Who Wants a Coup?
A List Experiment in Turkey

Sharan Grewal*

October 3, 2018

Abstract

The failed coup in Turkey in 2016 highlighted the importance of public support for a military takeover. Why do some coups enjoy public support while others do not? This paper presents a new theory for when the opposition will support a coup, hypothesizing that they should oppose a coup if they believe that: (1) they can win in elections, (2) the military will not appoint the opposition to power, or (3) a coup will increase sympathy for the ruling party. This paper then tests this theory through an original list experiment of 820 Turkish citizens gauging their support for the 2016 coup attempt. Results suggest that Turkish citizens may have opposed the coup as a result of these strategic, political considerations about the best pathways to power.

*Postdoctoral fellow at Brookings (sgrewal@brookings.edu). Survey approved through Princeton IRB #7855. I thank Kim Guiler and Matthew Cebul for jointly fielding the survey in Turkey and for helpful feedback. I also thank Holger Albrecht, Risa Brooks, Erica de Bruin, Ekrem Karakoç, Kemal Kirişçi and participants at the 2018 APSA conference for useful questions and comments.
1 Introduction

On July 15, 2016, Turkish troops descended upon strategic locations in Istanbul and Ankara in an attempt to stage a coup. The coup-plotters, self-styled the Peace at Home Council, had hoped to continue a trend of the military ousting polarizing presidents who in their mind had violated core tenets of secularism and democracy, as in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. But this time, the coup-plotters faced unexpected resistance. Thousands of Turkish citizens, both supporters of the regime and its opposition, fought back, blocking the soldiers on the Bosphorus bridge and climbing aboard their tanks. While some of the coup-plotters were willing to fire upon this cross-section of the Turkish public, many were not, and their subsequent fracturing soon led to the failure of the putsch.

The defeat of the 2016 Turkish coup at the hands of civilians was by no means unprecedented. In 1991, the August Putsch against the Soviet Union’s Mikhail Gorbachev failed after Boris Yeltsin mounted a tank and rallied the masses to oppose the coup (Gibson, 1997). Thirty years earlier, French President Charles de Gaulle employed a campaign of civil resistance to defeat the Algiers Putsch, famously calling on “Frenchwomen, Frenchmen, help me!” (Roberts, 1975). Mass protests similarly defeated coups in Russia (1917), Germany (1920), Japan (1936), Ethiopia (1960), Czechoslovakia (1968), Bolivia (1979), and Spain (1981), among others.

That public support is critical to the success of a military takeover is well-known. In The Man on Horseback, Finer (1962) argued that for a successful coup, the military would need not only a motive, but also an opportunity: namely, a population sufficiently disillusioned with the current regime to support a coup. Stepan (1971) famously contended that successful coups are even preceded by a “knock on the door of the barracks” – an explicit call by civilians for the military to intervene.

Why do some coups enjoy sufficient public support while others are defeated by mass protests? How do we explain such variation in support for coups over time and space? Given that military coups are the most common form of regime change (Singh, 2014), it is striking
that these questions have only been subject to a handful of empirical examinations. While many studies attempt to predict the occurrence of coups, few have attempted to analyze public support for coups. These few studies find that dissatisfaction and opposition to the government drive support for coups (Myers and O’Connor, 1998; Seligson and Carrión, 2002; Booth and Seligson, 2009; Cassell, Seligson and Booth, 2016), while support for democracy may reduce it (Gibson, 1997; Sarigil, 2015).

This paper offers additional explanations rooted in what it terms ‘strategic power-seeking.’ The central insight of the theory is to view military coups as one of many options the opposition has to assume power. Variation in the appeal of each of these options should affect support for coups. First, I hypothesize that individuals who believe that they cannot win in elections should be more supportive of military coups. Second, individuals who trust that the military will not only oust the existing regime but also subsequently appoint their favored alternative should be more supportive of coups. Finally, individuals who believe that in the long-term a coup will only increase sympathy for the regime and its ideology should be less supportive of a military coup.

These strategic considerations, I argue, can help to explain why Turkish citizens did not support a coup in 2016, even while many had supported previous attempts. By 2016, the Turkish opposition had increasingly come to believe that it could defeat the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in elections. Moreover, they had learned from past experience that coups do not necessarily elevate the opposition to power and may instead increase sympathy for the AKP. These political considerations do a better job of explaining why Turkish citizens opposed the 2016 coup attempt than competing explanations regarding increased commitment to democracy or the European Union.

In testing the theory, this paper also offers two methodological improvements over previous studies. First, it examines support for a real coup attempt immediately after it occurred, rather than examining support for military rule in the abstract. Second, in recognition of the

---

1See, e.g., Thompson (1975); McGowan and Johnson (1984); Londregan and Poole (1990); Clark (2007); Lehoucq and Perez-Linan (2014); Gassebner, Gutmann and Voigt (2016) and Kim (2016).
sensitive nature of this question, the paper employs a list experiment (Kuklinski, Cobb and Gilens, 1997; Corstange, 2009; Blair and Imai, 2012) to help capture underlying preferences toward military coups.

Overall, the theory presented herein can help to explain variation in public support for coups both across countries and across time. Where other avenues for gaining political power are more promising than a coup, there should be less support for a military takeover. Importantly, this theory also highlights one channel by which some countries eventually escape the coup trap: where previous coups failed to elevate the opposition to power, public confidence in military coups as a means to political power may decline.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 outlines the motivations of the paper, highlighting the critical role public support can play in the success or failure of a military coup, and illustrating this point through the case of Turkey. Section 3 then generates several hypotheses for who is likely to support military coups, presenting the theory of strategic power-seeking. Section 4 presents the data used to test these hypotheses, and analyzes the results. The final section concludes with an eye toward future research.

