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Sirtak, and Van
- The Kurdish-Dominated region spans the predominantly Kurmanchi-speaking Kurdish areas of southeastern and eastern Turkey. It includes Turkey's most underdeveloped economy and has the lowest level of infrastructure and industrial development. The economy is overwhelmingly agrarian, although there are some large cities in this region, such as Diyarbakir with nearly one million inhabitants. The region comprises mostly Sunni Kurds, some Turks, an Arab minority in Mardin and Siirt, and smaller Christian communities in the provinces along the Turkish-Syrian border, such as Mardin.

The Kurdish-Dominated region has largely become a single-party region in 2015 due to the large defection of conservative Sunni Kurds from the AKP to the HDP. For example, in 2011 the AKP garnered 48% of the vote in Siirt and 50.7% in Bitlis, while Kurdish independents won 42.5% and 40.2% of the vote, respectively. In 2015, AKP support in Siirt and Bitlis dropped to 28.2% and 30.9%, while HDP support in the same provinces increased to 65.8% and 60.4%, respectively.

Districts such as Sirvan in Siirt and Guroymak in traditionally pro-AKP and conservative Bitlis experienced comparable shifts. The AKP vote in 2011 in Sirvan and Guroymak was 75.1% and 55.9%, while Kurdish independents in the same districts earned 16.7% and 38.3%. In 2015, AKP support dropped to 45.4% in Sirvan and 26.3% in Guroymak. The HDP numbers increased to 48.1% and 69.5% in Sirvan and Guroymak, respectively. Overall, the greatest losses suffered by the AKP were in this region. The CHP and MHP have nearly no presence in the Kurdish-Dominated region, each garnering less than 2% of the vote.

Mediterranean Turkey

- 7 provinces: Adana, Antalya, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Mersin, and Osmaniye
- Mediterranean Turkey includes all the provinces that border Turkey's southern coast in addition to the immediate interior Taurus/Amanos Mountain provinces of Osmaniye, Kilis, and Gaziantep. This region has a diverse economy and ethnic composition. Provinces like Antalya and Mersin have prosperous tourism and export-oriented agriculture, trade, and shipping industries, while Kilis and Hatay remain largely underdeveloped and agrarian. One defining factor is that they all have sizable communities of Turkmens, i.e. Turks who have a vivid memory of their tribal past similar to highland Scots. Another characteristic is that these provinces are home to sizable communities of recent Kurdish immigrants from southeastern and eastern Turkey. Going east, Gaziantep and Hatay also have autochthonous Kurdish communities.

This electoral region is the only region known for four-way party competition, and uniquely, only the MHP performs well above its national average. The AKP, CHP, and HDP each perform below or slightly below their national averages.

The electorate in Mediterranean Turkey is more evenly divided among the four main parties than in any other region of Turkey. In provinces such as Adana and Mersin, the margin between the largest parties—the AKP in Adana and the CHP in Mersin—and the HDP narrows to 15.5% and 11.1%, respectively. With the exception of Mersin and Osmaniye, the AKP is the dominant party with 34.9%. Osmaniye is the only province in the country in which the MHP is the dominant party at 41.1%, as it is home to MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli.

Analysis of AKP Support

The AKP is Turkey's Islamist party, led by President Erdogan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu. The party was founded in 2001 by former president Abdullah Gül, Bulent Arinc, and President Erdogan out of the Islamist Virtue Party, elements from the Motherland

Party, and other centrist movements. The AKP has been the majority party in Turkey since 2002, before losing majority control in the current election cycle. By combining Turkey's rural, nationalist core with pro-business elements, the AKP enjoyed 13 years of single-party rule on a foundation of Islamic values and comprehensive economic reform, contributing to the rise of the first majority middle class in Turkey. During this election cycle, the AKP prioritized the creation of a new constitution for Turkey rooted in a more executive-style presidency and continuing the Kurdish Peace Process, though Erdogan's ambitions to change Turkey's parliamentary democracy into a presidential system with himself at the helm overshadowed these overtures.

Regional Support

The AKP lost support in every electoral region, dropping from 49.8% in 2011 to 40.4% in 2015. The party's largest losses were in the Kurdish-Dominated region, while losses were minimal in the Black Sea region.

The AKP's results in Metropolitan Turkey mirrored the party's national results. Only in Yalova did the AKP perform below its national average. In Kocaeli, the AKP garnered 46.3% of the vote, 5.9% above the national average. AKP losses were greatest in both Bursa and Istanbul, in which support declined 9.1% and 8.5%, respectively. The AKP lost a total of 12 MPs in the region.

