

**THE DECISION TO STAY LOYAL OR DEFECT: THE IMPACT OF
POLARIZATION ON VOTE SWITCHING**

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**THE DECISION TO STAY LOYAL OR DEFECT: THE IMPACT OF
POLARIZATION ON VOTE SWITCHING**

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ABSTRACT

THE DECISION TO STAY LOYAL OR DEFECT: THE IMPACT OF POLARIZATION ON VOTE SWITCHING

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This thesis examines the effects of individuals' policy evaluations on their propensity to switch parties between two consecutive elections as conditional on individuals' varying levels of affective polarization by employing a cross-sectional dataset. The theoretical framework builds upon policy and non-policy related voting theories, including but not limited to partisan identification. Albeit varying extents, the findings suggest that the effect of policy evaluations on the probability of switching votes decreases as affective polarization increases. The analyses present empirical support for the main hypothesis for policy domains such as economy, health, and business and industry, thus presenting a counter-argument towards issue voting and economic voting theories. Another important finding of this thesis is the difference in probabilities of vote switching between lowly and highly polarized systems. Furthermore, due to its polarized party and electoral politics, Turkish voting behavior in the June 2015 elections presents itself as an intriguing puzzle and a case study for this research. The empirical analyses suggest that even though the deteriorating economic conditions were one of the main determinants of the elections, their effect on vote switching are alleviated by high and increasing levels of affective polarization the country. Lastly, empirical evidence is provided for the effect of individuals' policy evaluations on their vote choices conditionally on varying levels of affective polarization.

ÖZET

SADIK KALMA YA DA AYRILMA KARARI: KUTUPLAŞMANIN OY DEĞİŞTİRME ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Kutuplaşma, Seçmen Davranışı, Oy Değiştirme Kararı, Konuya Oy Verme, Seçimler

Bu tez, çok sayıda ülkeyi içeren, kesitsel bir veriseti kullanarak, bireylerin çeşitli siyasalara dair değerlendirmelerinin, duygusal polarizasyon düzeylerine bağlı olarak, peş peşe iki seçim arasındaki oy değiştirme eğilimleri üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektedir. Tezin teorik çerçevesi literatürde uzun yıllardır tartışıl原因en siyasa temelli ve ideolojik oy verme davranışları ile bireylerin diğer tutum ve görüşleri, örn. partizan kimlikleri, ile ilgili oy verme teorileri üzerine kurulmaktadır. Ampirik bulgular siyasa temelli değerlendirmelerinin oy değiştirme olasılığı üzerindeki etkisinin, incelenen siyasalar arasında değişmekle birlikte, bireylerin duygusal kutuplaşma seviyeleri arttıkça azaldığını göstermektedir. Ampirik analizler, ekonomi, sağlık, iş ve sanayi gibi siyasa alanlarında ana hipotezlere destek sunmakta, böylelikle oy verme ve ekonomik oy verme teorilerine karşı sonuçlar öne sürmektedir. Bu tezin bir diğer önemli bulgusu da düşük ve yüksek seviyelerde parti kutuplaşmasına sahip sistemler arasında oy değiştirme olasılıklarında gözlemlenen farklılıklardır. Ayrıca, yüksek oranda kutuplaşmış partiler ve seçmenleri sebebiyle, Haziran 2015 seçimlerinde Türkiye’de oy kullanma davranışı bu araştırma için ilgi çekici bir bulmaca ve ayrı bir vaka çalışması olarak incelenmektedir. Türkiye üzerine yapılan ampirik analizler, seçim öncesi kötüleşen makroekonomik göstergeler seçimin ana belirleyicilerinden biri olsa da bu durumun seçmenlerin oy tercihlerini değiştirmedeki etkisinin ülkedeki yüksek ve artan duygusal kutuplaşma ile sınırlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Son olarak, bireylerin politika değerlendirmelerinin farklı seviyelerdeki duygusal kutuplaşmalarına bağlı olarak, oy tercihleri üzerindeki etkisine yönelik ampirik bulgular sunulmaktadır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Polarization has been a source of lively discussion for the political scientists for over a time. The existing literature provide many implications of polarization, both on systemic level and individual-level. Voting behavior of individuals is one of the most influential subject of the implications that are in question. Polarization is claimed to be a phenomenon that greatly shapes voting behavior, even though there is no agreement among political scientists on the direction and form of its effect. It has been examined with regard to many aspects of behavior, extending from vote preferences to the decision to turn out or not. This thesis addresses only one of its implications, namely, vote switching.

The incentives and motivations that drive people to remain loyal to their parties or choose to defect are important and partially unanswered questions in the political science literature. Two broad categories of explanations on voting behavior stand out in the existing literature, policy (Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1985; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) and non-policy related theories (Garner and Palmer 2011; Layman and Carsey 2002; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006) that include, but are not limited to, partisan identifications. The effect of polarization on the issue has been a debated one in the literature. One camp (e.g., Lachat (2008; 2011)) argues that divergence of policy options increases the clarity and saliency of issues and thus increases the possibility of issue voting. The others (e.g., Rogowski (2018)), however, claim that as the distance between candidates increases and differences among them are reinforced, voters become more likely to pursue motivated reasoning based their on political identities. Here in this thesis, informed by the existing literature (Lachat 2015; Moral and Zhirnov 2018), I offer a theoretical account of a unified model on voting behavior. I investigated how non-policy considerations interact with policy considerations in individuals' calculus of voting and more specifically, how it affects individuals' decision to remain loyal to their party or choose to defect. More specifically, I argue that the effect of voters' issue considerations on their probability of vote switching decreases as affective polarization increases. There are existing studies that unify both spatial voting and behavioral models,

and how policy and non-policy considerations interactively explain voting behavior. However, the effect of this interaction on the decision to change one's vote has been a relatively unexplored area of study.

Moreover, differently from the existing literature on polarization and vote switching, I adopt Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes' (2012) concept "affective polarization" instead of elite polarization, because polarization is not only about elites or politicians getting to have diverged issue or ideological stances that help clarify their offerings for voters. Polarization, by providing clearer cues and information, also causes voters to adopt positions that are more in line with their parties' positions (Levendusky 2010). Voters do not only adopt the positions of their parties, but also become more likely to pursue motivated reasoning based on their political identities (Rogowski 2018). Hence, political identities evolve into social identities that are deeply integrated with economic, social, and religious identities (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Thus, I ask whether it is still possible to switch between parties when an individual is highly polarized -a kind of polarization that goes further beyond ideological preferences and discontent with the way policies are made.

In order to address this hypothesis, this thesis employs the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 4 dataset that provide the opportunity to conduct a cross-sectional analysis. The effective sample consists of 23 post-elections surveys that were conducted between 2011 and 2015.

This thesis consists of two main chapters. The first one, covers a cross-sectional empirical analysis on how affective polarization mediates the effect of policy evaluations of individuals on their propensity to switch votes. In addition, the difference in individuals' voting behavior in low and highly polarized countries is discussed. Firstly, the existing theories on issue voting and vote switching are discussed and building on previous studies, the theoretical framework for the impact of polarization and voters' policy considerations on vote switching is given. After explaining the research design, I elaborate on the empirical findings of the chapter. The second one focuses on the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey. The *sui generis* character of Turkish politics that originates from its political history that consist of repetitive interruptions (Çarkoğlu, Heper, and Sayarı 2012), made it difficult to come up with a general pattern in voting behavior of citizens. However, all efforts to provide an explanation place a piece on the puzzle of Turkish voting behavior and this chapter aims to be one of those pieces. To investigate the determinants of voting behavior in Turkey, CSES Module 4 is used in this chapter as well; this module only covers June 2015 elections that took place in Turkey, hence its explanatory power is limited to an episode. Main themes of the Turkish voting behavior, namely issue

voting and economic voting theories, are addressed in this chapter, with regard to the context of June 2015 elections. In the concluding section, the overall findings are discussed and then the relevance and impact of this thesis is elaborated. Despite varying extents, empirical findings provide evidence for the main hypothesis, which claimed that the effects of policy evaluations of individuals on the propensity to switch parties decrease as affective polarization increase. Also, the findings also point to a difference in the predicted probabilities of switching parties among the lowly and highly polarized party systems.



2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF POLARIZATION ON VOTE SWITCHING

In this chapter, I look into how affective polarization mediates the effect of policy evaluations of individuals on their vote choices, by using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset Module 4. I argue that the effects of policy considerations on the probability to switch votes decrease as affective polarization of individuals increase.

Why and in which cases people remain loyal to their parties or choose to defect is an important and a partially unanswered question in the political science literature. There are several studies that look into the effect of elite polarization on electoral volatility, since increasing levels of polarization throughout the world has made polarization to be one of the most noteworthy topics of political science in recent years. It has been considered an important feature of party systems, however, most studies consider polarization to be a systemic factor affecting all individuals in a country in the same manner. Instead of analyzing the effect of elite polarization on electoral volatility at a systemic level, I adopt a different measure of polarization, namely affective polarization and I investigate how non-policy considerations interact with policy considerations in individuals' calculus of voting. Interactive models of policy and non-policy considerations have been suggested in the previous literature, but it has been offered to explain vote choice not vote switches.

I will firstly review the existing literature on vote switching and issue voting. I will then elaborate on expectations regarding the effect on affective polarization on vote switching by building upon previous literature. In the following sections of this chapter, data collection and research design will be explained, and empirical findings will be discussed. Lastly, I will conclude by discussing the importance of polarization as a determinant of the decision to stay loyal or defect.

2.1 Literature Review

Elections are the first step towards a representative democracy and they provide citizens with the agency to shape politics and public policy in their country. Ideally, candidates offer or promise a set of policies and citizens choose the candidate that they find most relatable among different alternatives.(Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1985; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). Elections are often considered to connect opinions with policies, based on the assumption that voters take policies into consideration when voting (Page and Brody 1972). The topic is critical to not only for our understanding of how voters perceive candidates' offerings and behave but also crucial for the quality and responsiveness of democracies (Powell 2000).

2.1.1 Issue Voting

There has been two strands of explanatory determinants of voting behavior in the literature: one being the spatial element and the other one is behavioral factors that include, but are not limited to, party identifications (Lachat 2015). The theories on spatial voting has been an issue that has kept political scientists busy for a long time. Traditional, or the so-called Downsian, spatial theory assumes that voters and candidates can be represented at a point, which reflects their preferred set of policies, on a single (ideological) dimension, and voters choose the candidate that is closest to them on this spectrum (Downs 1957). According to the spatial theory, the utility of a voter voting for a preferred candidate increases as the distance between their positions decreases. Directional theory of voting assumes that, on the other hand, voters do not specifically have a preferred set of policy alternatives that they look for a shorter distance between their position and a candidate's position, but rather it argues that when a candidate's stance is in the same direction, the voters look for a strong position on the issue (Macdonald, Listhaug, and Rabinowitz 1991; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989).

As an alternative and an extension to the debate, Pardos-Prado and Dinas (2010) and Kedar (2006) look into the institutional and systemic factors that affect voting behavior. The authors assert that the directional theory works better in polarized systems while the proximity model works better in less polarized systems. Lachat

(2008; 2011) also investigates systemic determinants of issue voting. He specifically analyzes the relationship between electoral competitiveness and issue voting. Electoral competitiveness is characterized by three elements: fragmentation and polarization, and proportionality of the electoral system. The previous literature on party system polarization and voting has suggested that higher levels of polarization reinforce issue voting because higher polarization relates to a more diverged and emphasized position on issues which enables voters to better identify issue positions and act accordingly. Lachat's (2011) theory is also in line with this expectation. He argues that proximity voting should be stronger in electorally competitive countries, where the system is polarized, fragmented, and proportional; whereas voting based on party identification should decrease with higher levels of polarization, fragmentation, and proportionality because voters would be more informed and rely less on heuristics. Polarization is assumed to be a factor increasing clarity for citizens. With increasing polarization, as the candidates move away from each other, the positions and opinions of the elite would be better elucidated in the eyes of the public. Ideological concepts would be easier to understand and access through providing more cueing information. This, arguably, does not only clarify ideological positions, but also makes citizens more politically sophisticated (Lachat 2008). The author even asserts that in intense campaigns, voters rely less on party identification and make more sophisticated decisions (Lachat 2008).

However, although polarization emphasizes the saliency of candidates' issue positions, this view neglects the fact that polarization causes individuals to base their policy and issue preferences on their party identifications and group interests (Garner and Palmer 2011). An important question should be, whether voters prefer a party because it stands close to their issue or policy preferences, or whether they prefer a policy because their party emphasize it.

Bafumi and Shapiro (2009) also exhibit that voters are linking their party identifications, ideologies and issue positions together. Partisanship and ideology have come to be deeply integrated with economic, social and religious issues, party identities become more than just a political preference. Levendusky (2010), for example, shows that when the elite provide more polarized cues, the partisans adopt positions more in line with their party's. It is no doubt that elite polarization provides clearer cues on issue positions, however, this does not deny the possibility that it is party identification that matters, not the issue itself. In line with this expectation, it is demonstrated that in the context of polarization, voters are more likely to change their policy preferences instead of their party identifications (Layman and Carsey 2002; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006). Moreover, Rogowski (2018) argues that voters' responsiveness to policy considerations are decreased by the increasing diver-

gence among candidates in elections. As the distance between candidates increases and differences among them are reinforced, voters become more likely to pursue motivated reasoning based on political identities (Rogowski 2018). Rogowski (2018) reasons that increased divergence between candidates increases the stakes that are related to the outcome of the elections. Due to this increased stakes, voters' propensity of making a decision based on their social group identities increases as well.

As mentioned above, there are two separate branches in the literature to explain voting behavior of individuals. Recent studies emphasize that presenting a unified model, behavior could provide better explanatory tools to understand voting behavior (Lachat 2008, 2015; Moral and Zhirnov 2018). Moral and Zhirnov (2018) argue that non-policy considerations, including party identification, are as important as issue considerations and when they are taken into account in a single model, fits of empirical models to data increase significantly. Lachat (2008; 2015), differently from the previous literature that brings together spatial voting and partisan voting (Highton 2010; Jessee 2010), proposes an interactive model, in which spatial factors interact with party identification instead of an additive one. He demonstrates that although voters' utility from their preferred candidates are unchanged by their distance to issues, their utility from voting for other parties gets affected by their distance to issues. In line with this proposal, here I also build on an interactive model that combines policy and non-policy considerations to explain voting behavior of individuals. The literature on spatial voting or issue voting mostly builds on how and what kind of an impact issue proximity has on vote choice of individuals. Yet, its effect on the decision to change one's vote or to switch between parties has been a relatively unexplored field of research.

2.1.2 Vote Switching

It has been argued that elite polarization sustains itself by turning detached or independent voters into loyal partisans. When the elite are polarized, their distinction from each other, in terms of ideological and policy offerings, becomes more clarified and explicit to the electorate. This, arguably, makes voters more attentive towards the differences between parties and candidates, in turn, decreases the indifference or uncertainty in evaluation of parties and candidates (Lacy and Markovich 2016; Smidt 2017). By providing certainty and clarity, elite polarization makes it easier for voters to form party and group attachments (Smidt 2017). Smidt (2017) states that

since the 1980s there has been an increase in elite polarization in the United States and an accompanying decrease in floating voters among the electorate. The result is a constituency that is less decisive and ambivalent. Similar empirical evidence is also presented by Tavits (2005), exhibiting reduced shifts in vote choices and increased polarization with parties having a consolidated support in post-Communist Europe.

One of the explanations for electoral volatility in the literature emanates from economic voting theory, which suggests that voters react to economic indicators and hold the incumbent responsible for the performance of the economy and punish them when they find the economic performance of the incumbent unsuccessful. Dassonneville and Hooghe (2017) provide empirical evidence with a time-series cross-sectional analysis for the existence of association between economic indicators and electoral volatility on an aggregate level. In other studies, political scientists look at individual-level factors that explain party switching and investigate the relationship between political dissatisfaction and the probability of switching (Dassonneville, Blais, and Dejaeghere 2015) or its relation to dissatisfaction with the performance of a party (Söderlund 2008). Another determinant of party switching is argued to be strategic voting by Bischoff (2013). However, he uses systemic incentives for strategic voting, like electoral threshold, as a proxy.

There are a few studies that look into the individual-level factors that affect party switching. Dejaeghere and Dassonneville (2017) investigate whether political knowledge, political disaffection, and party identification affect why voters remain loyal or defect. Political sophistication is considered to be another determinant of vote switching. Dassonneville and Dejaeghere (2014) analyze the link between political sophistication and volatility by using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data. Floating voters have usually been considered “unsophisticated” for their unconsolidated voting decisions, however, their so-called unsophistication is questioned in the literature as well (Van der Meer et al. 2015). Van der Meer (2015) criticizes the arguments that consider floating voters erratic and whimsical. He argues that if voters are not willing to carefully evaluate and consider different options in their decision making, it would be difficult to talk about democratic accountability. Yet, on the other hand, it is put forth that high electoral volatility leads politicians to be in a constant need to satisfy the demands of their constituency (Van der Meer et al. 2015). Electoral volatility is seen as one of the predictors of cabinet instability, affecting the quality and predictability of policies (Tavits 2005). The whimsical demands of voters or fluctuations in party support hinders the parties from making long-term policy commitments that are necessary for a stable development (Tavits 2005). Thus, the issue of floating voters and electoral volatility are quite important for many reasons that go beyond political unsophistication or

sophistication.