2 Motivation

Scholars have long observed that public support is critical to the success or failure of a military coup. Finer (1962), for instance, outlined two necessary conditions for a successful takeover: a military with a disposition (or motive) to intervene, and the opportunity for it to do so:

“...The military may well be angry or humiliated, and disposed to intervene; but how they will do so, when they will do so, and possibly whether they will in fact do so may and usually does depend on another factor. This factor is the opportunity to intervene. [...] Certain situations [...] enhance the military’s popularity while correspondingly depressing that of the civil authorities, [...] rendering them easier
prey to the intervention of the army” (Finer, 1962, p. 70-80).

Luttwak (1969) similarly contended that coups require certain preconditions that among the public “generate sufficient apathy and distrust of the regime to make a coup possible” (p. 30), such as a “severe and prolonged economic crisis” (p. 31). Stepan (1971) was even more explicit:

“Military coups tend to be successful, when, before the coup attempt, executive legitimacy is low and the legitimacy given by the relevant political strata to the military to intervene are high. [...] If we assume (as I do) that at all times there are some military officers anxious to overthrow the government [...], the attitudes of the pro-regime\(^{2}\) civilians are likely to be determining” (Stepan, 1971, p. 80-81).

It may not be readily apparent why a military would fear resistance from unarmed civilians. Couldn’t the coup-plotters simply fire upon protesters, if needed? The fact of the matter is that many soldiers may not be willing to kill civilians. As the defection literature\(^{3}\) has observed, militaries are trained for battle with armed enemies, not unarmed protesters, and thus often view the latter as outside their responsibilities. Whatever grievances the coup-plotters may harbor toward the regime, they may not rise to a level warranting a massacre of their countrymen. Especially if the protesters are numerous and represent a cross-section of society – not simply regime supporters – some soldiers may refuse to fire.

That fracturing of the coup-plotters, or even the expectation that the military will fracture, then undermines the unity needed for a coup to succeed. Singh (2014) observes that coups are like coordination games: if members of the military believe others may not join the coup, they will refuse to do so as well. Accordingly, “mass civilian mobilization can be

---

\(^{2}\)For Stepan (1971), pro-regime civilians “include congressmen, governors, political party leaders, newspaper editors, and voters who generally accept the constitutional framework and support the existing regime, but who may or may not support the government at specific times” (p. 73).

\(^{3}\)See, e.g., McLauchlin (2010); Bellin (2012); Brooks (2013); Lutterbeck (2013); Lee (2015); Nassif (2015); Albrecht and Ohl (2016); Barany (2016); Koehler (2016) and Grewal (2018).
useful in blocking a coup attempt if [they create] widespread expectations that the military will split” (Singh, 2014, p. 38).

Coup-plotters themselves acknowledge that they need public support for their takeovers. After seizing power in Nigeria in 1983, coup-plotter Major General Ibrahim Babangida noted that they had waited until there was sufficient public support:

“We could have toppled that government in 1982, before the [1983] elections. But then, we said no, because the people might go against us. [...] We waited for the right time. You see, to stage a coup, there is one basic element that everybody looks for; there must be frustration in the society. [...] We found the coup easier when there was frustration in the land” (quoted in Siollun (2013)).

In part because public support for a coup is difficult to measure, quantitative analyses have been slow to complement these qualitative findings. As of yet, there have been no direct, cross-national tests of whether public support correlates with coup success. There have, however, been several indirect tests. Among autocracies, scholars have found that those with more legitimacy – as proxied by the presence of a ruling party (Geddes, 1999) or a legislature (Bove and Rivera, 2015) are less likely to fall to coups. Wig and Rod (2016) find that autocratic elections in which the regime performs poorly or the result is contested are more likely to spark coups. Among all regimes, Powell (2012), Casper and Tyson (2014), and Johnson and Thyne (2018) find that anti-government protests and riots correlate with successful coups. However, what is important is that there is public support for a coup, not simply public opposition to the government. Anti-government protests are not necessarily pro-coup: the Turkey opposition had protested heavily against Erdoğan – for instance, in the 2013 Gezi park protests – but still did not support the 2016 coup attempt.

A quick attempt at a more direct test of public support and coup outcomes provides initial quantitative support for this relationship. Figure 1 plots the percent of respondents who

---

4Singh (2014) is actually relatively skeptical of public resistance defeating coups, though he acknowledges this potential mechanism.
agree or strongly agree that “military rule is a good way to run the country,” as measured by the World Values Survey, for the eight coups in which this question was asked within two years of a coup (coups coded from Powell and Thyne (2011)). As the figure illustrates, the three coups that failed – Azerbaijan 1995, Bangladesh 1996, and Venezuela 2002 – each had very low levels of public support: on average, only 10 percent of respondents supported military rule in these cases. Each the five successful coups, by contrast, enjoyed larger percentages of public support, with an average of 34 percent supporting military rule. In short, countries with greater public support for military rule were more likely to see successful coups.

![Figure 1: World Values Survey within Two Years of Coup](image)

2.1 The 2016 Turkish Coup

The failure of the Turkish coup of 2016 underscores the importance of public support. Ahead of their attempted coup, the coup-plotters had not bothered to inform the opposition or rally them to the streets, naïvely believing they would support the coup as they had supported previous coups in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 (Hale, 1994; Ulus, 2011; Pelt, 2014).

When the soldiers began their coup around 10 pm on July 15, they were surprised to find that the opposition was not on board. By contrast, each of the opposition party leaders con-
denounced the putsch. Even the Republican People’s Party (CHP), the party of Kemal Atatürk that had prominently supported previous coups, opposed this attempt. Upon learning about it on a plane around 11pm, CHP party leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu reportedly approached the AKP’s deputy chairman, who happened to be on the same flight, to express his opposition to the coup.\(^5\) The CHP later released a public statement denouncing the attempt, and asked its lawmakers to do the same in parliament (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017, p. 67).