In Coastal Turkey, the AKP performed below its national average in every province; the party's results were at least 10% below the national average in Aydin, Edirne, Izmir, Kizilirmak, and Mugla provinces. AKP losses were at least 15% below the national average in both Edirne and Izmir. After gradually building support in Coastal Turkey during the 2007 and 2011 elections through a policy of appealing to the center, the AKP has imploded in this region. This can be explained through President Erdogan's polarizing extreme-right rhetoric in the run-up to the June 7 elections, which aimed to build a right-wing majority for the AKP, but also alienated the Coastal Turks. The AKP has lost seven MPs in this region when compared to 2011.

Party support remained steadier in Middle Turkey, declining 8.3 percentage points. The party's results were at least 7% above its national average in Karabuk, Kastamonu, Nigde, and Sinop and at least 3% below its national average in Manisa. The net change in MPs was an eight-seat loss.

The AKP's results were varied in the Euphrates-Aras Valley region. The party lost 13.3% of the vote, yet performed at least 10% above its national average in Adiyaman, Elazig, Erzurum, Malatya, and Sivas and 10% below its national average in Ardahan, Igdir, and Tunceli. In total, the AKP lost nine MPs from the Euphrates-Aras Valley region.

AKP support declined 7.8% in the Heartland region from 2011, though the party performed at least 18% above the national average in Aksaray, Bayburt, Cankiri, Kahramanmaras, Konya, and Yozgat and 12% above its national average in all provinces save Kirikkale. In total, the party lost seven MPs.

Losses were smallest for the AKP in the Black Sea region, the sole AKP bastion, where the party regularly received above 50% of overall votes, including in Rize, the home province of President Erdogan. Results were 16.3%–26.4% above the national average in Duzce, Rize, Sakarya, and Trabzon and at least 10% above the party's national average in all 10 provinces. However, the AKP still lost 5.9 percentage points and four MP positions in this region.

The AKP's greatest decline in support was in the Kurdish-Dominated region, where the party decreased from 36.2% in 2011 to 12.3% in 2015. The AKP's single greatest decrease, 66.8%, was in Agri, while the lowest decrease, 39%, was in Bitlis. Results were at least 20% below the national average in Agri, Batman, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Sirnak, and Van. This translated into the loss of 18 MPs.

In Mediterranean Turkey, support for the AKP decreased from 42.3% in 2011 to 32.4% in 2015, and dropped by at least 10 points in Mersin. Losses were most drastic in Adana and Gaziantep, where the AKP lost 25.1% and 24.1% of the vote, respectively. The party had a net loss of seven MP positions.

Lessons for the AKP

The AKP's election results are indicative of some unsettling trends for the party's leadership and, indeed, vulnerability in the coming years. The unpopularity of the proposed presidential system and the divisive nature of President Erdogan, combined with the rise of the HDP, abandonment of the Kurdish Peace Process, and a number of poor economic conditions and corruption allegations led to the party's decisive defeat. At the same time, however, they provide insight into ways the party could improve itself and recapture the vitality that enabled it to dominate Turkish politics for 13 years.

Though Article 101 of the Turkish constitution stipulates that the president cannot have a party affiliation, Erdogan has continued to control the AKP through his appointment of prime minister and party head Ahmet Davutoglu. Ironically, Erdogan's continued exercise of power from the presidential palace has stripped his ambition of two-thirds parliamentary representation, which would have allowed the AKP to amend the constitution, possibly changing Turkey's government from a parliamentary to a presidential system with Erdogan at the helm. The unpopularity of the presidential system, both within the AKP electorate and without, in addition to these results, indicates that Erdogan may need to abandon his constitutional ambitions.

The defection of Kurdish voters to the HDP and nationalist voters to the MHP presents a serious quandary for the AKP, as in previous election cycles the party enjoyed support from both groups. With Erdogan beginning the Kurdish Peace Process and opening Turkey's borders to 1.8 million Syrian refugees, the AKP alienated some of its nationalist base, allowing for large MHP gains. In addition, due to the AKP's inaction in Kobani, Kurds felt alienated by the AKP and defected to the HDP. It is possible that the AKP could recapture either conservative Kurds or nationalistic Turkish voters, depending on how the party leadership continues, or discontinues, the Kurdish Peace Process. However, the party can no longer have both.