Individual shifts in vote choice is usually considered to be a result of voters' lack or weak loyalty towards a party (Mustillo 2018). Elite polarization's effect on electoral volatility or vote switching cannot be denied, however it is not only the clarity of party policy offerings or ideological positions that lead voters to stay loyal to their parties or defect, it is the affective feeling that bonds a voter to his party. Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes (2012) come up with a different approach towards polarization, which is usually called "affective polarization". This alternative definition of polarization is based on the dislike or even loathing that individuals have towards the supporters of the opponent parties, and the like that they have towards their fellow supporters. Iyengar and Westwood (2015) present evidence from the US for the existence of partisan cues in non-political domains and politics going beyond ideological divergence in individuals' policy preferences. Hence, affective polarization transports politics into a different realm and strips it from being about policies and issues, instead makes it a social matter. It not only enforces growing dislike between different supporters of a party, but it is also a driver of increasing elite polarization by itself (Diermeier and Li 2019).

2.2 Theoretical Overview

The main line of this chapter is to understand the rationale behind individuals' change of mind in their vote choices. What are the determinants that lead a voter to change their party preference in a given election ? Or, what makes a voter remain loyal to a certain party ? Spatial voting theories such as proximity (Downs 1957) or directional theories (Enelow and Hinich 1985; Macdonald, Listhaug, and Rabinowitz 1991; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) have been addressing the question of whether closeness to an issue position on the ideological spectrum is a determining factor of voting behavior of individuals. Polarization, on the other hand, has also been considered to have an impact on spatial voting, although previous studies on the topic present conflicting theoretical expectations and empirical findings regarding the direction of its effect (Kedar 2006; Lachat 2008, 2011; Pardos-Prado and Dinas 2010; Rogowski 2018), its influence is certainly seen as undeniable in the literature. Polarization's effect on voting behavior is not only limited to vote choice, but its relationship with vote switching is considered to be an important field of

inquiry. Yet, how it affects individuals' policy considerations in their evaluation of remaining loyal to a party or switching to another one has been rather remained unexplored. In accordance with what Moral and Zhirnov (2018), and Lachat (2008; 2015) propose, here I offer a theoretical account of how affective polarization interacts with policy evaluations of individuals in determining their decision to remain loyal to their own party or to defect. However, my expectations are not in the same direction with Lachat's (2008; 2015). I adopt Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes' (2012) concept "affective polarization" instead of elite polarization, because polarization is not only about elites or politicians having diverged issue or ideological stances that help clarify their offerings for voters. Polarization, as already indicated in the previous section, by providing clearer cues and information, causes voters adopt positions that are more in line with their parties' positions (Levendusky 2010). Voters do not only adopt the positions of their parties, but also become more likely to pursue motivated reasoning based on political identities (Rogowski 2018). Thus, political identities, evolve into social identities that are deeply integrated with economic, social, and religious identities (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009).

For that reason, I ask the question whether it is still possible to switch between parties when an individual is highly polarized and not content with the way policies are made. As Rogowski (2018) suggests, I would expect voters' responsiveness to decrease as polarization increases, because, as identities get reinforced by affective polarization, individuals get more and more distant from each other and start to perceive the issue at stake a matter of "us vs them", as opposed to a merely political matter. With high levels of polarization, specifically affective polarization, voting behaviors of individuals do not explain their policy preferences but rather party preferences for its own sake. Powell (2000) argues, election choices are not always reflections of policy preferences. I argue that high levels of polarization is one of the important factors causing this failure in such reflective purpose of elections. Normatively, we would expect voters to evaluate government performance on specific issues and policies when making their vote decisions. Previous studies have considered and provided evidence for the association between vote switching and political satisfaction, government performance evaluation, or economic performance. However, none of those studies have looked into the interactive effect of polarization and policy evaluations on vote switching. When the voters are highly polarized, the elections and the competition between parties become a battle of field in which non-policy considerations come to the forefront. Hence, in this thesis, I look into how non-policy considerations interact with the policy considerations in individuals' calculus of voting and consequently, my hypothesis is as follows:

H_1 : The effect of voters' issue considerations of individuals on their probability of

vote switching decreases as affective polarization increases.

Building upon previous literature, I also look into the effect of polarization at a systemic level. In line with Pardos-Prado and Dinas (2010) and Kedar's (2006) expectations and contrary to Lachat's (2008; 2011) and Tavits' (2005), I expect issue voting to have a lower explanatory power in more polarized systems and work better in less polarized systems. Thus, I hypothesize:

H_2 : The probability of individual-level vote switching is lower in highly polarized party systems, than in lowly polarized systems.

2.3 Data and Research Design

In this chapter, I explain the data compilation process and research design of my thesis. Although most of the previous literature on the relationship between polarization and electoral volatility look into systemic factors, I investigate individual-level determinants of party switching, and hence, the unit of analysis is the individual. I employ the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data, which is a comprehensive dataset that covers many countries and thus provides me with an opportunity to conduct a cross-sectional analysis. I was only able to use Module 4 of CSES data because the questions that were needed for public expenditure evaluations were only asked in this module. The effective sample consists of 23 post-elections surveys that were conducted between 2011 and 2015.

The dependent variable is, vote switching between consecutive elections, is binary and scores 0 for those who remain loyal to a party and 1 for those who switch from one party to another in two consecutive elections. I use the recall question in the CSES that asks respondents which party they voted in the last elections. There is a limitation that has to be recognized here –recall questions might cause measurement error in the response process, because the respondents may not remember whom they voted for in the previous elections. However, in the absence of other data, this operationalization is the best I could.

The main independent variable, affective polarization, is measured in several ways in previous literature. The so-called feeling thermometer questions (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012) is one way of operationalization. Others include questions on inter-

party marriage or stereotypes of party supporters (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012). Due to lack of such questions in the CSES dataset, only the feeling thermometer is used to measure, affective polarization in this chapter. I operationalized this measure in three different ways: The first one is the difference between the like-dislike score a respondent assigns to the party she voted in the last elections and the average like-dislike score she assigned to the other parties. That is equal to the difference between in-group and out-group thermometer scores. The second one is that the difference between the maximum like-dislike score a respondent assigned to a party and the minimum score she assigned to another one. Lastly, I used the standard deviation of all like-dislike scores a respondent assigns to all parties. I have chosen the standard deviation measure as my main independent variable. To be able to account for the possibility of a systematic difference in the polarization score of those who provided varied numbers (non-missing) answers, I included a control variable “number of parties placed”. I relegate sensitivity checks employing the alternative affective polarization measures to the Appendix A.

As mentioned above, affective polarization is not the only observable attitudinal consequence of polarization, Moral (2017) elaborates on the difference between perceived and actual party polarization, and building on his differentiation, I included (ideological) polarization by individual respondents in my models. Whether affective polarization and perceived polarization are a function of each other is a question that should be addressed in further studies, for the time being, I treated them as separate measures. Perceived polarization is the standard deviation of where each respondent places each party on the left-right ideological spectrum. Thus, it is the dispersion of how the respondents see parties in the system, which is a commonly employed measure e.g., Ezrow (2007). For party system polarization, on the other hand, I use the mean perceived polarization in a country. Another important variable that I included in my model is closeness to a party the respondents feel, because their partisan identification and its strength also has an effect on whether they remain loyal or not. I used the question asking for the “Degree of closeness to this party”. The variable takes three values: very close, somewhat close, not very close. Building on the existing literature, I also added political information and ideological extremity into the model. Voters’ level of political information and ideological extremity (where they place themselves on the ideological left-right spectrum) are usually considered as possible determinants of vote switching. Ideological extremity of individuals is measured as the distance (in absolute terms) from the mean point of self-placement of individuals in a country on the left-right spectrum. Education, gender, income level, and religiosity are also introduced as the other control variables.

Last but not least, my other main independent variable is evaluations of policies or issues. As a proxy, I used public expenditure evaluation and state of the economy questions in the CSES Module 4 dataset. There are 8 different questions on health, education, unemployment benefits, defense, old-age pension, business and industry, police and law, and welfare benefits. I recoded the responses so that the categories somewhat less than now and somewhat more than now are in the same category, also much more than now and much less than now are in the same category. As a result, I end up with three categories, one score (0) that indicates those who are content with the way things are going, the other (somewhat much/less than now) (1) marking those who wants some change and last one (much more/less than now) (2) marking those who want more drastic changes. Lastly, as a measure of economic performance, I adopted the question that asks respondents to evaluate the state of the economy. The economy variable ranges from 1 to 3, scoring 1 for those who say economy has gotten better, 2 for those who say it stayed the same and 3 for those who say it has gotten worse. All the policy evaluation scores range from content to discontent. The reason interaction term is introduced in my models is, I argue that the effect of policy considerations on the vote choice would take different values for varying levels of affective polarization.

The model specification is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote Switching} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Affective Polarization} \times \text{Policy Evaluation}) + \\ & \beta_2(\text{Affective Polarization}) + \beta_3(\text{Policy Evaluation}) + \beta_4(\text{Perceived Polarization}) + \\ & \beta_5(\text{Closeness to a Party}) + \beta_6(\text{Ideological Extremity}) + \\ & \beta_7(\text{Party System Polarization}) + \beta_8(\text{Political Information}) + \beta_9(\text{of Parties Placed}) + \\ & \beta_{10}(\text{Age}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Sex}) + \beta_{12}(\text{Education}) + \beta_{13}(\text{Religiosity}) + \beta_{14}(\text{Income}) + e \end{aligned}$$

The descriptive statistics of all the variables that are included in the model is reported below:

Table 2.1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
Vote Switch	0.29	0.46	0	1	7440
Affective Polarization (SD)	3.02	0.90	0	7.07	7440
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	3.01	1.01	0	7.07	7440
Closeness to Party	2.01	0.67	1	3	7440
Ideological Extremity	2.24	1.55	0.01	6.45	7440
Party System Polarization	4.89	0.49	2.83	5.73	7440
Health	1.16	0.73	0	2	7403
Education	1.14	0.74	0	2	7387

Unemployment Benefits	0.90	0.77	0	2	7320
Defense	0.87	0.77	0	2	7440
Old-Age Pensions	1.10	0.75	0	2	7377
Welfare Benefits	0.95	0.75	0	2	7121
Policy:Business & Industry	0.85	0.75	0	2	7217
Policy:Police & Law	0.83	0.73	0	2	7336
State of the Economy	2.26	0.73	1	3	7360
Political Information	0.87	2.07	-4	4	7440
Number of Parties Placed	6.86	1.19	2	9	7440
Age	53.83	16.08	18	98	7440
Sex	0.53	0.50	0	1	7440
Education	3.32	1.45	0	6	7440
Income	3.71	1.88	1	8	7440
Religiosity	2.51	0.95	1	4	7440

2.4 Empirical Analyses and Findings

To test my main hypothesis in this chapter, I conduct a logistic regression analysis for each issue evaluation variable. As estimator, logistic regression is employed due to the binary nature of the dependent variable, vote switch. To see how affective polarization mediates the effects of voters' issue evaluations on their decisions to remain loyal to their parties or not, I introduced a multiplicative interaction term of each issue and affective polarization in separate models. The regression estimates with robust standard errors are reported in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 below.

To begin with the estimates in Table 2.2, affective polarization has a significant negative effect on the probability of switching votes in models Health, Education, Business and Industry, but not in Economy. As the discontent in policies of health, business and industry, and state of the economy increases, the probability of switching parties increases. When we look at the coefficients of the interaction terms, although those in the models entitled health, business and industry and economy are in the expected direction, we do not see any statistically significant finding. The remaining models on the issues of defense, police and law, welfare and old-age pension are reported in Table 2.3. Again, affective polarization has a negative and

statistically significant effect in three of the models: Police and Law, Welfare, and Old-Age Pensions. Similarly, the policy evaluation variables of defense and welfare benefits have statistically significant effects on the probability of vote switching, in the expected direction. However, the interaction terms do not have significant effects on the propensity of switching.

Although Smidt (2017) argues that polarization decreases electoral volatility by providing citizens with higher certainty and clarity, perceived ideological party polarization, –i.e., ideological dispersion as perceived by individuals, does not have a statistically significant effect on vote switching in any of the policy models. Closeness to a party, on the other hand, has a statistically significant negative effect on vote switching in all the policy evaluation models. This finding is in line with the expectations of theories of voting behavior based on partisan identification, which claim that as individuals’ closeness to a party increase, their loyalty to their preferred party would also increase. Another control variable is ideological extremity of individuals, which has a significant and negative effect on vote switching in all models as well. This implies that as voters get more distant from the mean voter stand in their country, their probabilities of remaining loyal to their parties increase. Lastly, individuals’ level of political information has a statistically significant positive effect on vote switching. Although political information is admittedly an imperfect proxy of political sophistication, we see that switchers are not necessarily “unsophisticated” voters.

Commenting on the coefficients of the regression model is not as straightforward as it would be in linear regression models. Significance of the marginal effects comes from the covariance of two coefficients, for this reason, I look at the marginal effects of policy evaluations on the probability of vote switching conditional on the levels of affective polarization. By allowing affective polarization variable to vary within its in-sample range and setting all other variables to their representative moments, we look to the marginal effect of policy considerations on the probability of vote switching in Figure 2.1

Table 2.2 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Switching | Issue Evaluations
(1)

	Health	Education	Business & Industry	Economy
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.153*** (0.059)	-0.245*** (0.059)	-0.144*** (0.049)	-0.085 (0.103)
Policy:Health	0.151 (0.123)			
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy:Health	-0.010 (0.040)			
Policy:Education		-0.113 (0.125)		
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy:Education		0.071* (0.041)		
Policy:Business&Industry			0.343*** (0.121)	
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy:Business&Industry			-0.022 (0.039)	
State of the Economy				0.379*** (0.129)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ State of the Economy				-0.036 (0.042)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	-0.018 (0.031)	-0.012 (0.031)	-0.020 (0.032)	-0.025 (0.031)
Party System Polarization	-0.672*** (0.054)	-0.687*** (0.054)	-0.648*** (0.054)	-0.700*** (0.054)
Closeness to Party	-0.401*** (0.041)	-0.406*** (0.042)	-0.404*** (0.042)	-0.389*** (0.041)
Ideological Extremity	-0.049** (0.019)	-0.046** (0.019)	-0.061*** (0.019)	-0.053*** (0.019)
Political Information	0.039*** (0.014)	0.035** (0.014)	0.040*** (0.014)	0.036*** (0.014)
Number of Parties Placed	0.059** (0.023)	0.050** (0.023)	0.057** (0.024)	0.051** (0.023)
Age	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.010*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)
Sex	0.082 (0.053)	0.070 (0.053)	0.029 (0.054)	0.071 (0.053)
Education	0.098*** (0.020)	0.095*** (0.020)	0.100*** (0.020)	0.099*** (0.020)
Income	-0.062*** (0.014)	-0.066*** (0.014)	-0.066*** (0.014)	-0.058*** (0.014)
Religiosity	-0.079*** (0.028)	-0.082*** (0.028)	-0.091*** (0.029)	-0.074*** (0.028)
Constant	3.871*** (0.389)	4.315*** (0.392)	3.683*** (0.380)	3.358*** (0.456)
Log likelihood	-4457.521	-4450.585	-4283.469	-4425.229
AIC	8945	8931	8597	8880
BIC	9049	9035	8701	8985
N	7756	7729	7482	7724

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table 2.3 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Shifting | Issue Evaluations
(2)