The other opposition parties followed suit. The leader of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), Devlet Bahçeli, reportedly phoned Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım upon hearing the news, telling him his party “would never accept a coup.”\(^6\) The pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) publicly declared their opposition “to any kind of coup under any circumstances and as a principle.”\(^7\) Each of the minor parties – the Patriotic Party, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), and the Communist Party – similarly opposed the coup.\(^8\)

“In a departure from what had happened during other coups in Turkish history,” write Esen and Gumuscu (2017), “opposition elites did not endorse the toppling of the civilian government and instead publicly sided with the incumbents. This drastically cut short the coup’s potential for gaining popular support” (p. 68).

Not only did the opposition oppose the coup rhetorically, many also joined regime supporters in protesting against the coup. Protests had emerged immediately and organically, well prior to President Erdoğan’s Facetime plea for Turks to help him defend democracy (Unver and Alassaad, 2016). Of these immediate protesters, only 57% were AKP party members, and 83% voted for the AKP in November 2015 (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017, p. 64). Accordingly, many in the opposition had joined regime supporters in protesting the coup.

These protests, representing a cross-section of Turkish society, led the coup-plotters to


fracture. While some fired on the protesters, other “rank-and-file troops gave up their arms rather than fire on civilians. […] By early on the morning of July 16, it was apparent that the bulk of the Turkish armed forces were not behind the coup, and that popular resistance was too intense and widespread to overcome. Hundreds of soldiers surrendered while others were captured by police” (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017, p. 62).9

In short, observers agree that a lack of public support was one of if not the most important reason the 2016 coup attempt failed (Cook, 2016; Kinney, 2016; Esen and Gumuscu, 2017). This begs the question: why didn’t the Turkish opposition support this coup attempt, when they had supported coups in the past? More generally, why is public support for a coup higher in some countries and in some time periods than others?

3 Hypotheses

Several hypotheses can be generated regarding who would support a military coup. Given that regime supporters are likely to oppose a coup, this paper focuses on explaining variation among the opposition. In particular, this paper puts forth a series of hypotheses rooted in what I call ‘strategic power-seeking.’ The central insight of the theory is to view military coups as but one of many options opposition parties have to reach political power. Rather than a coup, opposition parties could run in elections, foment a popular revolution, or even start a civil war. I argue that variation in the attractiveness of these options should impact support for a military coup. From this vantage point, and from case knowledge of Turkey, I derive three specific hypotheses:

9Beyond encouraging defections, the anti-coup protests also defeated the coup through a second mechanism: physically blocking the coup-plotters from carrying out the offensive operations needed in the coup. “The tanks at the army base in Mamak never even made it out the gate – thousands of people were blocking their way” (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017, p. 64).
3.1 Can the Opposition Win Elections?

First, members of the opposition who believe that elections are a viable way to power should be less supportive of a coup. If opposition parties believe they can win in an election, there is no need to rely on the military.\textsuperscript{10}

Turkey’s opposition parties had supported previous coups in part because they could not win in elections at the time. Ahead of the 1960 coup, Adnan Menderes and his Democrat Party had won three massive electoral victories in a row, securing 84% of seats in the parliament in 1950, 93% in 1954, and 70% in 1957. Accordingly, opposition parties like the CHP lost faith in elections as a means to power, and turned to the military:

“Menderes’ overwhelming success in the 1950 elections was repeated in 1954 and 1957. It was against this background, as well as because of a fear that he would use extreme political methods to extend his hold on the government into the 1960s, that relations with the CHP and its supporters deteriorated beyond repair. [...] Kemalism was used by the old elite of the one-party era, hence also called the Kemalists, as an instrument to disqualify and fight competing elites” (Pelt, 2014, p. 2-4).

A similar story can be told for the CHP’s support for the 1971 coup. Süleyman Demirel’s Justice Party, the successor to the Democrat Party, had won 53% of the parliament in 1965 and then 57% in 1969. As Hale (1994) observed: “Demirel’s two election victories left the opposition parties in a state of turmoil. The [CHP], in particular, was naturally depressed by its failure to win an overall majority in any of the six general elections which had been held since 1950” (p. 175). Many in the CHP therefore “welcomed the [1971] memorandum as a means of implementing their own programme” (Hale, 1994, p. 195).

Beyond the CHP, many of the smaller opposition movements also supported these coups for electoral reasons. With Menderes in the 1950s and Demirel in the 1960s receiving absolute

\textsuperscript{10}This argument echoes Kinney (2018), who argues that the opposition in 1930s Iraq and 1950s Syria turned to coups when rigging and ballot-box stuffing prevented them from reaching power through elections.
majorities, small leftist parties did not even have the option of joining a ruling coalition in order to influence policy (Ulus, 2011, p. 37). Growing electoral thresholds, moreover, threatened to remove their representation in the parliament entirely. After the 1965 elections, leftist thinker Doğan Avcıoğlu wrote:

“The strategy of the [leftist party] TİP, influencing people ideologically and getting their assent to their party programme and coming to power through the votes of the people, was regarded as poor romanticism [...] The only way to get the assent of the people [...] was to come to power through anti-parliamentary methods and [then] gain the support of the people by initiating changes that would favour them. Hope lay in a probable reaction of the military to the victory of the [Justice Party]” (Ulus, 2011, p. 38).

Without recourse to elections, opposition parties in 1960 and 1971 believed that a coup was their only chance to power.

In 2016, however, opposition parties had increasingly come to believe they could beat the AKP in elections. Since 2011, the economy had begun a gradual descent, hurting the regime’s popularity. In the June 2015 parliamentary elections, the AKP had dropped from 327 seats to just 258 in the 550-member assembly, fewer than the combined total of the three opposition parties (292).\textsuperscript{11} The excitement with which the Turkish opposition approached the 2018 elections\textsuperscript{12} reinforces this point: many in the opposition believed they had a shot through elections, and thus did not need the ‘shot’ of the military. In sum, we can hypothesize that:


H1: Members of the opposition who believe they can win in elections should be less supportive of a military coup.