Yet perhaps the most important factor for the AKP is the economy. A storm of poor economic conditions,

including a declining lira and a high unemployment rate, made party losses likely, if not guaranteed, before the election. The AKP's single-party rule and success has been based upon a strong upward trend in economic development and the party has never entered elections before with an underperforming economy. To recover its voter share in future or early elections, the AKP needs to reprioritize economic development and find new programs that allow for both economic mobility and social welfare.

Analysis of CHP Support

The founding party of modern Turkey, the CHP has long appealed to Turkey's secular and liberal-religious voters. The party's stable electorate includes larger cities and coastal regions, as well as middle class voters, educated women, academics and intellectuals, and some labor unions. Since the 2010 election of party leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the CHP has made efforts to redefine its ideological platform to honor both its Kemalist roots and Turkey's evolving social democracy. However, the party has been largely criticized by Turkish Kurds, particularly in the southeast, for failing to develop policies that acknowledge and respect their basic rights. The CHP has also been perceived as lacking the strong internal cohesion necessary to inspire Turks domestically and promote Turkey internationally, though the party's new leadership has made strides to eliminate this deficiency.

Regional Support

Overall, the CHP largely stagnated, earning 25.2%, down 0.8% from 2011. Despite this marginal decline, CHP increased its MP seat allocation by three to 135 and won 10 of Turkey's 81 provinces, up from seven in 2011, due to significant decreases in AKP support.

The CHP lost support in five of the eight electoral districts between 2011 and 2015: Euphrates-Aras Valley (3.1% decrease), Heartland (1% decrease), Kurdish-Dominated (2.2% decrease), Mediterranean Turkey (4.4% decrease), and Metropolitan Turkey (1.2% decrease).

As predicted, the CHP performed best in Coastal Turkey, winning 44.1%, 18.9 percentage points above

the national average. While Coastal Turkey was the only region where the CHP performed significantly above the national average, party support increased in two additional regions, Black Sea and Middle Turkey, a 0.7% increase and a 0.8% increase, respectively.

Provincially, the CHP performed at least 12.6% higher than its national average in all nine Coastal provinces. The CHP performed at least 5% higher than its national average in two provinces in Mediterranean Turkey (Antalya and Hatay) and four provinces in Middle Turkey (Artvin, Balikesir, Bartin, and Denizli). In addition, it performed at least 2.2% higher than its national average in one province in the Black Sea region (Ordu), two provinces in Mediterranean Turkey (Adana and Mersin), four provinces in Metropolitan Turkey (Ankara, Bursa, Istanbul, and Yalova), and four provinces in Middle Turkey (Bilecik, Manisa, Sinop, and Usak).

On the contrary, CHP performance was 12.6 points lower than its national average in six provinces in the Euphrates-Aras Valley (Adiyaman, Bingol, Elazig, Erzurum, Igdır, and Kars), nine provinces in Heartland (Aksaray, Bayburt, Cankiri, Gumushane, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Konya, Kutahya, and Yozgat), all 11 provinces in Kurdish-Dominated (Agri, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Igdır, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Sirnak, and Van), and one province in Mediterranean Turkey (Kilis). The CHP performed 5% worse than its national tally in four provinces in the Black Sea (Duzce, Rize, Sakarya, Trabzon), nine provinces in Euphrates-Aras Valley (Sivas), five provinces in Heartland (Afyon, Karaman, Kayseri, Kirikkale, and Nevsehir), two provinces in Mediterranean Turkey (Gaziantep and Osmaniye), and three provinces in Middle Turkey (Karabuk, Kastamonu, and Kirsehir). Less significant, the CHP performed 2.5% worse than its national average in three provinces in the Black Sea region (Corum, Giresun, and Tokat), two provinces in Euphrates-Aras Valley (Ardahan and Tunceli), and two provinces in Middle Turkey (Isparta and Nigde).

Of these losses, the most significant is in Tunceli, Kilicdaroglu's home province. In 2011, one year after Kilicdaroglu's ascension to power, the CHP received 57.5% of votes, a 40.9 point increase from the 16.6%

vote share in 2007. However, in 2015, the CHP support decreased by 36.9 points to 20.6% of votes. This is due to the Alevi Zazas' shift in support from CHP to HDP, a move indicative of strong identification with "Kurdishness" across the broader Kurdish community in Turkey, a first in Turkish politics.