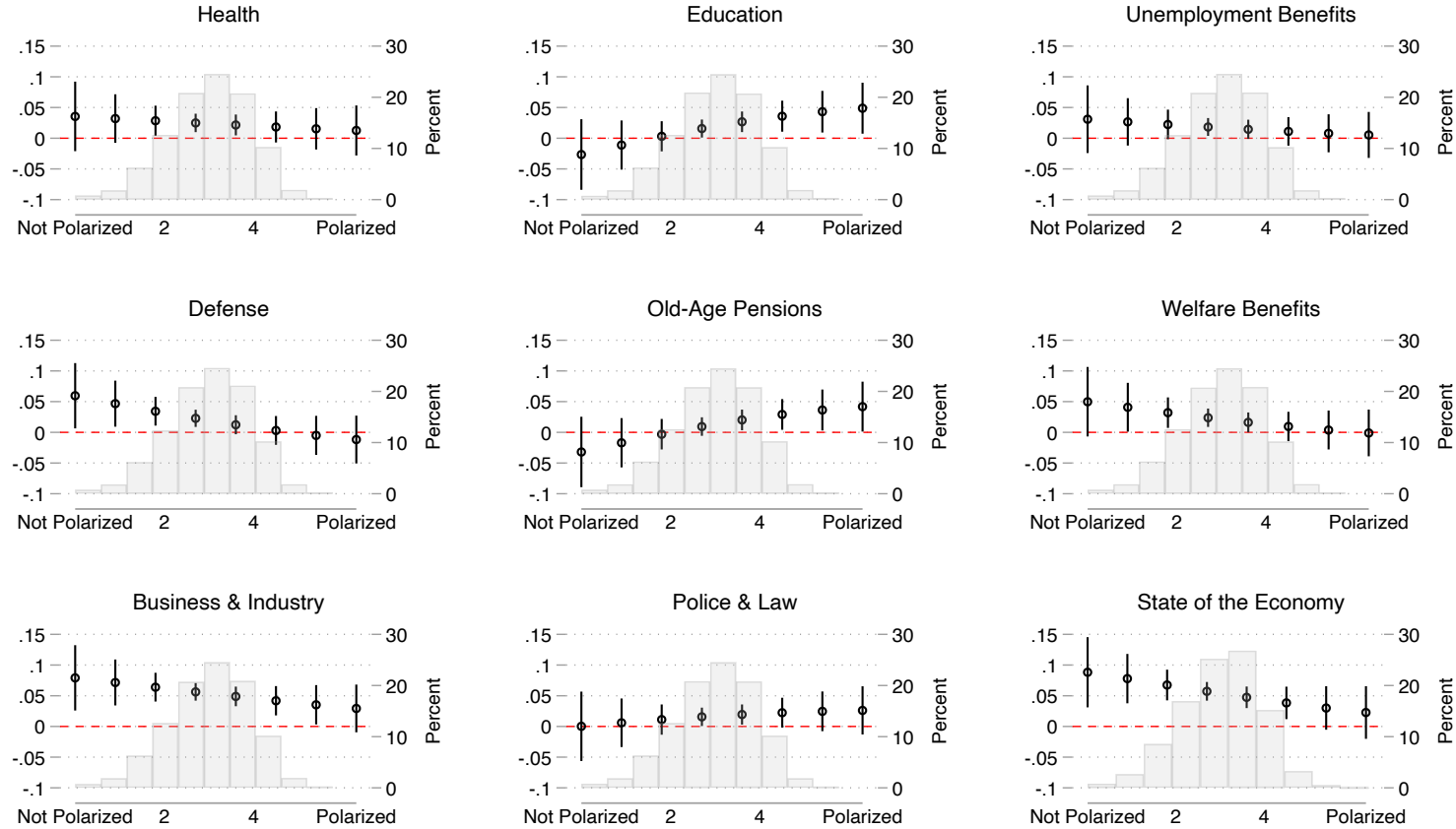
	Defense	Police & Law	Welfare	Old-Age Pension
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.104** (0.048)	-0.191*** (0.048)	-0.146*** (0.051)	-0.246*** (0.056)
Policy:Defense	0.259** (0.120)			
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy:Defense	-0.054 (0.039)			
Policy:Police&Law		0.001 (0.122)		
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy:Police&Law		0.028 (0.039)		
Policy:Welfare Benefits			0.211* (0.123)	
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy:Welfare Benefits			-0.035 (0.040)	
Policy:Old-Age Pensions				-0.136 (0.125)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy:Old-Age Pensions				0.067* (0.041)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	-0.027 (0.031)	-0.004 (0.031)	-0.024 (0.031)	-0.016 (0.031)
Party System Polarization	-0.622*** (0.056)	-0.685*** (0.054)	-0.689*** (0.055)	-0.675*** (0.053)
Closeness to Party	-0.401*** (0.042)	-0.405*** (0.042)	-0.408*** (0.042)	-0.396*** (0.041)
Ideological Extremity	-0.053*** (0.019)	-0.055*** (0.019)	-0.048** (0.020)	-0.045** (0.019)
Political Information	0.034** (0.014)	0.035** (0.014)	0.031** (0.014)	0.042*** (0.014)
Number of Parties Placed	0.037 (0.023)	0.056** (0.023)	0.059** (0.023)	0.055** (0.023)
Age	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.002)
Sex	0.037 (0.054)	0.067 (0.053)	0.077 (0.054)	0.062 (0.053)
Education	0.101*** (0.020)	0.097*** (0.020)	0.100*** (0.020)	0.099*** (0.020)
Income	-0.060*** (0.014)	-0.069*** (0.014)	-0.065*** (0.014)	-0.070*** (0.014)
Religiosity	-0.076*** (0.029)	-0.076*** (0.029)	-0.081*** (0.029)	-0.078*** (0.028)
Constant	3.721*** (0.381)	4.152*** (0.372)	4.017*** (0.380)	4.286*** (0.382)
Log likelihood	-4281.163	-4403.974	-4263.250	-4446.710
AIC	8592	8838	8556	8923
BIC	8696	8942	8660	9028
N	7440	7643	7441	7720

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01



Figure 2.1 Marginal Effect of the Policy Evaluation on Pr(Vote Switch) | Affective Polarization



In Figure 2.1, we observe that the marginal effects of the examined policies on vote switching are conditioned by affective polarization to varying extents. The marginal effects of the policies of education, old-age pensions, and police and law on the probability of vote switching, seem to increase for higher levels of affective polarization, contrary to our expectation. The cause of the small but reverse effect in education might be because it is a valence issue, most people would want to increase public expenditure on education. Regarding the police and law enforcement, on the other hand, as mentioned above, the surveys are conducted between 2011 and 2015, which corresponds to the years immigration erupted as a crisis all over the world, which in turn, created negative attitudes and discontent in terms of order within the examined host countries.

In line with our expectations, the marginal effects of the policies of health, unemployment benefits, defense, welfare benefits, business and industry on the probability to switch votes are lower for higher levels of polarization. The marginal effect of state of the economy on the probability of switching votes decreases as the level of affective polarization increases. The effect is positive for all the values of polarization, however, this decreasing effect is still an important finding with regard to the retrospective economic voting theories (Dassonneville and Hooghe 2017; Fiorina 1978; Kramer 1971; Söderlund 2008). Even if the economy is not going well and the citizens are aware of that situation, polarization decreases the possibility of voters switching votes and punishing the parties they have voted in the previous election. Moreover, this finding is also important because the economy is not a valence issue like education or health, it is easier for a respondent to say they want the government to spend more expenditure on education, nobody would say the contrary. However, economy is something that affects individuals more easily and roughly. Another detail that should be pointed is the possibility of polarized individuals not being able to put responsibility on the party they have voted for. Despite this possibility, we can observe such a decreasing effect. As stated in the theory section, I argue that these decreasing effects stem from polarization being an intervening factor in individuals' calculus of voting, which prioritizes group identities as opposed to policies, unlike what Lachat (2008; 2011) argues.

Figures 2.2-2.6 present the predicted probability of vote switching for varying levels of both individual-level affective polarization and country-level, party systemic, ideological polarization as well as policy evaluations. Low affect corresponds to individuals' particular distribution of affective polarization at the 10th percentile and high affect to 90th percentile. Similarly, low and high party polarization corresponds to the 10th and 90th percentile of the respective distribution. All the other variables are set to their representative moments.

In Figure 2.2, the predicted probabilities of vote switching for varying economic evaluations are presented. The probability of switching votes increases for both low affect and high affect individuals as their perception of the economy worsens. For both low party polarization and high party polarization cases, low affect and high affect individuals who say economy has gotten better are not statistically distinguishable from each other. However, the increase in the probability for low affect individuals is higher as we move from “Same as Now” to “Gotten Worse”. In addition, there is a significant difference in the predicted probabilities we calculate for the low- and high-polarization scenarios, which suggests that systemic polarization also affects voting behavior of individuals. This difference between low and high party polarization is observable for all of the examined policy domains. The previous literature on party system polarization and voting behavior has claimed that higher levels of polarization reinforces issue voting because higher polarization would make party positions more clear for individuals. Moreover, Tavits (2005) argues that increasing polarization reduces vote shifts and causes more consolidated party support. However, the predicted probabilities in Figures 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 exhibit that high party polarization does not reduce vote shifts, and provide empirical support for H_2 of this chapter.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the predicted probabilities for health and education policies. Low affect and high affect individuals are indistinguishable from each other in the “Same” category for health and “Much Less/More” category for education. The reverse marginal effect of education that was present in Figure 2.1 is also observable here as well. The reason, again, could be due to that education is a valence issue. The extent of public expenditure on health, on the other hand, is not a consensus issue that everyone agrees on in some societies like the United States. Similar to health, this reverse effect can also be seen in Figure 2.4 for old-age pensions graphs. The predicted probability of switching remain the same for low affect individuals but increases for high affect individuals. However, for unemployment benefits, high affect individuals’ probabilities remain the same as their discontent increases, whereas low-affect individuals’ predicted probability of vote switching increase.

Figure 2.2 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching in Lowly & Highly Polarized Party Systems: State of the Economy

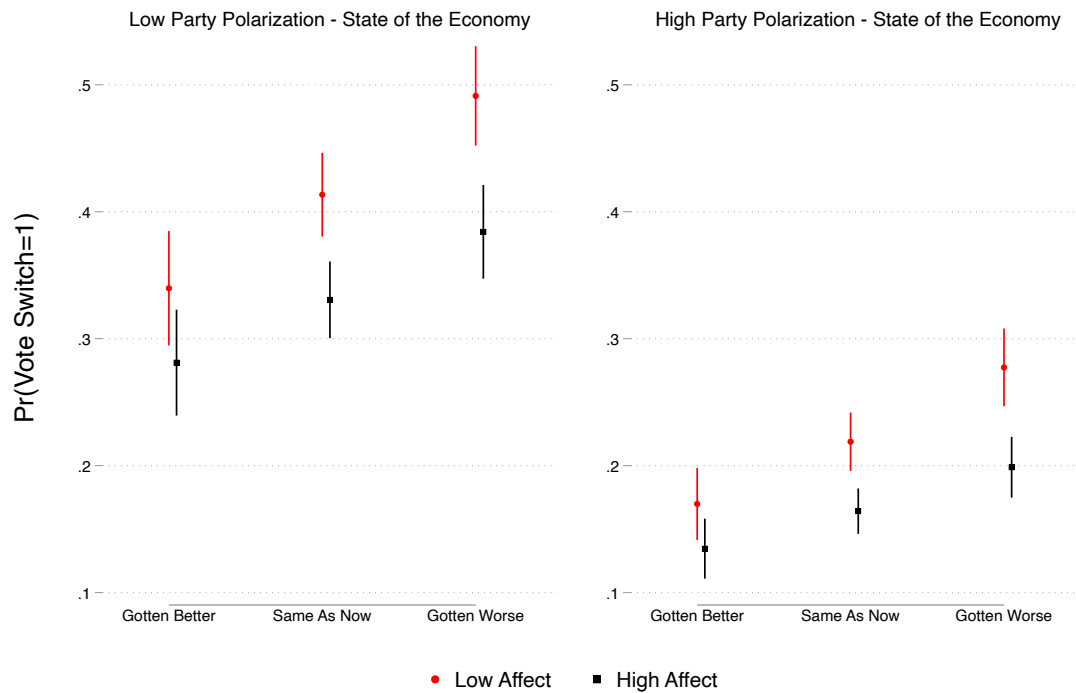


Figure 2.3 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching in Lowly & Highly Polarized Party Systems: Health & Education

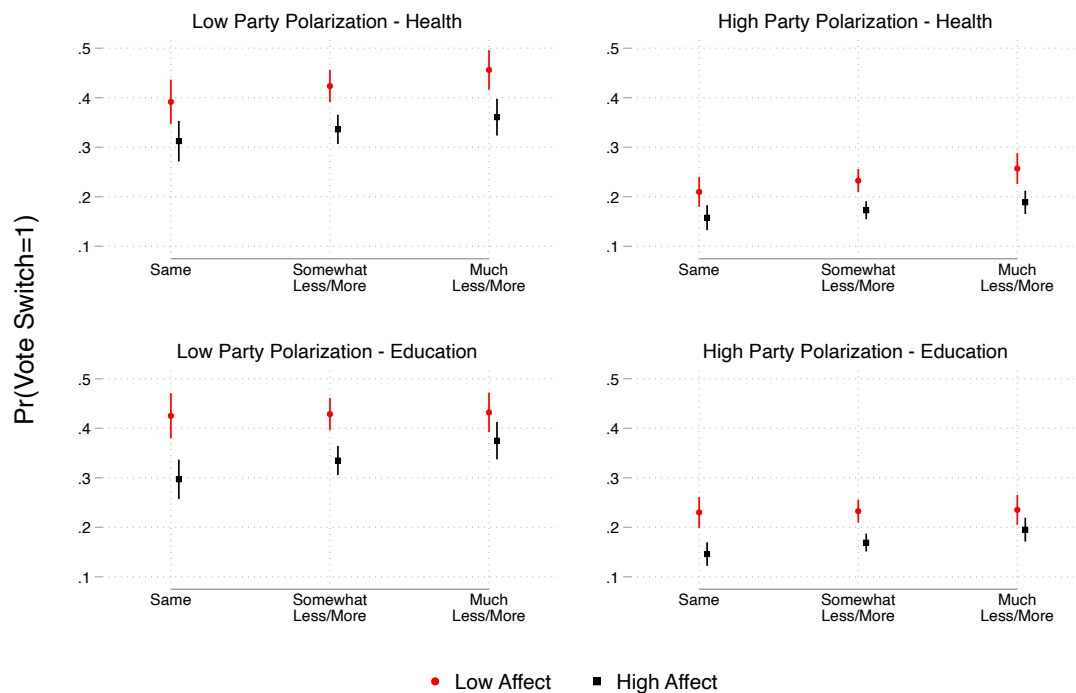
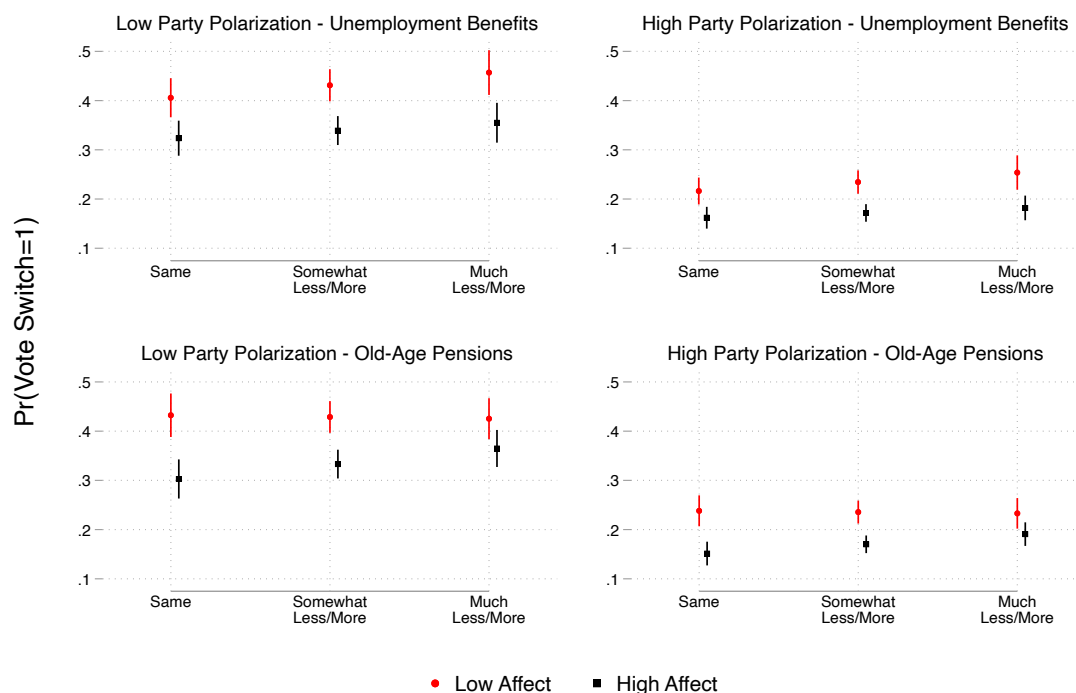


Figure 2.4 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching in Lowly & Highly Polarized Party Systems: Unemployment Benefits & Old-Age Pensions



Regarding the defense policy in Figure 2.5, it can be noticed that the probabilities of switching remain almost constant for high affect individuals even though the discontent about spending on the policy domain increases. However, low-affect individuals have increasing probabilities of switching as their discontent increases too. Similar to education and old-age pensions policies, when it comes to expenditure on police and law enforcement, high-affect individuals' probability to switch increases as they want more change in expenditure, which was previously interpreted within the context of immigration.

Lastly, in Figure 2.6, we can note that high-affect voters' probabilities remain constant as their discontent about the expenditure of welfare benefits increases, while the probabilities increase for low-affect voters as well. For business and industry expenditure, high-affect individuals have a lower probability of switching, however, the increase in the probabilities look similar for high- and low-affect individuals.