3.2 Will the Opposition Come to Power?

A second factor that should affect support for a military coup is whether members of the opposition believe that a coup will actually bring their party to power. While a coup will topple the existing regime, there is no guarantee the military appoints the opposition afterwards.

The first Turkish coup, in 1960, did propel the opposition to power. The military appointed both the CHP and the Republican Nation Party to the 1961 constituent assembly. The CHP not only got to nominate 49 of the 296 members, but “a big majority of those chosen as provincial representatives, or by professional organizations, were known to be [CHP] sympathisers” (Hale, 1994, p. 137).

The 1971 coup-by-memorandum again elevated the CHP to power. In the post-coup cabinet, the CHP claimed a deputy Prime Minister, Sadi Koças, as well as a number of ministers. Leftist parties, despite largely supporting the coup, were not so lucky. One month after the March 12 memorandum, the military instead declared martial law and initiated Operation Sledgehammer [balyoz harekâtı], arresting 547 leftists in the first five days of the operation. As Ulus (2011) observed:

“The 12 March military intervention and annihilation of the leading cadres of THKO, THKP-C and TKP-ML was a big shock to the leftists, especially the young. The sense of an alliance with the army, or that co-operation could be established through leftist military officers [...] was shattered by the repression of the leftists, measures directly aimed at curbing trade union activism and restrictions on civil rights. [...] The leftists had seemed to believe strongly in the revolutionary tradition of the army, and therefore were terribly traumatized by the 12 March intervention” (Ulus, 2011, p. 131).
Having been duped in 1971, Turkey’s leftists came to oppose future interventions, no longer trusting the military to appoint them to power.

The remaining opposition parties, including the CHP, subsequently learned this lesson after the 1980 coup. Rather than elevating the opposition, the military in 1980 dissolved all parties, ruling or opposition, and confiscated their property (McFadden, 1985; Milan, 2016). The assembly the military created to draft the new constitution had no members of the former political parties, and the constitution they passed in 1982 banned all members of the former National Assembly from running in elections for 5 years (McFadden, 1985, p. 71). Nearly 650,000 people were arrested (Demirel, 2005, p. 251), with coup leader General Kenan Evren today boasting, “we [the junta] hanged one from the right, [and] one from the left. In this way, we wanted to prove we were not taking sides.” In short, none of the opposition parties in 1980 were helped by the coup, and instead were made considerably worse off. The repression and trauma of the 1980 coup has been deeply embedded into Turkey’s “collective memory” to this day (Orhon, 2015; Karacan, 2016; Basçı, 2017).

The behavior of the military in these previous coups, I argue, may have shaped the Turkish opposition’s refusal to support a coup in 2016. The opposition simply did not trust the military to appoint them to power afterwards. Qualitative evidence of this lesson learned can be seen in the reporting following the failed coup. CHP MP Mahmut Tanal, for instance, did not view the coup as a potential route to power, but rather a potential route to prison: “As a member of the secular opposition Republican People’s Party, Tanal feared arrest should the military seize power. A student of Turkey’s history with military coups, which includes four changes of government since 1960, Tanal had a dark notion of what was coming.” If the Turkish opposition learned from previous coups not to trust the military, then we should find that:

---

14 That the opposition was thinking about previous coups was clear from Kılıçdaroğlu’s statement: “This country has suffered a lot from coups. We do not want these difficulties to be repeated.” See http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/opposition-parties-reject-the-military-coup-attempt-101670.
H2: Members of the opposition who do not trust the military to appoint them to power should be less supportive of a military coup.

3.3 Will the Coup Increase Sympathy for the Ruling Party?

A final factor that should affect support for a military coup is whether members of the opposition believe that a coup will simply increase sympathy for the ruling party. In the long-term, if the popularity of the ousted party and its ideology increases, it is likely to win the next elections at an even higher rate.

That coups only increase sympathy for the ruling party has been the lesson learned from Turkey’s most recent “post-modern coup” in 1997. After the military forced Necmettin Erbakan to resign and then dissolved his Welfare Party, Turkish Islamists re-grouped in the form of the AKP, and drew upon their image as victims of the military to increase their appeal and sweep the 2002 elections. “Central themes in the AKP’s [campaign] rhetoric,” notes Aslan (2016), were “Muslim victimhood and suffering due to injustices at the hands of the enemy – whether Kemalists, Westerners, secularists, Israelis, or the military.” Erdogan himself was able to use his experience of being imprisoned for reciting a poem in 1997 to increase his appeal.

Beyond garnering sympathy, Guiler (2018) argues that this victimhood can also “signal to voters that they are credible, committed to their cause, and serious about change.” By increasing their perceived integrity and resolve, coups may thus grant the ousted party an electoral advantage over opposition parties that are instead perceived as having “opportunistically” used the coup to propel themselves to power (Ozel, 2003, p. 88).

Moreover, their status as victims of the military can make voting for the ousted party a protest vote against the military, increasing their vote share beyond their ideological base. As Haliloğlu (2017) observes: “in the [AKP] party rhetoric, their popularity was the Turkish public’s response to previous coups, their way of saying ‘never again.’” Indeed, one of the AKP’s slogans after the 2016 coup attempt was to equate Erdoğan with the previous victims...
of the Turkish military’s coups: “You hung Menderes, you poisoned Özal, were not letting you swallow Erdoğan.”