Lessons for the CHP

The June results indicate that the CHP has maintained majority representation in Thrace and along the Aegean coast. While the party performed well in Mediterranean, Metropolitan, and Middle Turkey, strong provincial losses enabled the HDP to gain where the AKP lost, rather than the CHP, the main opposition. With the formation of the HDP, the CHP has essentially been erased from Turkey's southeast, losing any remaining political appeal in the Kurdish-Dominated region, with the Euphrates-Aras Valley trending toward the same electoral behavior.

The HDP has absorbed much of the CHP's previous support from liberals and Alevi Kurds. This requires the party to build bases in larger provinces dominated by two-party competition between the AKP and CHP: Adana, Antalya, and Hatay. In all three provinces, the CHP was within 2% of AKP's vote share, and in order to increase these figures, the party would need to strengthen its standing by building broader alliances.

Analysis of MHP Support

The MHP is Turkey's right-wing nationalist party; it prioritizes the preservation of the Turkish identity and state. Under longtime leader Devlet Bahçeli, the party has moved away from its neo-fascist roots of the 1970s and strict Kemalist-style secularism, instead embracing conservative, Islamic values and democratic institutions. The party shares a voter base with the AKP and enjoys strong support from rural, Sunni Turks and Turkmens. In addition, the party's emphasis on the "Turkish identity" has earned the support of Turkey's Azeri community in the northeast. This election cycle, the party continued to voice its opposition to the AKP-started Kurdish Peace Process, which it perceives to be a threat to the unity of Turkey, and

proposed a variety of economic reforms targeting its agrarian voter base.

Regional Support

Support for the MHP increased from 13.0% in 2011 to 16.5% in 2015. This 3.5 point increase translated into 80 MP positions in Turkey's parliament. The party's strongest performance was in the Heartland region, while its poorest performance was in the Kurdish-Dominated region. Support from the MHP increased in every electoral region.

The MHP's support in Metropolitan Turkey was 13.8% below the national average, 2.5% above the national average in Yalova, and over 5% below the national average in Istanbul. Overall, support in Metropolitan Turkey increased 2.5%, and the single largest provincial increase, from 11.9% to 15.3%, was in Kocaeli. Such gains helped the party gain six MPs from Metropolitan Turkey.

In Coastal Turkey, support for the MHP was at least 3% above its national average in Canakkale and Kırklareli. The party also saw a regional increase of 2.8% and increased support in all provinces except Aydın, where support declined 0.1%. This surge in support led to an additional four MP positions from this region.

The MHP earned 23% of the vote in Middle Turkey. Its share of the electorate increased in all provinces in this region save for Bilecik, where party support declined 5.3%. The MHP achieved at least 17.6% support in Bilecik, Isparta, Karabük, Kastamonu, Kirsehir, Nigde, and Usak, while the only province where the MHP was within 1% of its national average was Sinop. Overall, the MHP gained six seats in the parliament from Middle Turkey.

MHP results in the Euphrates-Aras Valley region are more varied. The party earned 12.9% in 2015, increasing its support by 3.8% from 2011. However, the party performed over 1.7% below its national average in Adiyaman, Bingöl, Sanliurfa, and Tunceli, all Kurdish and Arab majority provinces, but 1.7% above its national average in Iğdir, home to an Azeri community. The MHP's overall share of the vote decreased in Adiyaman, Ardahan, Iğdir, and Kars,

though it increased by over 6.6% in every other province. Support for the party was at least 0.7% above its national average only in Elazığ and Erzurum, both Sunni Turkish majority provinces. From the Euphrates-Aras Valley, the MHP picked up one additional MP position.

The MHP's strongest performance was in the Heartland provinces, where it received 23.5% of the vote and increased its voter share by 7.3% from 2011. The party earned at least 1.7% above its national average in Aksaray, Bayburt, Cankiri, Gumushane, Kayseri, Kirikkale, Kutahya, Nevşehir, and Yozgat and was within 1% of its national average only in Konya. Party support increased by at least 3.3% in all provinces, earning the MHP an additional eight seats in parliament.

Support for the MHP increased from 13.1% to 17.6% in the Black Sea region, 1.1% above its national average. The Black Sea experienced the lowest increase in MHP support of all electoral regions. The party's performance was at least 0.3% above its national average in Giresun, Sakarya, Tokat, and Trabzon and at least 0.3% below its national average in Ordu and Rize. Party support increased in all provinces except Bolu and Düzce, where it lost 0.1% and 2.5% of the vote, respectively. The MHP gained an additional two MPs from the region.