Figure 2.5 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching in Lowly & Highly Polarized Party Systems: Defense & Police & Law

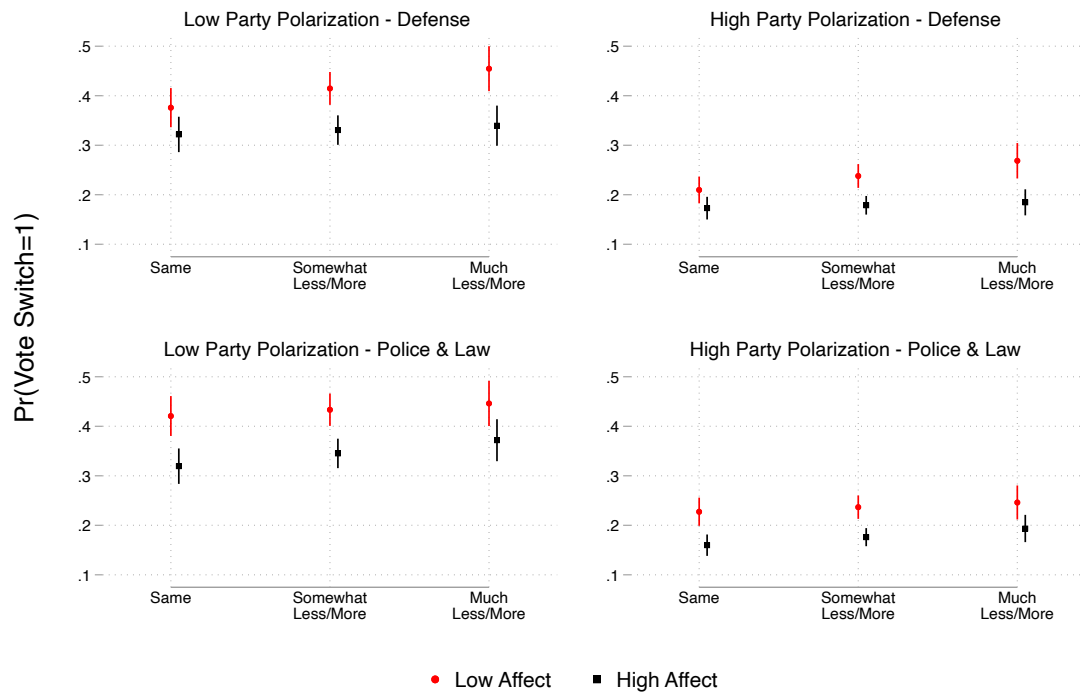
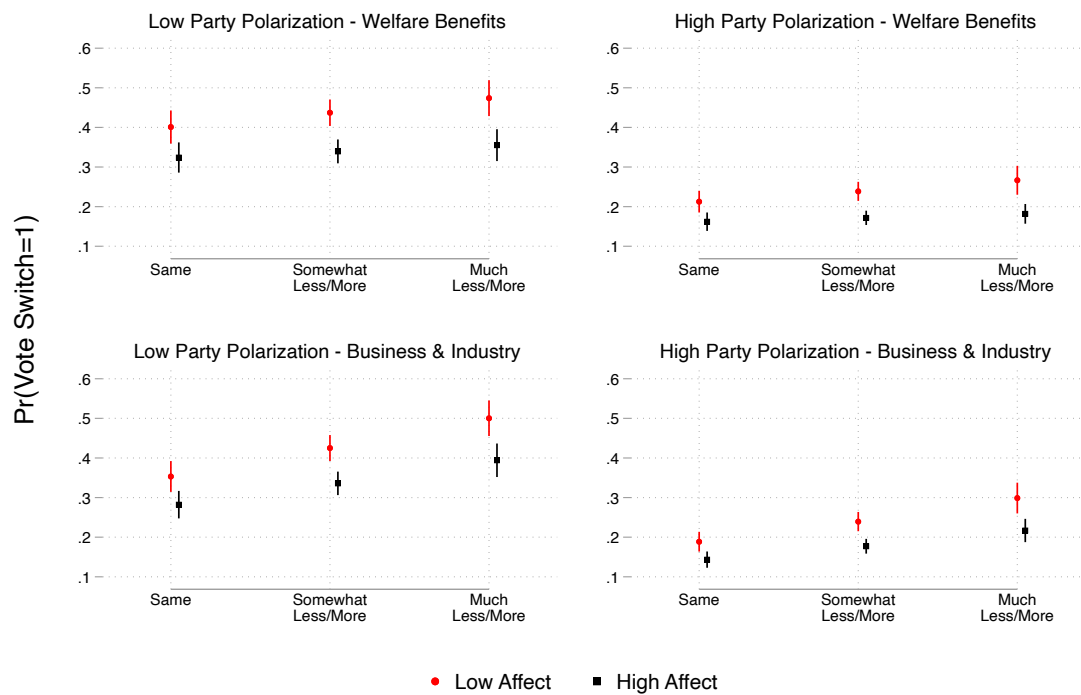


Figure 2.6 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching in Lowly & Highly Polarized Party Systems: Welfare Benefits & Business & Industry



2.5 Conclusion

As stated above, elections are the most important part of representative democracy and the goal is to realize the broader interest of the public (Powell 2000). Polarization, nowadays a phenomenon concerning many established and emerging democracies, is an intervening factor in this basic representational relationship between public opinion and policy making. Yet, the extent and direction of this intervening effect have been debated in the previous literature. In this chapter, despite varying extents, we do find some answers to the extent and direction of this intervening effect. There is empirical support for H_1 of this chapter. As expected, the effects of individuals' policy evaluations such as economy, health, defense, or business and industry, on their propensity to switch parties decrease as affective polarization increases. However, that is not the case in some other, especially valence, issue domains such as education or old-age pensions. In Figure 2.1, it can be seen that the observations cluster more around the mean affective polarization scores, for this reason, we should interpret the substantive significance of the effects accordingly. For economy, business and industry, and welfare benefits, we can say that although the calculated marginal effects (i.e., first differences in predicted probabilities) in effects are small, they are still meaningful and the decreasing effects can be considered substantively significant. Especially for the economy, it is easier to talk about substantive significance, since the marginal effects are decreasing with a steeper slope compared to other policy domains and statistically significance except for the most polarized individuals, where there are very few observations. This finding regarding retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations of voters is, I believe, quite important considering the prevalence of economic voting theories. Moreover, there is also empirical support for H_2 , the probabilities of individual-level vote switching are, indeed, lower in highly polarized party systems, as opposed to lowly polarized systems. Furthermore, it can be observed that, not only probabilities of switching are lower in highly polarized systems, but also, the differences between the probabilities of switching of low- and high-affect individuals are higher in lowly polarized party systems.

Despite many contributions and interesting conclusions we draw here, there are, of course, limitations to my research. As mentioned in the research design section, an important concern is related to a measurement error resulting from possible memory problems by the respondents.

3. THE EFFECT OF POLARIZATION ON VOTE SWITCHING IN TURKEY

The study of voting behavior has rather been a relatively slow-developing field among Turkish political scientists. Çarkoğlu (2012) attributes this relative lag to the shaky foundations of democracy due to repeated military interventions, which have shifted the attention of scholars to elite conflict instead of individual behavior. Çarkoğlu (2012) also argues that another source of the problem stems from the limited influence of behavioral and rational choice approaches on the Turkish political science community. Lastly, the comparably late development of quantitative methods and analyses have delayed the advancement of the field (Çarkoğlu, Heper, and Sayarı 2012). Consequently, the existing literature mostly composes of descriptive studies. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing number of quantitative studies on the voting behavior of Turkish voters in the literature.

This chapter of the thesis aims to address the main themes of Turkish voting behavior studies, namely issue voting and economic voting theories. For this purpose, the current state of the literature on Turkish voting behavior, and the kind of theories that are presented in the past and recent works will be discussed. Later, I will demonstrate my theoretical expectations on vote switching and vote choices, how non-policy and policy matters could interactively explain voting behavior in the June 2015 elections of Turkey by using the CSES Module 4 data. After explaining the specifics of the research design, empirical findings and their implications will be discussed.

3.1 Literature Review

Among the existing studies on Turkish voting behavior, spatial voting theories (Downs 1957; Enelow and Hinich 1985; Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989) have rarely been used to explain voting patterns of individuals, which suggest that as the distance between a party and an individual increases, the probability of voting for the party decreases, but see: (Çarkoğlu and Toprak 2000).

Çarkoğlu (2012), elaborates on the Michigan school (Campbell et al. 1960), which asserts that party identification, integrated with political socialization, is a defining factor in the voting behavior of individuals. Party identification creates certain patterns of considerations of policies, group benefits, and political socialization for the individuals who vote for the same party (Çarkoğlu, Heper, and Sayarı 2012) and, in return, it creates a self-sustaining mechanism that obstructs or lowers the possibility of vote switching through a subjective perspective.

Çarkoğlu and his colleagues (2012) question the applicability of the Michigan approach to the study of Turkish voting behavior, because Turkey has had an infamous history of military interventions and party closures, and thus lacks a political stability which makes it difficult to maintain party identification. Instead of party identification, the authors offer to replace it with party family identification which can indeed be supported by the “center-periphery” cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Mardin 1973) in Turkey. Kalaycıoğlu (2013), too, argues that cultural and moral factors play a significant role in determining the voting behavior and party preferences of Turkish voters. The center-periphery divide has long been argued to be characterizing the Turkish society since the Ottoman era (Tachau 2002).

Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) represented the center and Demokrat Parti (DP) represented the periphery, which was not a homogenous group but rather a reaction against the center. The salience of the divide represented by the CHP and DP is now a generally accepted by almost all students of Turkish politics, however an important question that should be considered is whether this cleavage is still relevant within the society. Kalaycıoğlu (1994) argues that, in the post 1960 era, the CHP had still represented the state or the center, but the DP was replaced by Adalet Partisi. Whereas in the mid-1960s, CHP moved towards the left of the center on the ideological spectrum and thus became “the party of the state elite, labor, and the landless peasants” (Kalaycıoğlu 1994). Despite this eclectic image of the party, CHP continued to be “the pivot of the party system” (Kalaycıoğlu 1994), the other parties that emerged in this period had tried to challenge that center and based their campaigns against it. A group of scholars like Çarkoğlu and Avcı (2002) consider the center-periphery cleavage to be a persisting determinant of the party system and Turkish society’s political behavior. However, Kalaycıoğlu (1994) argues that

Turkish party system has gone through a radical change in the 1980s and 1990s. No single party represents the center or stands for the interests of the peripheral groups. Turkey does not even have a compact elite group that would defend the interests of the center. Yet, although the composition of the groups have changed, the values that belong to the belief systems of the center and the periphery continue to affect electoral behavior. The cleavage is no longer represented as a unidimensional center-periphery one, but rather has a multi-dimensional cross cutting character. Contrary to what Özbudun and Tauchau (1975) predicted regarding the rise of socio-economic cleavage as a new basis of voter alignment, class does not seem to be one of the relevant divides that has emerged the Turkish political behavior. Instead, we observe a secular vs. pious Sunni-Muslim divide or a Kurdish vs. Turkish divide in the society. Hale (2002) presents this four-fold divide in the form of secularism vs. Islamism and left vs. right. We now however, observe the representation of those cleavages in the party system for almost four decades, however, these cleavages have intensified during the 1990s. This sociological framework provides us with another perspective to analyze the Turkish party system and electoral behavior.

Another strand of the literature on Turkish voting behavior looks into the economic determinants of voting. Baslevent, Kirmanoglu, and Senatalar (2004; 2005) provide empirical support for the economic voting theory in the 2002 elections. However, the effect should be considered with respect to the economic condition of the 2002 elections, which was a consequence of one of the most severe economic crises Turkey has faced. Secondly, the authors neglected the issue of clarity of responsibility. If the voters do not attribute responsibility of the economy to the right positions or seats, then economic voting hypothesis would not really work. This was then pointed out and corrected by Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu (2007). However, interestingly, both studies find that issue positions were more important for the voters compared to economic evaluations. Çarkoğlu (2008) further investigates whether voting behavior is shaped by short-term economic evaluations or long-term ideological orientations by comparing the 2002 and 2007 elections and he provides evidence for the economic voting hypothesis examining the 2007 elections. In another study, Çarkoğlu (2012) reconsiders the debate in the literature on economic evaluations vs. ideology on voting behavior of Turkish citizens. He examines survey studies from the 2002, 2007, and 2011 and exhibits that the 2002 elections were shaped by the credibility loss of the center-right and center-left parties and the vote for the incumbent was not largely affected by negative economic evaluations. Despite the fact that the economy was much better at 2007, the elections were shaped by economic considerations instead of ideology, likely serving as a reward mechanism for improvement of the economy by the AKP government. However, in the 2011 elections, the effect of economy seems

to have decreased and longer term ideological concerns were reinforced (Çarkoğlu 2012).

3.1.1 Vote Switching in Turkey

The existing literature on voting behavior and spatial voting in Turkey mainly focuses on the determinants of vote choices of individuals. Electoral volatility or vote switching in Turkey has been an underdeveloped area of research.

Çarkoğlu (2011) points out that since the entry of the AKP into the political scene in 2002, electoral volatility in Turkey has faced a steady decline in 2011, only 10% of the electorate switched from one party to the other. There has also been a steady decline in ideological volatility and ideological fractionalization between 2002 and 2011, pointing to a consolidation of voters' partisan attitudes and ideological orientations. Hazama (2009) investigates the inter-bloc vote swings between parties, more specifically incumbent and left-right swings. The author seeks to answer of such swings, whether voter punishment of the incumbent party is the primary motive, he finds that changes in total electoral volatility are due to swings from the incumbent to the opposition, and to the swings between left- and right-wing parties. Secondly, the author exhibits that lower economic growth increases swings from the government to the opposition and also from left- to right-wing parties because economic crises result more lower-income voters who are more likely to support right wing parties in Turkey (Hazama 2009).

In another study, Hazama (2007) looks to the social cleavages around, Sunni Muslim religiosity, Kurdish ethnicity, and Alevi sectarianism, and their effect on electoral volatility. The author argues that Sunni religiosity had contributed to total volatility, because the group had been switching votes among the centre-right parties. Alevis, on the other hand, had been loyal to their parties and the identity is considered to be a stabilizing element. Lastly, Kurdish votes had stabilized by the 1990s around Kurdish nationalist parties. The author concludes that social cleavages are not as much of a determining factor on volatility as they used to be. Although social cleavages do not play a big role in increasing volatility anymore, Hazama (2007) claims that Turkish voters have become more retrospective, hence punish the incumbent for their economic performance and he uses the 2002 elections as an example. However, as mentioned above, the 2002 elections were a consequence of one of the most dramatic economic crises Turkey has ever faced and I believe it is

not an appropriate case to illustrate the extent of retrospective voting. Secondly, the study does not cover the elections after 2007. Hale (2008) points out that AKP increased its vote share in the 2007 elections, hence the volatility had declined in 2007, Hale concludes as retrospective voting can work in both ways, if the economic performance is bad it increases electoral volatility by punishing the incumbent; if it is good, however, then voters reward the incumbent and volatility is reduced.

Lastly, Hazama (2018) investigates whether long-term economic success of the incumbent party produces an illusion that reduces the responsiveness of voters to short-term economic fluctuations. The author finds support for his hypothesis that long-term economic success reduces the effect of short-term economic conditions on the vote choice of Turkish voters. The analysis was conducted by using survey data that was collected in 2014. Turkey's GDP per capita has been on a decreasing trend since 2013.¹ That is the "short-term economic changes" are not short-term anymore. During the AKP incumbency, Turkey has experienced 11 years of economic success and, from 2013 onwards, a 7 years-long decline. Further research should thus address the same question to see whether this period of economic success still creates a "halo effect".

3.1.2 The June 2015 Elections

As it should now be clear, studies on vote switching in Turkey has rather been limited in scope and number, and this thesis aims to fill this gap in the literature. However, for data availability reasons that are mentioned in the previous chapter, only CSES Module 4 is employed in this study and it covers June 2015 elections of Turkey. Because the study only examines an episode or a shot of Turkey, the context that June 2015 elections took place has to be considered.

In the June 2015 elections, compared to the last general elections in 2011, the incumbent AKP lost 9 percentage points, the main opposition CHP lost 1 percentage points and, MHP and HDP increased their votes by 3.3 and 6.6 percent respectively. Clearly, it was an election with significant changes in vote shares. Prior to the elections, the terror attacks of ISIS had been gaining importance as a salient issue for Turkey. Two days before the elections, for instance, there was an attack at the HDP's rally in Diyarbakır (Çarkoğlu and Yıldırım 2015). However, it was still a

¹<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2019&locations=TR&start=2002>

relatively calm political environment compared to the events that occurred after the elections. Another critical point concerning the elections was HDP's decision to run in the elections as a party, instead of competing through independent candidates. One important reason behind AKP's decline in popular support, was thus, linked to HDP, since AKP lost many seats in the Kurdish districts to the HDP (Sayarı 2016). Relatedly, the famous "Peace Process" with the PKK had started to weaken before the elections. The peace negotiations ended in April 2015 and ultimately process completely ended in July (Hakyemez 2017). Still, according to a panel study that was conducted before the June elections, 54% of the voters considered economy to be the most important problem facing Turkey and only 10% said it was terrorism. Thus, terrorism was not that much of a salient or notable issue for the June elections (Aytaç and Çarkoğlu 2019). Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) find evidence for economic voting in June elections, those with more negative economic evaluations were less likely to vote for the AKP, more likely to vote for CHP or MHP. Worsening of the economy and the AKP government's failure to take effective measures were considered to be one of the reasons for AKP's loss of vote share (Kemahlioğlu 2015; Sayarı 2016).

3.2 Theory

Turkish political scientists present several common explanations for voting behavior: economic voting, party identification, and ideological voting. Those all were supported by in particular elections and time periods. The difficulty to make a more general claim on which theory has more explanatory power in the Turkish context possibly emanates from the *sui generis* character of Turkish political history and elections, a history filled with repetitive interruptions and discontinuities, making a party system, institutional structure, or consistent political socialization pattern very difficult.