In short, if the Turkish opposition learned from the 1997 coup that military intervention will simply increase support for the Islamists, then they may be reluctant to support another attempt. Accordingly, we can hypothesize that:

**H3: Members of the opposition who believe the ruling party will simply gain sympathy should be less supportive of a military coup.**

4 Data

To see if these power-seeking considerations were why the Turkish opposition did not support the 2016 coup, I conducted a survey in Turkey one month after the July 15 coup attempt.\(^\text{16}\) Given that survey companies were hesitant to ask about support for the coup, respondents were instead recruited through Facebook advertisements, a commonly-used method of survey recruitment in the social sciences (Bhutta, 2012; Cassese et al., 2013; Samuels and Zucco, 2013; Kosinski et al., 2015; Antoun et al., 2016; Rife et al., 2016). Turkey has the 9th highest number of Facebook users in the world, with 39 million users daily in September 2016.\(^\text{17}\) About 96% of internet users in Turkey have a Facebook account, reaching roughly 50% of the Turkish population.\(^\text{18}\)

The Facebook advertisement (see appendix) featured a link to the Qualtrics survey and asked Turkish citizens to fill out a short questionnaire to be entered into a raffle for an iPad.\(^\text{19}\) The advertisement was shown on Facebook to all Turkish citizens over 18 years old between August 15 and October 1, 2016.\(^\text{20}\) In total, 819 Turkish citizens completed the

\(^{16}\)The survey was fielded jointly with Kim Guiler (UT-Austin) and Matthew Cebul (Yale), with each of us providing separate sections of the questionnaire.


\(^{19}\)The randomly selected winner received his iPad in November 2016.

\(^{20}\)Facebook was later banned in Turkey in December 2016.
A common critique of Facebook surveys is that they target a biased sample: typically one that is younger, wealthier, and more liberal than the national population. To gauge the representativeness of our sample, Table 1 compares it to the nationally representative 2011 World Values Survey, the 2011 census, and the November 2015 elections. Overall, the survey sample was fairly representative of the national population. While slightly under-representing women and over-representing students, the survey was representative in terms of age, education, geographic location, income, and vote choice in the November 2015 elections. About 10% of the sample identifies as Kurdish, compared to 5.4 in the World Values Survey, but scholars argue that the true figure is closer to 12-14% (Mutlu, 1996; Koc, Hancioglu and Cavlin, 2008; Karakoç, 2013; Livny, 2018). While our intent in this survey is not to make inferences about the general population – it is to make comparisons within the sample itself – it is reassuring that the survey sample is relatively representative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Facebook 2016</th>
<th>WVS 2011</th>
<th>Census 2011</th>
<th>Nov. 2015 Elex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Age</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No College</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Income (10-pt scale)</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurdish</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Religion in Politics</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AKP</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHP</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDP/BDP</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>1,605</td>
<td>74,525,696</td>
<td>47,840,231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire consisted of four batteries, one for each survey partner plus demographic questions at the end. While 819 respondents completed my section (the first section), only 406 made it to the final demographics.
4.1 Measuring Coup Support

The survey features two major advantages over the few previous surveys that have examined support for coups. The first is that most of the existing surveys ask for ‘support for military rule’ in the abstract. Our survey, like Gibson (1997) and Myers and O’Connor (1998), instead asks about support for a specific military coup after it occurred. Accordingly, respondents are not being asked to think about some hypothetical situation in which a military is somehow in power, but rather about a concrete and recent example of the military attempting to seize power. This specificity should provide a more accurate measure of respondents’ support for a military coup.

The second methodological improvement is to employ a list experiment to assess support for the coup. Matanock and Garcia-Sanchez (2018) find that there are large social desirability biases when asking respondents in a survey about their support for the military, let alone for a military coup. Given the potential for preference falsification when respondents are asked directly about their support for a coup, a list experiment provides a useful, indirect measure of their support.

The set-up of a list experiment is to ask respondents how many items they support in a list of 4-5 items. Half of the sample (the control group) is randomly chosen to see only four items, while the other half (the treatment) sees five items, the fifth being the sensitive one – in this case, support for a coup. If the average number of items supported in the control group is 2, and the average number of items in the treatment group is 3, then we can infer that everyone in the treatment supported the sensitive item. Respondents are asked only how many items they support, not which ones, therefore removing the social desirability bias of openly supporting a coup.

In the Turkey survey, the list experiment was as follows:\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{Please tell me how many of the following items you support. We are not interested in}

\textsuperscript{22}I thank Korhan Koçak (Princeton) for help in developing the non-sensitive items.
which ones you support, just how many. No one will know which ones you choose.

Number: 

- I support reducing unemployment.

- I support Turks having the right to burn the Turkish flag.

- I support the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. (sensitive item)

- I support historians going through the Ottoman records to clear our name of Armenians’ smear campaign.

- I support Turkey receiving loans from the World Bank.

Item #3 was the sensitive item, only shown to those in the treatment group. Among the non-sensitive items, I anticipated that most Turkish citizens would support two items (#1 and #4) and oppose two items (#2 and #5), thereby minimizing the number of people who in the treatment put 0 or 5 items – answers which reveal their preference toward the coup. Indeed, less than 10% of respondents chose these extreme options.

One assumption in list experiments is that the addition of the sensitive item in the treatment does not alter a respondent’s answers to the non-sensitive items (what would be called a “design effect”). The R package “List” comes with a function for testing for this assumption. For our data, this test is not significant, suggesting there are no design effects. Accordingly, we can proceed with the assumption that any differences between the treatment and control groups can be attributed to support for the sensitive item.

4.2 Who Supported the Coup?

Before turning to the list experiment, let us first examine the direct question. Respondents were asked, “What was your position towards the coup attempt on July 15, 2016?” Figure
2 presents the results for the opposition, coded as those who did not vote for the AKP in 2015 and do not plan to if elections were held tomorrow.\textsuperscript{23}

As can be expected due to the hostile post-coup environment, very few respondents were openly in favor of the coup. Only 26 of 346 opposition respondents, or 7.5 percent, were somewhat supportive or very supportive of the coup attempt. The vast majority, 69 percent, expressed opposition to the coup, while the remaining 23 percent recorded a neutral attitude ("neither supportive nor opposed") or said "don’t know."