Mediterranean Turkey, with its large Turkmen community, is the MHP's second stronghold and includes the only province in which the MHP was a majority, Osmaniye, the home of Devlet Bahçeli. The party received 22% of the vote. The party performed at least 1.2% above its national average in Kilis, Mersin, and Osmaniye, and 0.3% below its national average only in Hatay, an ethnically diverse province with large numbers of Arabs, Sunnis, and Alawites. Party support increased in every province save Osmaniye, where support declined 0.4%. Such increases helped the MHP gain three MP positions from Mediterranean Turkey.

The MHP's worst performance was in the Kurdish-Dominated region, where the party received 1.8% of the vote. Yet, the support for the MHP increased by 0.1% from 2011. The party performed at least 14.5% below its national average in all provinces.

Lessons for the MHP

The MHP's successes, though sizable, were more due to AKP losses and missteps than to the party's ability to win over new voters with new initiatives. Conservatives, dissatisfied by the Kurdish Peace Process and the Open Door Policy vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees, perceived the MHP as the only viable option. That being said, the MHP needs to focus heavily on drawing voters away from the AKP and outperform the CHP in Mediterranean Turkey in order to potentially become Turkey's main opposition party.

The election results indicate that the MHP has been nearly ousted from northeastern Turkey, namely the Aras Valley, previously an MHP stronghold due to a large Azeri and conservative Turkish presence. To recoup these losses, the party needs a stronger presence in the Black Sea and Heartland regions. Despite being distinctly "right-wing," the Black Sea region has an AKP majority, with the MHP often a distant second. In subsequent election cycles, the MHP could prioritize drawing away AKP voters to bolster its own share of the electorate, turning the region into one shared by both the AKP and MHP, much like the Heartland.

The increasing MHP presence in Mediterranean Turkey is also telling. After winning a majority in Osmaniye and besting the CHP in Gaziantep and Kilis, the MHP could seek to become the second party in Mediterranean Turkey by drawing away from declining AKP and CHP support, in the long term even rendering the region a two-way competition between the MHP and HDP. Overall, the party must continue to present itself as the sole outlet for conservative voters to remain viable in the coming election cycles.

Analysis of HDP Support

Founded in 2012, the HDP is Turkey's newest political actor—a left-wing, liberal, pro-Kurdish party that unifies multiple political factions previously represented by independent candidates. While the HDP's emphasis is on fundamentally shifting Turkish-Kurdish relations, it has harnessed much support from

left-wing supporters due to a strong party platform encompassing minority rights including women and LGBTQ, labor parties, environmentalists, and academics and intellectuals. Of its 80 MP seats, 37.5%, or 30 seats, are held by women, the highest ratio among Turkey's political parties. The HDP is also the only party to be cochaired, requiring one chairman and one chairwoman. Despite the party's objective to represent all of Turkey, the HDP was previously criticized for focusing on the interests of Kurds in southeastern Turkey, where the party is strongly supported.

The June elections were largely an HDP victory, as the party made a true effort to broaden its base beyond the Kurdish southeast, marking the first time that a Kurdish political party surpassed the 10% electoral threshold required for parliamentary representation. Earning more than double the 6.5% of votes in 2011, the HDP received 13.0% of the vote, translating into 80 MP seats—up from 35 in 2011—and tying with the MHP as Turkey's third-largest political party. The HDP's success is largely responsible for derailing the AKP from being the majority party and therefore abolishing Erdogan's ambitions of turning Turkey's political system from parliamentary to presidential.

Regional Support

Overall, the HDP won 11 total provinces, up from 7 in 2015, including 10 provinces in the Kurdish-Dominated region and Tunceli in the Euphrates-Aras Valley. In the Kurdish-Dominated region, support was 80.2% overall, nearly five times the national average, and 23.4%, nearly double the national average, in the Euphrates-Aras Valley.

In the Kurdish-Dominated region, the vote share was at least four times the national average (i.e., at least 52%) in all 10 provinces (Agri, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Sirnak, and Van). The most significant gains were made in Hakkari, Siirt, and Sirnak, provinces in Turkey's southeastern-most corner bordering Iran and Iraq. In the Euphrates-Aras Valley, support was above the national average in eight of 11 provinces (Adiyaman, Ardahan, Bingol, Elazig, Erzurum, Kars, Sanliurfa, and Tunceli). Bingol and Tunceli received the highest percent of votes—41.0% and 61.0%, respectively. While party

support in Turkey's right-wing-dominated regions—Black Sea, Heartland, and Middle Turkey—remained negligible overall, it is significant that party support increased in all eight electoral regions.