The aim of this chapter is to understand only a tiny friction of such complicated structure of Turkish political behavior. Similar to the previous chapter, I will investigate whether the effects of policy considerations of individuals on vote switching are alleviated by high and growing levels of affective polarization in the country. Deteriorating macroeconomic conditions were said to be one of the main themes of the pre-June 2015 election period (Kemahlioğlu 2015; Sayarı 2016) and economy

has long been considered to be one of the main determinants of voting behavior in Turkey (Başlevant, Kirmanoğlu, and Şenatalar 2004, 2005; Çarkoğlu 2012; Hazama 2018). Thus, I expect the economy to have a significant effect on both vote switching and vote choices. However, to what extent affective polarization conditions such effect is a question that has to be answered. In line with out theoretical expectations explained in the previous chapter in detail, I thus hypothesize that:

H_1 : The effect of economic evaluation of individuals on the probability of vote switching decreases as affective polarization increases.

The model specification for H_1 is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote Switch} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Affective Polarization} \times \text{Policy Evaluation}) + \\ & \beta_2(\text{Affective Polarization}) + \beta_3(\text{Policy Evaluation}) + \beta_4(\text{Perceived Polarization}) + \\ & \beta_5(\text{Closeness to a Party}) + \beta_6(\text{Ideological Extremity}) + \beta_7(\text{Political Information}) + \\ & \beta_8(\text{\# of Parties Placed}) + \beta_9(\text{Age}) + \beta_{10}(\text{Sex}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Education}) + \beta_{12}(\text{Religiosity}) + \\ & \beta_{13}(\text{Income}) + e \end{aligned}$$

Secondly, as an extension to the literature, I examine whether the effect of policy considerations on vote choice would be different among switchers and loyals, conditional on their varying levels of affective polarization. I expect the effect of issue considerations on vote choice to be lower for those individuals with higher levels of affective polarization and I anticipate this effect to be mitigated/decreased for those who switched parties. Hence the second hypothesis of this chapter is:

H_2 : The effects of issue considerations on vote choice decrease as affective polarization increases. Vote switching behavior, however, decreases polarization's mediating effect in policy evaluations.

The second model specification is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Vote Choice} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{Affective Polarization} \times \text{Policy Evaluation} \times \text{Vote Switch}) + \\ & \beta_2(\text{Affetive Polarization}) + \beta_3(\text{Policy Evaluation}) + \beta_4(\text{Vote Switch}) + \\ & \beta_5(\text{Vote Switch} \times \text{Affective Polarization}) + \beta_6(\text{Vote Switch} \times \text{Policy Evaluation}) + \\ & \beta_7(\text{Poliyc Evaluation} \times \text{Affective Polarization}) + \beta_8(\text{Perceived Polarization}) + \\ & \beta_9(\text{Closeness to a Party}) + \beta_{10}(\text{Ideological Extremity}) + \beta_{11}(\text{Political Information}) + \\ & \beta_{12}(\text{\# of Parties Placed}) + \beta_{13}(\text{Age}) + \beta_{14}(\text{Sex}) + \beta_{15}(\text{Education}) + \beta_{16}(\text{Religiosity}) + \\ & \beta_{17}(\text{Income}) + e \end{aligned}$$

3.3 Data and Research Design

As mentioned in the previous chapter, due to data availability problems on public expenditure questions, I am able to employ only the CSES Module 4 to test my hypotheses. CSES Module 4 covers the June 2015 general elections of Turkey. The number of respondents for the June 2015 elections is 1086. However, after necessary data operations and listwise deletion of missing values in the empirical analyses, the sample size decreases to 475, which is one of the main limitations of this chapter on Turkey. Moreover it should be reminded that this part of this thesis only covers a cross-sectional analysis of the Turkish voting behavior.

Two different models are estimated in this chapter. The first one aims to capture vote switching and the second to understand vote choices. For this reason, there are two dependent variables for the two models.

In line with the previous section, for the vote switching model, the dependent variable is again a binary variable that either scores 0 (loyal) or 1 (switcher). The variable is, once again, operationalized from the recall question that asks respondents which party they voted for in the last elections. Hence, the memory problems that are mentioned in the previous chapter may apply to this analysis as well. Moreover, another important problem is that, in 2011, HDP was not established and instead independent candidates were nominated from ethnically concentrated Southeast regions. In 2015, however, many of those candidates contested under the HDP umbrella. For this reason, I had to make an additional assumption and coded the respondents who voted for the independent candidates in 2011 as HDP voters while operationalizing the dependent variable.

For the vote choice model, the dependent variable is a 5 category categorical variable, where the respondents' reported vote choice for each of the following parties are taken account of: AKP, CHP, MHP, HDP, SP. The same independent variables that were used in the comparative chapter are used. However, differently from the other models, the dependent variable "vote switch" is used as one of the main independent variables in this model. To see whether there is a difference between switchers and loyalists in their party preferences according to varying levels of affective polarization and policy discontent, I introduced a triple interaction term. Policy evaluation variables are operationalized from the same public expenditure questions.

The descriptive statistics of all the variables that are included in the model are reported below:

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min.	Max.	N
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Vote Switch	0.08	0.27	0	1	461
Affective Polarization (SD)	3.55	0.75	0	5.16	461
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	3.85	0.97	1.17	7.07	461
Closeness to Party	2.60	0.51	1	3	461
Ideological Extremity	2.98	1.59	0.06	5.94	461
Health	1.51	0.68	0	2	460
Education	1.57	0.66	0	2	459
Unemployment Benefits	1.44	0.72	0	2	458
Defense	1.24	0.80	0	2	458
Old-Age Pensions	1.70	0.54	0	2	460
Welfare Benefits	1.42	0.74	0	2	460
Business & Industry	1.10	0.79	0	2	461
Police & Law	1.19	0.81	0	2	460
State of the Economy	2.39	0.70	1	3	459
Political Information	0.16	1.99	-4	4	461
Number of Parties Placed	5.93	0.33	4	6	461
Age	43.79	14.55	22	90	461
Sex	0.54	0.50	0	1	461
Education	1.97	1.24	0	6	461
Income	3.04	1.36	1	5	461
Religiosity	3.19	0.65	1	4	461

3.4 Empirical Analyses and Findings

3.4.1 Vote Switching

To test the H_1 of this chapter, similarly to the first chapter, I employed a logistic regression for each policy evaluation variable, because the dependent variable, vote switch, is again a binary variable. The related multiplicative interaction term is also introduced in the model equations to see how non-policy considerations interact

with the policy considerations in individuals' calculus of voting. The regression estimates with robust standard errors are reported in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 below.

Because commenting on the coefficients estimates from interactive non-linear models is not as straightforward as it would be in linear regression models. I calculate and plot the conditional (marginal) effects of the examined policy evaluations on the probability of vote switching –as conditionally on the level of affective polarization. By allowing the affective polarization variable to vary with its in-sample range and setting all other variables to their representative moments, I look into the marginal effect of policy considerations on the probability of vote switch for varying levels of affective polarization in Figure 3.1

It can be easily seen that, for almost all of the marginal effects of policy evaluations, it is not possible to talk about a statistically significant effect. Only in two of the figures, we can observe a significant effect, and interestingly one of them is the retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations of voters. In the literature section of this chapter, it was mentioned that one of the main determinants of the June 2015 elections was the economic conditions. In the pre-election period, 54% of the voters considered economy to be the most important problem facing Turkey, and Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) have provided evidence on that economic voting was prevalent in the June elections. Despite such findings in previous literature, we do observe that the marginal effect of the economic evaluations on vote switching decrease as the affective polarization of the individuals increase. In other words, for those who are, highly polarized economic evaluations do not have an effect on their vote choice.

When we look at the predicted probabilities of vote switching for low- and high-affect individuals in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 below, we see that these low and high affect individuals are not statistically distinguishable from each other. However, even if we cannot talk about a significant difference, in Figure 3.2, we can still observe that the predicted probabilities of switching remain the same for high-affect individuals as their evaluation of the economy worsens, whereas the low affect individuals' probability to switch increases as their evaluations become more negative.

In conclusion, although the marginal effects of retrospective economic evaluations on vote switching for varying levels of affective polarization are in the expected direction, so that people's responsiveness to economy decreases as they get more polarized, we cannot see a statistically significant difference between the predicted probabilities of low and high affect individuals. The other policy evaluations do not seem have exert any effect on the probability to switch votes conditionally on individuals' affective polarization.

Table 3.2 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Switching | Issue Evaluations
(1)

	Health	Education	Business & Industry	Economy	Unemployment Benefits
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.791* (0.408)	-2.092*** (0.682)	-0.755** (0.351)	0.154 (0.631)	-0.635 (0.574)
Health	0.388 (0.817)				
Affective Polarization (SD) × Health	0.008 (0.253)				
Affective Polarization (SD) × Education		0.800** (0.359)			
Business& Industry			0.112 (0.788)		
Affective Polarization (SD) × Business&Industry			0.052 (0.246)		
State of the Economy				1.580* (0.883)	
Affective Polarization (SD) × State of the Economy				-0.359 (0.258)	
Unemployment Benefits					0.544 (1.057)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Unemployment Benefits					-0.079 (0.331)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.084 (0.192)	0.054 (0.219)	0.032 (0.200)	0.072 (0.195)	0.149 (0.187)
Closeness to Party	-0.442 (0.320)	-0.416 (0.342)	-0.466 (0.317)	-0.390 (0.320)	-0.527 (0.328)
Ideological Extremity	-0.094 (0.113)	-0.124 (0.118)	-0.105 (0.117)	-0.151 (0.117)	-0.121 (0.114)
Political Information	0.156 (0.106)	0.224** (0.110)	0.172 (0.106)	0.130 (0.111)	0.136 (0.107)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.471 (0.542)	0.094 (0.639)	-0.038 (0.718)	-0.412 (0.534)	-0.454 (0.534)
Age	-0.012 (0.014)	-0.007 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.013)	-0.014 (0.014)	-0.011 (0.014)
Sex	0.633* (0.364)	0.557 (0.372)	0.551 (0.369)	0.529 (0.363)	0.606* (0.366)
Education	-0.372** (0.175)	-0.359** (0.175)	-0.329* (0.170)	-0.342** (0.171)	-0.348** (0.174)
Income	0.077 (0.125)	0.065 (0.126)	0.082 (0.132)	0.065 (0.122)	0.101 (0.120)
Religiosity	0.317 (0.292)	0.338 (0.334)	0.388 (0.322)	0.411 (0.312)	0.333 (0.309)
Education		-1.388 (1.067)			
Constant	2.968 (4.204)	2.174 (4.757)	0.301 (5.128)	-0.937 (4.923)	2.368 (4.084)
Log likelihood	-117.848	-110.780	-115.483	-117.404	-115.659
AIC	264	250	259	263	259
BIC	322	308	317	321	318
N	476	473	461	475	472

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table 3.3 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Switching | Issue Evaluations
(2)

	Defense	Police & Law	Welfare Benefits	Old-Age Pension
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.652*	-0.726**	-0.739*	-2.386***
	(0.396)	(0.349)	(0.422)	(0.813)
Defense	0.284			
	(0.848)			
Affective Polarization (SD) × Defense	-0.060			
	(0.255)			
Police&Law		-0.054		
		(0.705)		
Affective Polarization (SD) × Police&Law		-0.018		
		(0.224)		
Welfare Benefits			0.321	
			(0.851)	
Affective Polarization (SD) × Welfare Benefits			-0.015	
			(0.268)	
Old-Age Pensions				-2.693*
				(1.446)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Old-Age Pensions				0.924**
				(0.429)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.065	0.093	0.061	0.143
	(0.192)	(0.192)	(0.193)	(0.205)
Closeness to Party	-0.418	-0.391	-0.502	-0.476
	(0.312)	(0.320)	(0.321)	(0.328)
Ideological Extremity	-0.092	-0.108	-0.093	-0.084
	(0.114)	(0.116)	(0.113)	(0.112)
Political Information	0.152	0.149	0.152	0.184*
	(0.104)	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.111)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.477	-0.456	-0.476	-0.484
	(0.507)	(0.495)	(0.518)	(0.542)
Age	-0.010	-0.012	-0.011	-0.013
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Sex	0.594	0.604	0.643*	0.568
	(0.368)	(0.368)	(0.359)	(0.366)
Education	-0.344**	-0.351**	-0.354**	-0.348**
	(0.168)	(0.172)	(0.169)	(0.171)
Income	0.076	0.079	0.060	0.055
	(0.123)	(0.124)	(0.120)	(0.128)
Religiosity	0.339	0.335	0.339	0.307
	(0.299)	(0.307)	(0.304)	(0.330)
Constant	2.916	3.224	3.213	8.262**
	(3.893)	(3.755)	(4.106)	(4.103)
Log likelihood	-118.790	-118.976	-118.645	-116.789
AIC	266	266	265	262
BIC	324	324	324	320
N	469	471	476	476

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Figure 3.1 Marginal Effect of Related Policy Evaluation on Pr(Vote Switch) | Affective Polarization

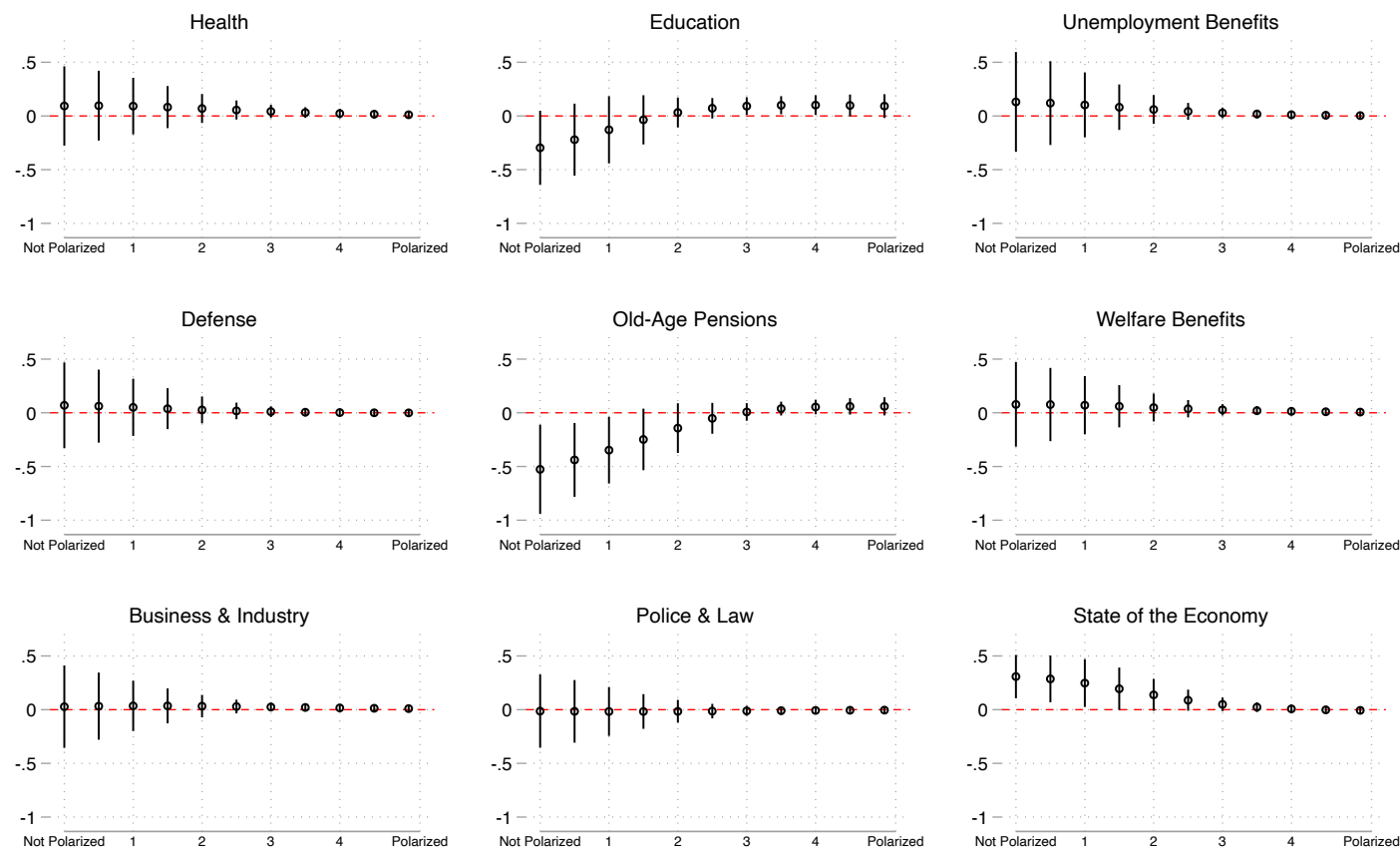


Figure 3.2 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching (1)