Figure 2: Support for Coup, Direct Question

However, the list experiment confirms that the direct question suffers from social desirability bias. In the list experiment, opposition respondents in the control supported an average of 1.57 items, while those in the treatment supported 1.81 items, a difference of 0.24. This suggests that in reality, 24 percent of the opposition may have supported the coup attempt (see Figure 3, middle dot). The difference between treatment and control is nearly significant in a two-sided t-test (p=0.054) and significant in a one-sided test (p=0.027).

To demonstrate that respondents were indeed falsifying their preferences in the direct

\textsuperscript{23}This definition of opposition includes both supporters of opposition parties as well as apathetic individuals who do not support any party. In the list experiment, supporters of opposition parties were no different in their support for the coup from apathetic individuals (p=0.44), and thus I use "opposition" as a useful shorthand to characterize this group, all of whom oppose the AKP.
question, we can examine the list experiment among the 69% of opposition respondents who stated in the direct question that they were somewhat or very opposed to the coup. Of these supposed opponents of the coup, the list experiment suggests that 29 percent actually supported the coup attempt (1.82 items in the treatment v. 1.53 in the control, two-sided p=0.039). While still a minority, it appears that some in the opposition supported the coup but were unwilling to express that sentiment in a direct question.

Figure 3: Support for Coup, List Experiment

To provide greater validity to the list experiment, Figure 3 also presents the results for AKP supporters (left-most dot). As supporters of the ruling party, coup support here should be low. Indeed, the list experiment reveals about 0 percent support for the coup among AKP supporters (1.594 items in the control v. 1.598 in the treatment, a difference of 0.004).

In sum, the list experiment appears to provide a valid and more accurate measure of coup support than the direct question. The experiment suggests that about 24 percent of the opposition supported the coup, in contrast to the 7.5 percent who openly admit it in a direct question. Importantly, this figure is still very low. Only a small minority of the opposition supported the coup attempt, confirming the dominant narrative about why the

---

24While the sample size of the other answer options are very small, the results of the list experiment there are also interesting. Among the 26 respondents who openly supported the coup, the list experiment finds the highest rate of coup support – 55%. Among the 57 who stated don’t know, the list experiment suggests that 21% supported the coup. The 23 who were neutral may in fact have been neutral: for this group, the list experiment actually finds a higher number of items supported in the control than the treatment.
2016 coup failed. And yet, the Turkish opposition had supported previous coup attempts. What changed?

### 4.3 Explaining Opposition to the Coup

To shed light on this question, the survey asked respondents who had expressed opposition to the coup in the direct question why they opposed the coup. The survey also asked the 26 respondents who openly supported the coup why they supported it. Given the small sample size of the latter, I will relegate the discussion of the open coup supporters to the appendix, though the results there are highly supportive of the power-seeking hypotheses as well.

The remainder of the paper instead focuses on the first group, who constitute the majority (69%) of the opposition respondents in the survey. These members of the opposition, who claimed in the direct question that they opposed the coup, were asked for their level of agreement with each of the following statements:

- I thought the opposition would have won the next elections.
- I thought that the coup would not bring opposition parties to power.
- I thought that a successful coup would increase sympathy for the AKP.

These statements will allow us to test the three power-seeking hypotheses outlined in the theory section. In particular, we can exploit the fact that among these individuals who stated their opposition to the coup, 29 percent actually supported the coup in the list experiment. We can therefore examine whether this 29 percent correlates with their level of agreement with each of these statements.

Let us begin with power-seeking hypothesis 1: that members of the opposition who believe they can win in elections should be less supportive of the coup. Figure 4 plots the results

---

25 If I could run the survey again, I would ask the same questions of all respondents to permit usage of the full sample.
of the list experiment among opposition members who somewhat, mostly, or completely believed they would have won the next elections (right-hand side) and those who did not (left). Here, the list experiment finds a massive difference: among individuals who believed they had a shot at winning elections, only 12% supported the coup. Among those who did not believe they could win, however, a staggering 75% supported the coup. The plot presents the confidence intervals for whether the treatment was significantly different from the control for each subset: as can be seen, the 12% was not significantly different from 0, while the 75% clearly reveals support for the coup (p=0.0004). The difference between the 75% and 12% is also marginally significant at p=0.057. Individuals who believe that there is a viable alternative to a coup, in this case elections, were considerably less supportive of the coup attempt.

Figure 4: Power-Seeking Hypothesis 1

![Opposition Will Win Next Elections](image)

Power-seeking hypothesis 2 is also confirmed by the data: members of the opposition who trusted that the military would appoint them to power after the coup were more supportive of the coup attempt. Figure 5 presents the list experiment for those who somewhat, mostly, or completely agreed that opposition parties would have been appointed to power, and those who did not. Among those who believed the military would appoint the opposition, a full 91% supported the coup, revealing statistically significant support for the coup (p=0.0004). Among those who did not, only 25% supported the coup, not significantly different than 0. The difference between the 91 and 25% is also statistically significant at p=0.046.
Finally, the data lend their strongest support for power-seeking hypothesis 3: that members of the opposition who believe that a coup would simply increase sympathy for the ruling party should be less supportive of the coup. Figure 6 presents these results. Among individuals who somewhat, mostly, or completely agreed that the AKP would gain sympathy from a coup, only 6% supported the attempt, not significantly different from 0. However, among those who disagreed, 79% supported the coup ($p=0.0006$). The difference between the 79 and 6% was also statistically significant at $p=0.022$.

In short, each of the power-seeking hypotheses see support in the survey. Members of the opposition who find alternative pathways to power more viable, or who find coups less
viable, were less supportive of the coup attempt. While the survey only reveals one snapshot in time, the patterns suggest that the Turkish opposition may have become less supportive of coups over time as the result of an increasing belief that they could win in elections and an increasing disillusionment with coups as a pathway to power.