The HDP's parliamentary representation increased in five of the eight electoral districts, excluding the Black Sea, Heartland, and Middle Turkey regions. In Coastal Turkey, the HDP gained two of the district's 66 MP seats, marking the first time a Kurdish party was represented in parliament in this region. This shift was due to support in Izmir, which increased 5.5% from 2011, to an overall vote of 10.3% in 2015. In Euphrates-Aras Valley, MP seats more than tripled, up from four in 2011 to 15 in 2015.

The strongest gain was in the Kurdish-Dominated region, up 17 seats from 25 in 2011 to 42 in 2015. The largest MP increase was in Diyarbakir, the unofficial capital of Turkey's Kurdish regions, and all but one seat was taken directly from the AKP. Significant MP representation was also gained in Mediterranean Turkey and Metropolitan Turkey. Representation more than tripled in Mediterranean Turkey, increasing from two to seven seats, while 10 seats were gained in Metropolitan Turkey, up from three to 13. Eleven of these 13 seats are from Istanbul, while the other two are from Ankara and Bursa.

The HDP has single-party status in the Kurdish-Dominated region and a strong position in the Euphrates-Aras Valley. The party is nearly nonexistent in the Black Sea and Heartland regions, earning below an average of 2% of the vote.

Lessons for the HDP

The June election results were a proclamation of sustained political representation for Turkey's Kurdish minority. Tied as Turkey's third-largest political party, the HDP has legitimized the representation of Kurds in parliament and amplified the efforts of additional minorities to gain similar political validity.

In order to remain a competitor in Turkey's political arena, the HDP must make efforts to broaden its ideological and geographical support away from its current stronghold: Kurdish voters in Turkey's southeast. Increased migration of Kurds into the larger cities of Izmir, Istanbul, Antalya, Adana, and Mersin

present the HDP with opportunities for political and ethnic integration in a way that has not been previously afforded.

The HDP's cochairman Selahattin Demirtas will also need to make serious strides to increase cooperation and dialogue between the HDP and Turkey's primary political parties. Rather than focusing on policies of isolation, including those of minority rights, the HDP could broaden its scope to refocus on inclusive policies of integration and liberal politics.

Implications for U.S. Policy

The analysis of the Turkish election results suggests the emergence of a four-party system in the country composed of secularist/social democrat (CHP), Islamist/conservative (AKP), Turkish nationalist/conservative (MHP), and Kurdish nationalist/liberal (HDP) poles. Each of these poles is an integral part of the Turkish body politic. Given the hung composition of the Turkish parliament and the divided nature of the Turkish society, an analysis of the electoral regions reveals that not one single movement but a combination of these movements will rule Turkey in the coming years, including in potential early elections later this year.

DEMOCRACY AND EUROPE. Regarding specific issues, both the CHP and HDP will likely push for European Union accession and liberal democratic reforms, while any combination including the MHP or the AKP would be unlikely to prioritize EU accession.

KURDS. On the Kurdish issue, a government including the HDP will prioritize Kurdish language and political rights, while a potential MHP government would oppose such rights, with the AKP and CHP falling in between the two parties; the AKP's current hard stance against the PKK and on the Peace Process appears to be a tactical move, aimed at bolstering President Erdogan's strongman image in the run-up to potential early polls.

RUSSIA. All four parties are likely to be reticent regarding an aggressive stance toward Russia. All Turks, including the Kurds, share a historically rooted fear of Russia stretching back to the days of the Ottoman Empire when the sultans fought nearly twenty winless wars against Moscow.

SYRIA AND ISIS. The four parties present the most diversity in terms of priorities regarding Syria and ISIS policy. The AKP's priority will be ousting the Assad regime, and Turkey will remain distracted from fighting ISIS under future AKP governments. The CHP will take nearly the opposite stance when in government: deeply concerned over ISIS, the party could even seek to reach a modus vivendi with the Assad regime. The MHP will prioritize the Turkmens in Syria as its overarching Syria policy objective, sometimes shadowing other objectives. Conversely, the HDP will prioritize the welfare of the Syrian Kurds, making this an overarching goal of its Syria policy, but also casting itself as ISIS's archenemy.

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