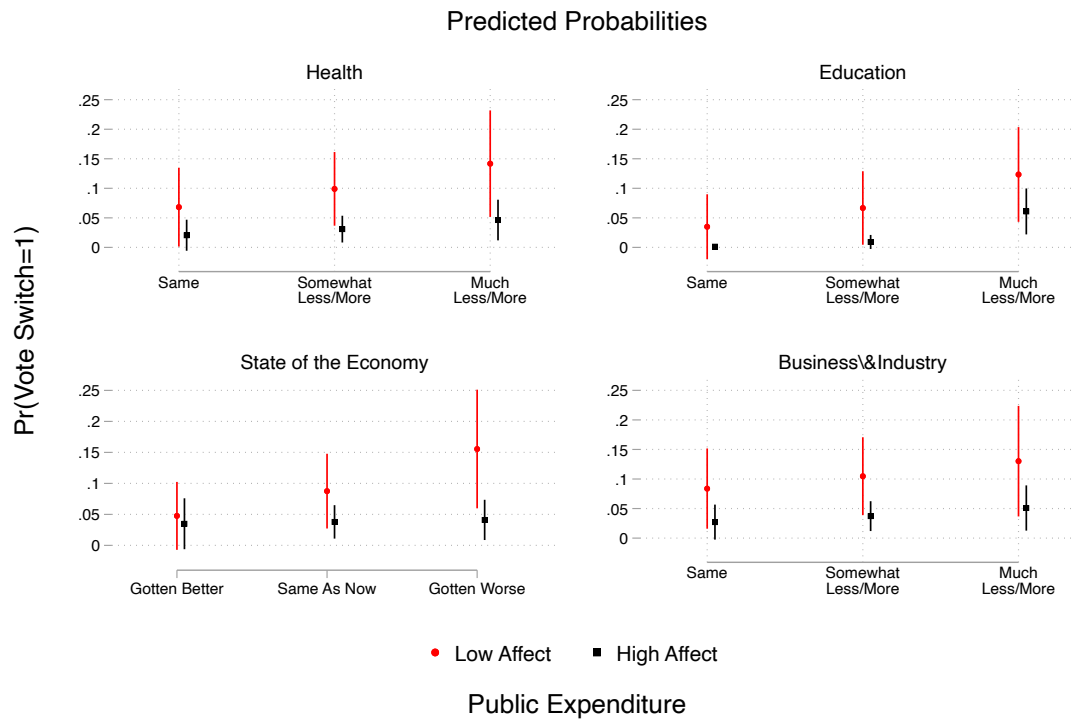
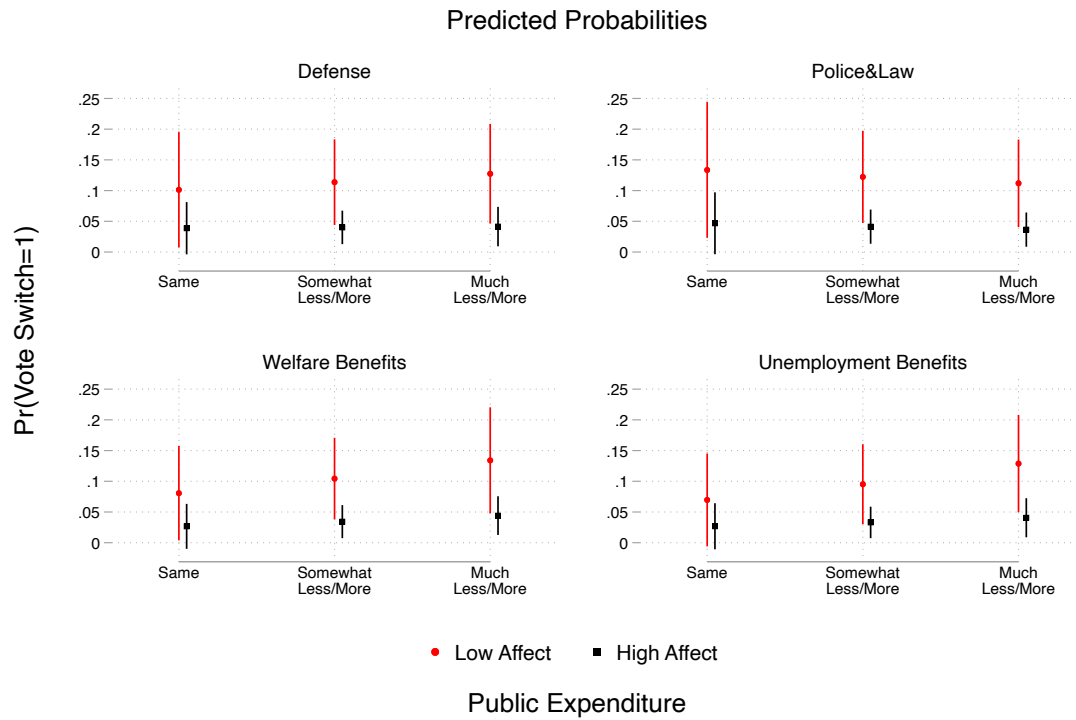


Figure 3.3 Predicted Probability of Vote Switching (2)



3.4.2 Vote Choice

Explaining the determinants of vote choice is a difficult task. As already discussed in the previous chapters, the unique history and development of Turkish politics, makes it even more difficult. Despite this difficulty, I attempt to analyze whether the effect of policy considerations on vote choice would be different among switchers and loyals, conditionally on their varying levels of affective polarization. I expect that the effects of issue considerations on vote choice to be lower for those individuals with higher levels of affective polarization and I expect that this effect to be alleviated for switchers. To test this hypothesis, I employ multinomial logistic regression since my dependent variable is a categorical variable with five mutually exclusive choices –of voting for the examined parties.

The regression estimates are presented below in Tables 3.4 and 3.5. The base outcome is the probability of voting for AKP and all the coefficient estimates are relative to the base outcome. To see the marginal effect of policy considerations on vote choice conditional on vote switching and affective polarization, the affective polarization variable is set to its 10th and 90th percentiles to represent the low and high polarization scenarios. Vote switching is on the other hand, takes only two values: loyal (0) and switcher (1). All other variables are set to their representative moments. For the sake of simplicity and in line with the literature, I only include the figures illustrating the marginal effects of economy, police and law, and unemployment benefits policies. All the other marginal effect figures are presented in Appendix B. I chose these three policy domains, because those were the most relevant in the June 2015 elections. As already stated, economy was one of the main themes in the pre-election period. Related to the economy, unemployment benefits were an important determinant of voting for AKP and at a time where economic conditions have started to deteriorate, it is likely to have affected Turkish voters' decision-making calculi. Lastly, although only 10% of the voters said terrorism was the most important problem facing Turkey, the bombing at the HDP rally, the end of negotiations with the PKK, and the ISIS attacks were all relevant problems at the time. Thus, expenditure on police and law enforcement is thus another issue to examine in more detail.

Table 3.4 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Choice | Issue Evaluations & Vote Switch (1)

	Health	Business & Industry	Economy	Unemployment Benefits
<i>CHP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	0.370 (0.460)	-0.328 (0.299)	-1.742** (0.821)	-0.806 (0.501)
Vote Switch	1.626 (1.013)	-0.603 (1.523)	3.809 (3.492)	3.565 (3.723)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Vote Switch	-0.413 (0.305)	0.097 (0.459)	-1.193 (1.050)	-0.904 (0.981)
Policy	1.288 (1.013)	-1.404 (0.872)	-0.698 (1.211)	-1.944* (1.129)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy	-0.162 (0.262)	0.404* (0.234)	0.683** (0.325)	0.596** (0.325)
Policy × Vote Switch	-1.129 (1.071)	1.156 (1.460)	-1.389 (1.435)	-2.472 (2.300)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy × Vote Switch	0.259 (0.295)	-0.278 (0.401)	0.431 (0.424)	0.592 (0.594)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	-0.318* (0.165)	-0.269 (0.168)	-0.210 (0.174)	-0.314* (0.165)
Closeness to Party	-0.376 (0.276)	-0.399 (0.279)	-0.248 (0.315)	-0.380 (0.283)
Ideological Extremity	0.741*** (0.116)	0.733*** (0.115)	0.679*** (0.117)	0.762*** (0.117)
Political Information	0.149** (0.071)	0.159** (0.074)	0.254*** (0.083)	0.135* (0.071)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.077	-0.107	0.014	-0.085

	(0.364)	(0.367)	(0.422)	(0.335)
Age	0.049***	0.051***	0.048***	0.054***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Sex	0.033	-0.142	0.056	-0.029
	(0.289)	(0.290)	(0.297)	(0.291)
Education	0.380***	0.361**	0.365**	0.376***
	(0.145)	(0.145)	(0.157)	(0.146)
Income	0.207*	0.167	0.276**	0.178*
	(0.107)	(0.109)	(0.116)	(0.107)
Religiosity	-1.477***	-1.468***	-1.336***	-1.451***
	(0.222)	(0.223)	(0.247)	(0.217)
Constant	-1.643	2.095	1.066	3.188
	(3.076)	(2.676)	(4.061)	(2.891)

MHP

Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.793*	-0.085	-0.307	-0.996**
	(0.416)	(0.417)	(0.696)	(0.460)
Vote Switch	-2.127	0.977	6.258	3.307
	(2.154)	(1.320)	(4.446)	(4.267)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Vote Switch	0.255	-0.490	-2.282	-1.223
	(0.542)	(0.415)	(1.487)	(1.203)
Policy	-0.490	0.939	1.882*	-0.976
	(0.871)	(0.904)	(1.045)	(0.975)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy	0.351	-0.218	-0.069	0.404
	(0.246)	(0.249)	(0.283)	(0.268)
Policy × Vote Switch	1.867	0.252	-2.015	-1.617
	(1.543)	(1.215)	(1.677)	(2.348)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy × Vote Switch	-0.320	0.123	0.764	0.611

	(0.416)	(0.358)	(0.545)	(0.654)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.273	0.258	0.304*	0.270
	(0.185)	(0.179)	(0.179)	(0.170)
Closeness to Party	-0.312	-0.198	-0.110	-0.273
	(0.301)	(0.310)	(0.313)	(0.296)
Ideological Extremity	-0.008	-0.004	-0.017	0.010
	(0.098)	(0.103)	(0.105)	(0.101)
Political Information	0.129	0.125	0.163*	0.128*
	(0.079)	(0.079)	(0.088)	(0.076)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.563	-0.472	-0.460	-0.519
	(0.452)	(0.387)	(0.463)	(0.380)
Age	0.011	0.016	0.011	0.017
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.012)
Sex	0.524	0.452	0.468	0.500
	(0.319)	(0.318)	(0.317)	(0.311)
Education	0.159	0.204	0.242*	0.170
	(0.134)	(0.131)	(0.146)	(0.132)
Income	0.276**	0.235**	0.308**	0.221**
	(0.112)	(0.116)	(0.121)	(0.109)
Religiosity	-0.382	-0.297	-0.231	-0.388
	(0.257)	(0.267)	(0.279)	(0.250)
Constant	2.928	0.141	-3.467	3.702
	(3.344)	(3.019)	(4.388)	(3.044)
<i>HDP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.719	-0.119	1.121	-0.480
	(0.557)	(0.718)	(1.624)	(1.158)
Vote Switch	1.624*	3.026*	8.613	6.236

	(0.841)	(1.605)	(5.446)	(4.082)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Vote Switch	-0.336	-0.876*	-2.605	-1.666
	(0.280)	(0.520)	(1.683)	(1.213)
Policy	-0.963	0.429	3.188	0.145
	(1.337)	(1.563)	(2.334)	(2.407)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Health	0.527	0.149	-0.375	0.381
	(0.378)	(0.442)	(0.590)	(0.650)
Policy $\times$ Vote Switch	1.407	1.025	-1.965	-1.958
	(1.099)	(1.267)	(2.300)	(2.484)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy $\times$ Vote Switch	-0.391	-0.146	0.672	0.558
	(0.305)	(0.368)	(0.701)	(0.731)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.227	0.174	0.235	0.135
	(0.225)	(0.212)	(0.217)	(0.222)
Closeness to Party	0.553	0.341	0.776	0.251
	(0.473)	(0.429)	(0.478)	(0.453)
Ideological Extremity	0.363***	0.425***	0.395***	0.433***
	(0.129)	(0.128)	(0.135)	(0.141)
Political Information	0.139	0.113	0.196	0.169
	(0.102)	(0.096)	(0.121)	(0.104)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.237	-0.420	0.100	-0.049
	(0.630)	(0.588)	(0.659)	(0.590)
Age	-0.038**	-0.035**	-0.032*	-0.030*
	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Sex	2.590***	2.518***	2.390***	2.501***
	(0.565)	(0.630)	(0.564)	(0.573)
Education	-0.269	-0.274	-0.170	-0.335
	(0.243)	(0.248)	(0.256)	(0.243)
Income	-0.067	-0.069	0.014	-0.112
	(0.170)	(0.172)	(0.176)	(0.174)

Religiosity	-0.128 (0.302)	-0.120 (0.308)	-0.046 (0.316)	-0.130 (0.331)
Constant	-1.777 (4.169)	-2.212 (4.850)	-15.005* (8.458)	-3.811 (6.303)
<i>SP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	0.380 (0.808)	-0.347 (0.419)	-0.073 (0.656)	-0.172 (0.907)
Vote Switch	2.135 (4.967)	2.193 (1.592)	6.318 (3.956)	-32.564*** (7.764)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Vote Switch	-0.487 (1.248)	-0.467 (0.420)	-1.544 (1.297)	4.569 (2.916)
Policy	14.019*** (1.996)	-2.609* (1.533)	-0.183 (1.579)	-0.363 (2.616)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy	0.005 (0.517)	0.820* (0.436)	0.193 (0.357)	0.315 (0.619)
Health × Vote Switch	-1.680 (3.878)	-6.101 (4.410)	-3.477* (1.903)	15.626*** (3.477)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy × Vote Switch	0.424 (0.996)	1.511 (1.091)	0.868* (0.508)	-2.095* (1.207)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.022 (0.326)	0.162 (0.355)	0.121 (0.289)	0.094 (0.326)
Closeness to Party	0.080 (0.733)	-0.421 (0.738)	0.064 (0.734)	-0.125 (0.689)
Ideological Extremity	-0.112 (0.235)	-0.035 (0.175)	-0.164 (0.286)	-0.126 (0.268)
Political Information	-0.518 (0.361)	-0.532 (0.404)	-0.567 (0.442)	-0.513 (0.393)

Number of Parties Placed	0.012 (0.664)	0.389 (0.699)	0.246 (0.646)	0.167 (0.639)
Age	0.029 (0.046)	0.032 (0.044)	0.034 (0.048)	0.029 (0.044)
Sex	0.219 (0.984)	-0.503 (1.043)	-0.062 (0.878)	-0.084 (0.904)
Education	0.831* (0.500)	0.793 (0.513)	0.895 (0.608)	0.766 (0.545)
Income	-0.053 (0.211)	-0.177 (0.216)	-0.197 (0.204)	-0.163 (0.221)
Religiosity	2.201* (1.199)	2.595 (1.671)	2.310* (1.371)	2.181* (1.194)
Constant	-43.731*** (12.131)	-16.897 (11.979)	-17.854 (12.579)	-15.516 (11.399)
Log likelihood	-478.492	-473.522	-440.256	-479.927
AIC	1091	1091	1025	1068
BIC	1373	1392	1328	1295
N	500	485	500	497

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table 3.5 The Effect of Affective Polarization on Vote Choice | Issue Evaluations & Vote Switch (2)

	Defense	Police & Law	Welfare Benefits	Old-Age Pension
<i>CHP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	0.211 (0.384)	-0.614* (0.360)	-0.249 (0.340)	1.260 (0.924)
Vote Switch	3.180 (2.613)	-1.079 (2.055)	2.505 (4.149)	1.741 (2.781)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Vote Switch	-1.044 (0.720)	0.193 (0.579)	-0.683 (1.089)	-0.353 (0.773)
Policy	0.489 (0.922)	-2.466*** (0.870)	-0.699 (0.871)	2.932 (2.379)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy	-0.115 (0.247)	0.642*** (0.238)	0.246 (0.232)	-0.620 (0.492)
Policy $\times$ Vote Switch	-2.000 (1.636)	1.191 (1.599)	-1.653 (2.379)	-0.976 (1.950)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy $\times$ Vote Shift	0.645 (0.445)	-0.262 (0.437)	0.430 (0.628)	0.166 (0.536)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	-0.279* (0.165)	-0.305* (0.164)	-0.289* (0.161)	-0.322* (0.166)
Closeness to Party	-0.340 (0.285)	-0.367 (0.276)	-0.441 (0.280)	-0.439 (0.280)
Ideological Extremity	0.734*** (0.113)	0.746*** (0.115)	0.739*** (0.113)	0.730*** (0.112)
Political Information	0.160** (0.074)	0.142** (0.072)	0.146** (0.072)	0.144** (0.072)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.039	-0.086	-0.081	0.005

	(0.360)	(0.343)	(0.345)	(0.344)
Age	0.050***	0.049***	0.049***	0.044***
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)
Sex	-0.057	0.019	-0.001	-0.012
	(0.281)	(0.288)	(0.285)	(0.283)
Education	0.345**	0.385***	0.371**	0.364**
	(0.144)	(0.142)	(0.145)	(0.143)
Income	0.206*	0.216**	0.202*	0.148
	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.107)
Religiosity	-1.429***	-1.380***	-1.462***	-1.401***
	(0.224)	(0.219)	(0.220)	(0.220)
Constant	-0.605	2.713	1.490	-5.080
	(2.785)	(2.619)	(2.615)	(4.481)