4.3.1 Control Variables

How do these effects compare to other explanations of coup support found in the literature? The survey allowed us to test the effects of seven other variables. The first and most prominent is support for democracy. In a survey gauging support for the failed 1991 coup in the Soviet Union, Gibson (1997) found that support for democracy was the strongest predictor of opposition to the coup. Sarigil (2015)’s survey in Turkey in 2011 similarly finds that support for democracy correlated with lower support for military rule. Indeed, in Turkey in 2016, each of the opposition parties made reference to their commitment to democracy in denouncing the attempted coup. In the survey, opponents of the coup were asked whether they “thought that the coup would undermine democracy.”

A second, perhaps more Turkey-specific, variable is support for the European Union. Several scholars of Turkish politics have argued that the European Union’s granting of candidacy to Turkey for EU membership in 1999 may have led opposition parties to oppose military intervention, as a coup would immediately disqualify Turkey from membership (Güney and Karatekeliöğlu, 2005; Heper, 2005; Usul, 2010; Kubicek, 2011). In the survey, opponents of the coup were asked for their level of agreement with the statement: “I thought that the coup would make it more difficult for Turkey to join the European Union.”

Alongside these two ideational variables are five demographic ones: age, gender, voting behavior, associational membership, and political knowledge. I control in particular for CHP voters, given that party’s ties to Kemalism and prominent support for previous coups.

---

Modernization theory contends that as individuals become more politically aware and involved in civic life, they should become less supportive of authoritarianism (Lerner, 1958; Putnam, 1993). I therefore also control for membership in an association (civil society organization, labor union, or political party), and employ a political knowledge question (who is the current U.S. secretary of state).

To gauge the magnitude of the power-seeking variables relative to these other explanations of coup support, Figure 7 presents the bivariate correlation between each variable and support for the coup (through the list experiment). As can be seen, the power-seeking hypotheses are the most powerful predictors of coup support, with individuals 60-70 percentage points more supportive of the coup if they agree that it would not help the AKP, that the military would appoint the opposition to power, and that the opposition could not win in elections (in line with Figures 4-6). The magnitude of the seven ideational and demographic variables are less than half this size, and in any case are not significantly correlated with coup support.

Figure 7: All Hypotheses, Bivariate Correlations

![Coefficient Plot](image)

Table 2 presents the multi-variate analysis,\(^{27}\) examining the effect of the power-seeking

---

\(^{27}\)The multivariate analysis was conducted using the ICTREG function in the R package List.
variables when controlling for these seven covariates. As models 3-6 demonstrate, the effect of each power-seeking variable remains significant or marginally significant in the presence of these controls. These results increase our confidence that the power-seeking variables indeed shaped attitudes toward the coup.

In both the bivariate and multivariate analysis, none of the control variables were significant. Individuals who agreed that the coup would hurt Turkey’s chances of EU membership were not significantly more opposed to the coup, though this effect is leaning in the right direction. Curiously, individuals who strongly agreed that the coup would undermine democracy were leaning more supportive of the coup, rather than less. CHP supporters were no more supportive of the coup. Older respondents and members of an association were leaning slightly more supportive of the coup, while respondents who correctly guessed the U.S. Secretary of State (John Kerry) were slightly less supportive.

Missing among these covariates are income, education, and ethnicity. Unlike the other demographics, these were asked at the end of the survey, nearly 45 questions after the list experiment. Unfortunately, there was significant attrition during this time. Of the 346 opposition members who answered the list experiment, over half – 181 – dropped out before these final demographic questions. This attrition was also not random, with coup supporters being more likely to drop out. Thus, among the small subset who made it to the end, the main (power-seeking) results are no longer significant, even before controlling for income, education, and ethnicity. Given that there are no power-seeking results in this subset, we therefore cannot test whether those results hold when controlling for these variables.

---

28 Given the high degree of correlation between the three power-seeking variables, I do not include them in the same model.
29 This null/leaning-opposite result could be because the Turkish opposition did not believe that Turkey was still a democracy under Erdoğan, and thus there would be no democracy to undermine by a coup.
30 Support for the MHP and HDP also did not correlate with support/opposition to the coup (results available from author).
Table 2: Power-Seeking Hypotheses and Coup Support (ICTREG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable: Support for Coup (List Experiment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sensitive item**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Win Elex</td>
<td>-0.628*</td>
<td>-0.776**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.330)</td>
<td>(0.353)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t Appt</td>
<td>-0.653**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.328)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>-0.732**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.319)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.015)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.558)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.434)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td>-0.132</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.393)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.446)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.456)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.393)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.747***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.211)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Control items**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Win Elex</td>
<td>0.322*</td>
<td>0.244</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.191)</td>
<td>(0.197)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t Appt</td>
<td>0.107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.192)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.191)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.392***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.110)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Residual SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>0.931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>0.928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>0.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>0.951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01
However, there is reason to believe that these variables are unlikely to confound the analysis. Theoretically, income and education are thought to affect coup support either by increasing support for democracy, political awareness, or associational life, all of which are already controlled for. Kurdish citizens (and sympathizers) are thought to be particularly opposed to the military (Sarigil, 2015), though this should be captured in support for the pro-Kurdish party, the HDP. Moreover, among the subset who made it to these demographics, none of these variables were correlated with support for the coup.

One Turkey-specific alternative explanation is support for Fethullah Gülen, who Erdogan accused of masterminding the coup. As a result, the opposition may have opposed this coup not because of power-seeking considerations, but rather because they oppose Gülen. To measure support for Gülen, the survey asked if “those who support the Gülen movement should be able to live freely in Turkish society.” This question was asked slightly earlier than the final demographics, at which point attrition had only removed one of the three power-seeking effects (whether the military would appoint the opposition to power). For the two power-seeking effects that remained significant, controlling for support for Gülen did not confound the analysis. Beliefs about winning elections and the AKP gaining sympathy were still marginally significant predictors of opposition to the coup (p=0.052 and p=0.09, respectively).