MHP

Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.656*	-0.540	-0.345	-0.230
	(0.386)	(0.399)	(0.494)	(0.678)
Vote Switch	-0.006	1.250	1.842	0.685
	(3.094)	(2.084)	(4.005)	(1.212)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Vote Switch	-0.275	-0.501	-0.745	-0.562
	(0.843)	(0.587)	(1.037)	(0.384)
Policy	-0.517	-0.346	0.712	0.535
	(0.868)	(0.826)	(1.002)	(1.325)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy	0.198	0.094	-0.065	-0.125
	(0.237)	(0.232)	(0.283)	(0.357)
Policy × Vote Switch	0.556	-0.729	-1.135	-0.074
	(1.842)	(1.581)	(2.288)	(0.914)
Affective Polarization (SD) × Policy × Vote Switch	0.030	0.338	0.453	0.228

	(0.495)	(0.439)	(0.602)	(0.266)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.306*	0.309*	0.272	0.280
	(0.172)	(0.172)	(0.178)	(0.176)
Closeness to Party	-0.141	-0.183	-0.308	-0.189
	(0.293)	(0.296)	(0.301)	(0.293)
Ideological Extremity	0.006	-0.009	0.001	-0.013
	(0.100)	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.101)
Political Information	0.118	0.118	0.132*	0.123
	(0.079)	(0.076)	(0.079)	(0.075)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.514	-0.536	-0.630*	-0.601*
	(0.370)	(0.357)	(0.364)	(0.362)
Age	0.014	0.014	0.011	0.013
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Sex	0.417	0.453	0.532*	0.447
	(0.311)	(0.312)	(0.311)	(0.308)
Education	0.174	0.180	0.175	0.195
	(0.132)	(0.130)	(0.134)	(0.131)
Income	0.276**	0.267**	0.235**	0.213*
	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.109)	(0.110)
Religiosity	-0.319	-0.271	-0.358	-0.374
	(0.258)	(0.248)	(0.251)	(0.249)
Constant	2.194	2.098	2.164	1.854
	(2.693)	(2.777)	(3.072)	(3.429)
<i>HDP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	0.693	-0.569	-0.567	0.382
	(0.967)	(0.551)	(0.791)	(1.867)
Vote Switch	5.965*	2.854	4.107	3.186

	(3.274)	(2.219)	(4.471)	(2.363)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Vote Switch	-1.574	-0.806	-0.837	-0.765
	(0.968)	(0.677)	(1.277)	(0.782)
Policy	2.103	-1.192	0.123	1.498
	(2.100)	(1.117)	(1.564)	(3.907)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy	-0.372	0.472	0.378	-0.227
	(0.539)	(0.321)	(0.469)	(1.005)
Policy $\times$ Vote Shift	-1.723	0.538	-0.171	-0.171
	(2.166)	(1.521)	(1.457)	(1.457)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy $\times$ Vote Switch	0.503	-0.035	0.101	0.030
	(0.648)	(0.451)	(0.688)	(0.439)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.196	0.241	0.181	0.170
	(0.214)	(0.219)	(0.228)	(0.228)
Closeness to Party	0.571	0.574	0.389	0.488
	(0.458)	(0.465)	(0.489)	(0.480)
Ideological Extremity	0.410***	0.384***	0.392***	0.387***
	(0.134)	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.135)
Political Information	0.126	0.110	0.172*	0.103
	(0.101)	(0.096)	(0.101)	(0.103)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.098	-0.088	-0.131	-0.077
	(0.576)	(0.628)	(0.685)	(0.525)
Age	-0.028*	-0.035**	-0.032*	-0.036**
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.016)
Sex	2.346***	2.563***	2.584***	2.429***
	(0.564)	(0.604)	(0.557)	(0.558)
Education	-0.190	-0.224	-0.272	-0.195
	(0.238)	(0.233)	(0.248)	(0.243)
Income	-0.079	-0.044	-0.106	-0.168
	(0.172)	(0.170)	(0.167)	(0.175)

Religiosity	-0.066 (0.306)	-0.068 (0.305)	-0.044 (0.315)	-0.057 (0.309)
Constant	-7.943 (5.554)	-3.124 (4.443)	-3.792 (4.811)	-6.121 (7.450)
<i>SP</i>				
Affective Polarization (SD)	-1.037 (0.825)	0.494 (0.805)	2.052** (1.040)	3.230*** (1.167)
Vote Switch	3.314 (3.451)	2.973 (2.487)	-24.079* (13.132)	-26.229** (13.129)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Vote Switch	-0.539 (0.977)	-0.600 (0.602)	2.997 (2.559)	3.907 (2.638)
Policy	-3.319 (2.221)	0.096 (2.423)	4.783* (2.881)	6.588** (2.573)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy	1.072* (0.578)	-0.144 (0.610)	-1.220* (0.656)	-1.680*** (0.598)
Policy $\times$ Vote Switch	-3.163 (2.716)	-18.323*** (3.155)	10.520 (7.783)	12.255 (7.840)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy $\times$ Vote Shift	0.621 (0.640)	2.755*** (0.834)	-1.031 (1.609)	(1.690)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.075 (0.333)	-0.018 (0.227)	-0.133 (0.301)	0.032 (0.270)
Closeness to Party	0.163 (0.719)	-0.079 (0.703)	-0.196 (0.750)	0.012 (0.677)
Ideological Extremity	-0.188 (0.309)	-0.141 (0.283)	-0.165 (0.227)	-0.132 (0.285)
Political Information	-0.595 (0.417)	-0.545 (0.403)	-0.459 (0.358)	-0.518 (0.351)

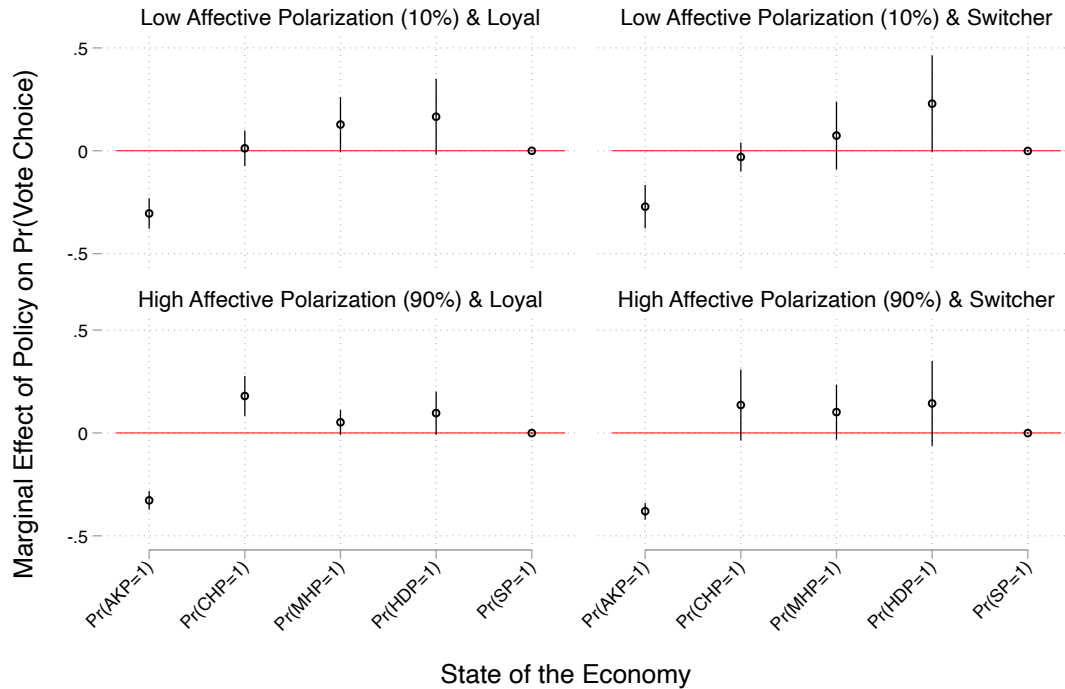
Number of Parties Placed	0.120 (0.581)	0.168 (0.564)	0.179 (0.609)	0.087 (0.537)
Age	0.032 (0.048)	0.044 (0.056)	0.020 (0.040)	0.025 (0.041)
Sex	-0.203 (0.863)	-0.570 (1.146)	-0.112 (0.809)	-0.036 (0.807)
Education	0.944* (0.565)	0.929 (0.658)	0.691 (0.497)	0.678 (0.483)
Income	-0.239 (0.265)	-0.320 (0.326)	-0.202 (0.256)	-0.190 (0.261)
Religiosity	2.568* (1.484)	2.103 (1.352)	2.477* (1.350)	2.208 (1.348)
Constant	-14.123 (10.707)	-16.267 (11.424)	-22.385* (12.613)	-27.002** (12.701)
Log likelihood	-487.204	-486.071	-484.991	-497.285
AIC	1118	1116	1112	1139
BIC	1421	1419	1411	1442
N	492	495	500	501

Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Two-tailed tests. * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

In Figure 3.4, we can see the marginal effect of the economic evaluations of individuals on the probability of vote choice according to their varying levels of affective polarization and vote switching. The most notable effect is observed when we take a look at the difference between the probability to vote for AKP and CHP. The effect of economy on the probability to vote for AKP is negative for both loyals and switchers. However, there seems no variation between the loyals and the switchers. That is the variation stems from the marginal effect of affective polarization. We see that for low affect individuals, the effect of economy on the probability to vote for CHP is negative (though not statistically significant since its respective confidence interval includes zero). However, for high-affect individuals, the effect is positive and statistically significant. That is, if an individual is highly polarized, economy plays an important role in determining her vote for the incumbent or for the main opposition. In the previous estimates on the probability to switch votes, we argued that polarization decreases the extent of economic voting since it alleviates the responsiveness to the economy. However, when we examine whom Turkish respondents vote for, we observe that both polarization and economy are determining factors on the vote choices of individuals.

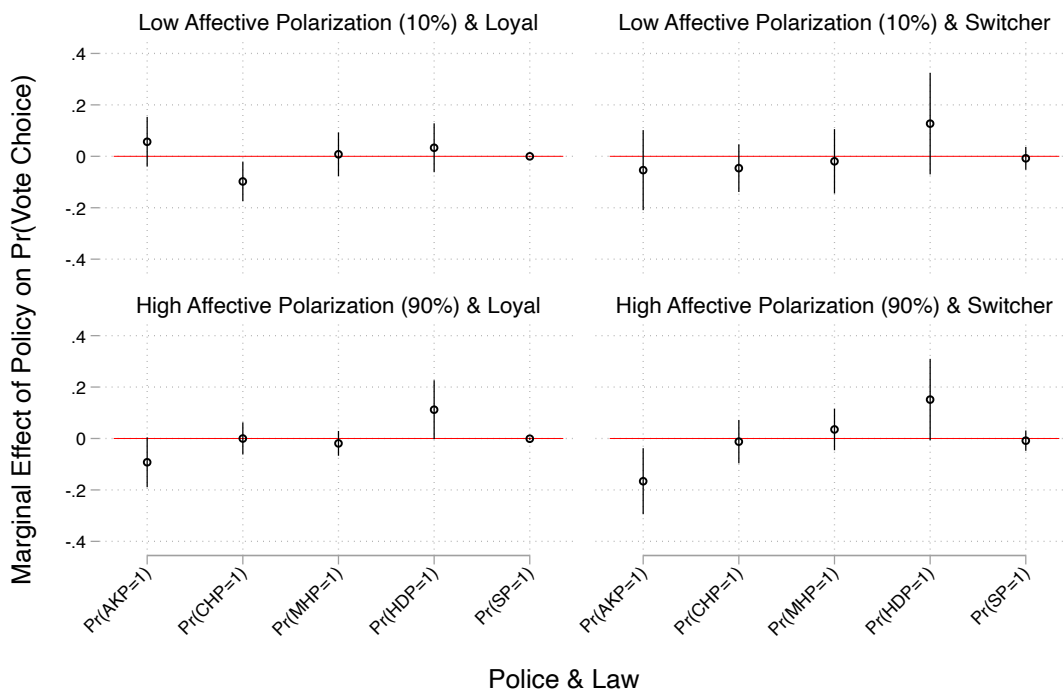
Figure 3.4 Marginal Effect of Economic Evaluations on Vote Choice



In regard to the effect police and law enforcement expenditure evaluation on vote choice in Figure 3.5, the most salient difference among the predicted marginal effects come from the difference between the probability of voting for AKP and HDP

of high-affect individuals. Discontent about police and law enforcement seems to increase the probability of voting for HDP and decrease the probability of voting for AKP of the high-affect individuals. Although, we see no statistically significant effect of police and law enforcement evaluation on the probability to switch in Figure 3.1, it apparently has an effect on vote choice for highly polarized individuals –albeit for only these two parties. Despite the fact that only 10% of the society considered terrorism as the most important problem, we can see this difference between the probabilities as a precursor of the November elections, which revolved strongly around the issue of terrorism, where we also observed respectively the largest increase and a significant decrease in the vote shares of the AKP and HDP.

Figure 3.5 Marginal Effect of Police & Law Expenditure Evaluations on Vote Choice

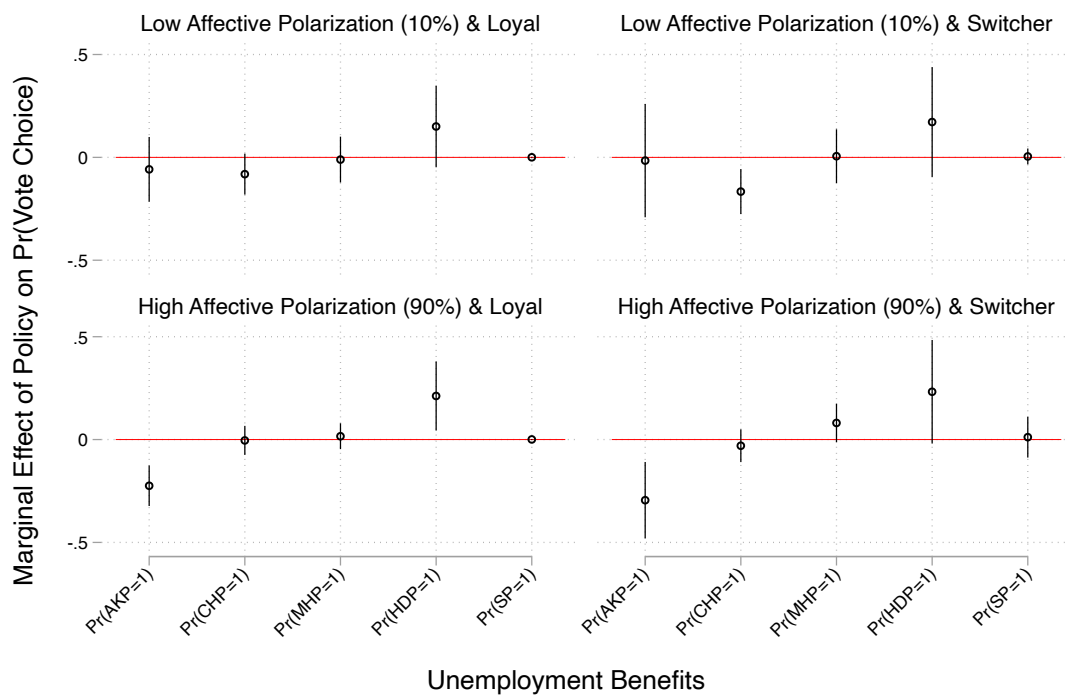


Unemployment benefits on the other hand, do not provide us with a meaningful variation in the probabilities of vote choice. Being discontent with the unemployment benefits has a negative effect on the probability to vote for the incumbent, AKP. However, it was apparently not considerable motive for individuals in the June 2015 elections.

A few things have to be discussed regarding the empirical findings, this chapter covers only the June 2015 elections of Turkey, thus the sample size is very small. Although 1086 survey respondents were interviewed for the study the CSES, after necessary listwise deletion of missing values in the empirical analyses, the sample

size decreases to 485 (i.e., size of the smallest effective sample). Besides, since AKP has a larger share of votes compared to the other parties, among these 485 respondents, a sizeable portion of respondents are AKP voters, which could explain significant effects regarding the propensity to vote for AKP and insignificant effects for the other party outcomes. Furthermore, since AKP is the incumbent party, policies are supposed to affect its electoral support negatively. Voters would punish AKP more for their discontent about policies, as opposed to the opposition parties, of course, if they are able to put responsibility on the correct party. Moreover, the repeating theme of this thesis is that polarized voters' propensity to vote for other parties would be lower. Thus, what is not taken into account in this analysis, and what could be investigated in a further research is, the probability of abstaining as opposed to voting for another party.

Figure 3.6 Marginal Effect of Unemployment Benefits Expenditure Evaluations on Vote Choice



3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, as already discussed in the previous chapters, this chapter aimed to examine a very small episode of a very intricate larger pattern, if there ever was a consistent pattern in the Turkish electoral behavior. In the previous studies, to understand the voting tendencies of Turkish citizens, students of Turkish politics have benefited from economic and ideological voting, and partisan attachment-based theories in explaining voting behavior in particular elections and there is empirical support for each of those at separate occasions. This chapter dealt with the same theories, but with a different question -vote switching- and a slightly different approach -policy and non-policy considerations.

The findings suggest that although the sociotropic economic evaluations have a positive effect on the probability of switching parties, the increasing levels of polarization diminish this effect for the Turkish voters as well. This is an important finding considering the economic conditions in Turkey, both in the context of June 2015 elections and for today. The polarization of the Turkish society and also polarizing discourse of the elites have been increasing for quite some time with an accompanying deterioration of the economy. Moreover, we show that polarization mediates the effects of economy, police and law enforcement, and unemployment benefits evaluations on vote choice and may lead to lower volatility than one would expect.

Apart from the voting behavior of Turkish citizens, the implications of this research are against the “responsible party” (APSA 1950) thesis, which upholds the responsibility of parties to the public. Knowing that high polarization hinders the possibility of punishing the incumbent or the opposition to a certain extent is worrisome. Not only it provides a rescue plan for the parties that do not perform well in the eyes of the public anymore, but shaping the public in a way that they would not respond to under-performing parties would create suboptimal government policies.

4. CONCLUSION

The seminal APSA Report on “Responsible Party” (APSA 1950) had brought about an important topic of debate to the political science community. In its report, the committee upheld the responsibility of the parties to the public. The committee claimed that, normatively, what makes a party good depends on whether it makes policy offerings to its electorates, carry them out when elected and, if not in power, it should come up with alternative policies, and lastly its policy offerings should be divergent enough so that voters would have a real choice. Thus, an ideal party (government) has the capability to produce and carry out good policies for the public. What the committee had not considered is, however, that divergence of party policy and ideological offerings may not always result in better policy outcomes.

The literature has not reached a consensus on the effect of polarization on voting behavior. A group of scholars have a more optimistic view of the divergence of parties, arguing that the more the options are distinct from each other, the better the voters can identify and take account of each policy. However, the others claim that as the distance between elites or parties increases and differences among them are reinforced, voters become more likely to pursue motivated reasoning based on their political identities instead of their issue preferences (Rogowski 2018). Trying to understand the determinants of political behavior is an intriguing but also a challenging task. My interest in trying to make sense of voting behavior stemmed from this growing debate among political scientists. The motivations that drive an individual to vote for the same party or to look for a change is an important and a partially unanswered question in the political science literature. For this reason, in this thesis I look into how individuals’ policy and non-policy considerations interactively affect their calculus of voting and, more specifically, their decision to remain loyal to the party they voted for or choose to defect. My main expectation is that the effects of issue considerations of individuals on the probability of vote switching decrease as their polarization, more specifically affective polarization, increases.

Two kind of explanations on voting behavior stand out in the existing literature—spatial voting theories highlighting the importance of ideological and policy pref-

erences, and non-policy related explanations based on voters' distinct politico-demographic attitudes –including but not limited to partisan identification. Both these theories provide us with considerable explanatory power. However, an individual would simultaneously have both types of incentives to vote for a particular party. For this reason, recent studies tend to focus more on explaining how policy and non-policy considerations interactively explain voting behavior. However, such interactive effects of policy- and non-policy considerations of voters on their decision to change their vote choices have so far been unexplored.

I employed the CSES Module 4 dataset to test my expectations regarding my cross-sectional examination of voting behavior. The findings are indeed not as straightforward. There is clearly a difference in the probability of vote switching between low- and high-affect individuals. However, high affective polarization does not interfere with all policy evaluations as expected. Although we can find evidence for the hypothesized interactive effect for some of the issue domains such as economy, health, or defense, this is not the case for others like education or old-age pensions.

In the second empirical chapter of this thesis, I further investigate the determinants of voting behavior in the Turkish context, more specifically for the June 2015 elections due to data unavailability. Firstly, I find that the effect of retrospective sociotropic economic evaluations on the probability to switch votes decreases as individuals' levels of affective polarization increase. This is an important finding given that one of the main themes of the June 2015 elections was the economy. In the pre-election period, 54% of the eligible voters considered economy the most important problem the country had been facing as Aytaç and Çarkoğlu (2019) notes. Moreover, the Turkish politics literature has long emphasized economic voting as one of the, if not the most, important determinants of voting behavior in Turkey. Nonetheless, we see that polarization plays a mediating role in the vote decision-making calculus of individuals, even though they consider the state of the economy as important and distressing. Secondly, I provide evidence for polarization mediating not only the effect of economy, but also those of police and law enforcement, and unemployment on vote choice and, therefore, producing different outcomes in the probability to vote for particular parties within the context of the June 2015 parliamentary elections than a policy-based model would predict.

The implications of this research are not limited to explaining voting behavior of individuals from a comparative perspective and in Turkey. Democratic theory considers elections to be the links that connect public opinion with government policies, based on the very assumption that voters take policies into consideration when voting (Page and Brody 1972). The question asked in this thesis is thus critical to not

only for our understanding of how voters perceive candidates' offerings and behave accordingly but also for the quality and responsiveness of democracies (Powell 2000). Learning that high levels of citizen polarization impede the possibility of punishing the incumbent or opposition parties to a certain extent unfortunately would not provide us with an optimistic or an idealistic vision of politics. High polarization provides political parties and candidates with a way to not be "responsible" when it suits their purposes. Because democracy rests on the assumptions of accountability and responsiveness, parties should be held accountable for their suboptimal policies and respond accordingly when the public is discontent. Polarization's such negative effects on these very notions would thus produce inefficient outcomes. Although the effect of polarization on the translation of policy preferences into voting behavior and, more specifically, voters' punishment of suboptimal party and policy performance are not direct, with its aforementioned effect, the possibility of voters punishing incumbent or opposition parties decreases to a considerable extent.

There are, of course, limitations to my research as well. As mentioned in the previous chapters, potential measurement error as a result of possible memory problems by the respondents is one of such important limitations. Panel data would be a much better option for our research question both in terms of measurement and internal validities.

Secondly, some of the public expenditure questions that are used as the main independent variables are related to the so-called *valence issues* (Stokes 1963), thus, might be problematic measures of whether individuals are discontent with government policies and to study issue voting. Old-age care and education, for example, have been considered typical valence issue examples (Narud and Valen 2000), as opposed to positional issues, which are more appropriate to study issue voting. Thus, it is difficult to test the hypotheses with these valence issues. Furthermore, the thesis does not capture the variation on issues across countries. The salience of issues might not be the same in all examined party systems. As such, the noise stemming from the variation should also be taken into consideration in further research.

Further research may also focus on vote switching, not as a binary variable, but as a categorical variable that also takes account of its direction –i.e., from which party (or which party family) the voter switches from– or examine whether the voter switches from or to the incumbent party. This could provide us with more nuanced explanations of vote switching behavior. In these respects, our focus on Turkey as a case study would perhaps be of more interest to students of voting behavior who, arguably, would be able to study such shifts more easily within particular countries and over time, especially in the absence of cross-national panel data suitable for the

task at hand.



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APPENDIX A

Sensitivity Checks for Different Measures of Affective Polarization

Table A.1 State of the Economy

	Standard Deviation	Maximum-Minimum
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.066 (0.102)	
State of the Economy	0.432*** (0.127)	0.365*** (0.134)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ State of the Economy	-0.038 (0.042)	
Affective Polarization (Max-Min)		-0.068 (0.042)
Affective Polarization (Max-Min) $\times$ State of the Economy		-0.006 (0.017)
Party System Polarization	-0.585*** (0.065)	-0.570*** (0.065)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.042 (0.033)	0.049 (0.032)
Closeness to Party	-0.365*** (0.041)	-0.354*** (0.041)
Ideological Extremity	-0.047** (0.019)	-0.045** (0.019)
Political Information	0.025* (0.014)	0.024* (0.014)
No. of Parties Placed	0.019 (0.022)	0.047** (0.022)
Age	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)
Sex	0.079 (0.052)	0.077 (0.052)
Education	0.055*** (0.020)	0.052*** (0.020)
Income	-0.051*** (0.014)	-0.050*** (0.014)
Religiosity	-0.137*** (0.028)	-0.137*** (0.028)
Constant	1.718*** (0.417)	1.766*** (0.423)
Log likelihood	-4476.669	-4469.665
AIC	8983	8969
BIC	9088	9074
N	7724	7724

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A.2 Welfare Benefits

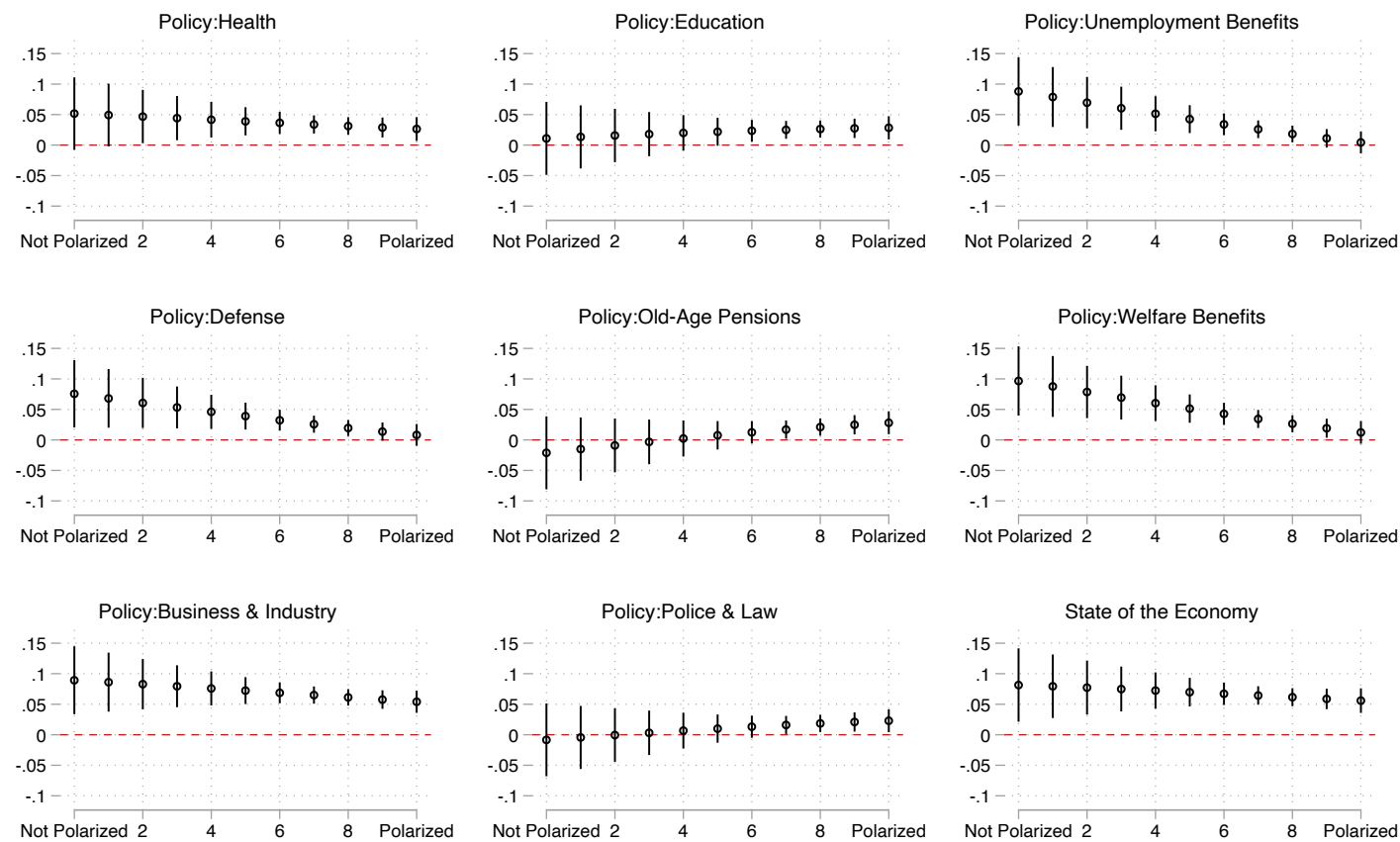
	Standard Deviation	Maximum-Minimum
Affective Polarization (SD)	-0.112** (0.050)	
Policy:Welfare Benefits	0.320*** (0.119)	0.417*** (0.127)
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Policy:Welfare Benefits	-0.059 (0.039)	
Affective Polarization (Max-Min)		-0.060*** (0.021)
Affective Polarization (Max-Min) $\times$ Policy:Welfare Benefits		-0.035** (0.016)
Party System Polarization	-0.464*** (0.065)	-0.448*** (0.065)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.026 (0.034)	0.035 (0.033)
Closeness to Party	-0.390*** (0.042)	-0.375*** (0.042)
Ideological Extremity	-0.042** (0.019)	-0.041** (0.020)
Political Information	0.021 (0.014)	0.019 (0.014)
No. of Parties Placed	0.027 (0.022)	0.059*** (0.023)
Age	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.002)
Sex	0.083 (0.053)	0.083 (0.054)
Education	0.062*** (0.020)	0.059*** (0.020)
Income	-0.058*** (0.014)	-0.057*** (0.014)
Religiosity	-0.144*** (0.029)	-0.145*** (0.029)
Constant	2.127*** (0.338)	1.934*** (0.338)
Log likelihood	-4323.978	-4312.853
AIC	8678	8656
BIC	8782	8759
N	7441	7441

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Figure A.1 Marginal Effect of Related Policy Evaluation on Pr(Vote Switch) | Affective Polarization (Max-Min Measure)

Marginal Effect of Policy on Pr(Vote Switch)



APPENDIX B

Sensitivity Checks for Different Measures of Affective Polarization

Table B.1 State of the Economy

	Ingroup-Outgroup	Standard Deviation	Maximum-Minimum
Affective Polarization (Ingroup-Outgroup)	-0.471* (0.272)		
State of the Economy	-0.262 (0.672)	0.871 (0.856)	0.669 (0.846)
Affective Polarization (Ingroup-Outgroup) $\times$ State of the Economy	0.079 (0.102)		
Affective Polarization (SD)		-0.139 (0.595)	
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ State of the Economy		-0.177 (0.253)	
Affective Polarization (Max-Min)			-0.113 (0.237)
Affective Polarization (Max-Min) $\times$ State of the Economy			-0.048 (0.101)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.127 (0.217)	0.043 (0.207)	0.029 (0.204)
Closeness to Party	-0.111 (0.345)	-0.260 (0.338)	-0.267 (0.336)
Ideological Extremity	-0.153 (0.123)	-0.164 (0.119)	-0.168 (0.119)
Political Information	0.215* (0.117)	0.161 (0.118)	0.162 (0.118)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.103 (0.545)	-0.440 (0.516)	-0.287 (0.522)
Age	-0.013 (0.015)	-0.014 (0.015)	-0.014 (0.014)
Sex	0.575 (0.378)	0.611 (0.376)	0.620 (0.379)
Education	-0.398** (0.177)	-0.353** (0.177)	-0.349** (0.177)
Income	0.102 (0.132)	0.095 (0.127)	0.097 (0.128)
Religiosity	0.240 (0.336)	0.278 (0.325)	0.274 (0.333)
Constant	0.710 (4.643)	0.505 (4.732)	0.161 (4.763)
Log likelihood	-108.027	-111.411	-111.449
AIC	244	251	251
BIC	302	309	309
N	466	466	466

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table B.2 Welfare Benefits

	Ingroup-Outgroup	Standard Deviation	Maximum-Minimum
Affective Polarization (Ingroup-Outgroup)	-0.111 (0.145)		
Welfare Benefits	1.167* (0.651)	1.417 (0.918)	1.106 (0.783)
Affective Polarization (Ingroup-Outgroup) $\times$ Welfare Benefits	-0.117 (0.093)		
Affective Polarization (SD)		-0.092 (0.429)	
Affective Polarization (SD) $\times$ Welfare Benefits		-0.313 (0.270)	
Affective Polarization (Max-Min)			-0.106 (0.140)
Affective Polarization (Max-Min) $\times$ Welfare Benefits			-0.089 (0.094)
Perceived Party Polarization (SD)	0.093 (0.216)	0.007 (0.202)	-0.001 (0.201)
Closeness to Party	-0.227 (0.343)	-0.390 (0.333)	-0.395 (0.333)
Ideological Extremity	-0.133 (0.125)	-0.123 (0.117)	-0.127 (0.115)
Political Information	0.189* (0.111)	0.170 (0.112)	0.167 (0.111)
Number of Parties Placed	-0.139 (0.611)	-0.456 (0.514)	-0.319 (0.526)
Age	-0.014 (0.015)	-0.014 (0.015)	-0.014 (0.015)
Sex	0.709* (0.376)	0.713* (0.376)	0.730* (0.378)
Education	-0.424** (0.179)	-0.380** (0.180)	-0.377** (0.177)
Income	0.093 (0.135)	0.093 (0.127)	0.097 (0.127)
Religiosity	0.243 (0.327)	0.256 (0.319)	0.262 (0.327)
Constant	-0.972 (4.555)	0.986 (4.293)	0.758 (4.123)
Log likelihood	-106.916	-110.598	-110.662
AIC	242	249	249
BIC	300	307	307
N	467	467	467

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Marginal Effect of Policies on Vote Choice