5 Conclusion

This study employed a unique survey to determine who among the Turkish opposition supported the 2016 coup attempt. Employing a list experiment, the survey was able to minimize social desirability bias and thereby capture a more accurate measure of coup support than has previously been the case. Moreover, this paper introduced a new set of hypotheses – which the paper termed ‘strategic power-seeking’ – for who is likely to support a military coup.
The central insight of this theory is to view military coups as one of many options the opposition has to assume political power. Accordingly, members of the opposition who believed they had a chance at winning in elections were less supportive of the military coup. Similarly, members of the opposition who did not believe a coup was a viable strategy, as they did not think the military would appoint the opposition to power afterwards, were less supportive of the coup attempt. Finally, members of the opposition who felt that a successful coup will simply increase sympathy for the ruling party and its ideology in the long-term were less supportive of the coup attempt.

These findings suggest that the Turkish opposition may have opposed the 2016 coup attempt because they had increasingly come to believe they had a shot at beating the AKP in elections. Their excitement heading into the 2018 elections reinforces this point, though their eventual defeat raises the question of whether they would now be more supportive of a coup attempt. This paper would suggest that while coup support may have increased today, it would still be tempered by the two other power-seeking findings. The Turkish opposition has increasingly become disillusioned with coups as a means to power, observing that the military has not appointed the opposition to power in the most recent previous coups, and these coups instead only served to increase sympathy for the Islamists. Accordingly, even if the Turkish opposition today feels that elections are not a viable strategy, they may not view a coup as a viable strategy, either.

These findings also have important implications for how countries who have undergone coup after coup eventually escape the coup trap. The data would suggest that how previous coups play out will shape whether the opposition seeks a coup in the future. If the military fails to appoint the opposition to power after a coup, the opposition may become less supportive of coups over time. Similarly, if a coup in the long-term simply increases the appeal of the ousted party, then the opposition may begin to realize that coups are not their best pathway to political power. This political learning may thus be one channel by which countries escape the coup trap.
References


Başçı, Pelin. 2017. *Social Trauma and Telecinematic Memory: Imagining the Turkish Nation since the 1980 Coup*. Palgrave Macmillan.


6 Appendix

6.1 Survey

Figure 8 shows the advertisement shown to Turkish Facebook users over 18 years old. The text reads: “Chance to win an iPad! Everyone who completes this survey has a chance to win an iPad! Try your luck, and you too can win an iPad.”

Figure 8: Facebook Advertisement

The following survey questions were used in this paper:

1. What year were you born? (Important note: Those who are under 18 are ineligible)

2. What is your sex? Female/Male

3. Are you a member of a party?

4. Are you a member of a labor union?

5. Are you a member of a civil society organization?

6. Did you vote in the 1 November 2015 general election?

7. Did you vote in the 7 June 2015 general election?

8. Which party did you vote for in the 1 November 2015 election?
9. If you had voted in the 1 November 2015 election, which party would you have voted for?

10. Which party did you vote for in the 7 June 2015 election?

11. If you had voted in the 7 June 2015 election, which party would you have voted for?

12. If there was an election tomorrow, which party would you vote for?

13. Please tell me how many of the following items you support. We are not interested in which ones you support, just how many. No one will know which ones you choose. Number: ___

- I support reducing unemployment.
- I support Turks having the right to burn the Turkish flag.
- I support the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. (sensitive item)
- I support historians going through the Ottoman records to clear our name of Armenians’ smear campaign.
- I support Turkey receiving loans from the World Bank.

14. What was your position toward the coup attempt on July 15, 2016?

15. Why did you support the coup? Please indicate below how much each factor motivated you to support the coup.

- I thought that the coup would bring opposition parties to power.
- I thought that the coup was likely to succeed.
- I thought that the coup would save Turkish democracy from Erdogan’s authoritarian rule.
- I thought that removing Erdogan would make joining the EU more likely.
- I thought that international actors also supported the coup.
16. Why did you oppose the coup? Please indicate below how much each factor motivated you to oppose the coup.

- I thought that the coup would undermine democracy.
- I thought that the coup would make it more difficult for Turkey to join the European Union.
- I thought that the coup would not bring opposition parties to power.
- I thought the opposition would have won the next elections.
- I thought that a successful coup would increase sympathy for the AKP.

17. Some statements are listed below. For each statement, please select the option that most closely represents your views (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

- A Sharia state should be established in Turkey.

18. Please select the province and town that you live in from the list below.

19. Do you live in an urban or a rural setting?

20. What is the last level of education that you completed?

21. Which of the following best describes your current situation? ... Student, Unemployed

22. What is your religion?

23. Please consider the past six months. What is your household’s average total monthly income, including the salaries of all members of the family, rent, pension, etc.? Please select the category closest to your average total monthly income.

- 500 TL and less
- 501-850 TL
- 851-1000 TL
- 1001-1500 TL
- 1501-2000 TL
- 2001-3000 TL
- 3001-4000 TL
- 4001-5000 TL
- 5001-10000 TL
- 10001 TL and more

24. When you think about your childhood, which of the following languages did you speak with your parents at home? You may select more than one language. ... Kurdish.

6.2 Coup Supporters

While the number of opposition respondents who openly supported the coup is extremely low (26), we must also examine them for the sake of completeness. These coup supporters were asked for their level of agreement with each of the following:

- *I thought that the coup would bring opposition parties to power.*

- *I thought that the coup was likely to succeed.*

- *I thought that the coup would save Turkish democracy from Erdogan’s authoritarian rule.*

- *I thought that removing Erdogan would make joining the EU more likely.*

- *I thought that international actors also supported the coup.*

Among these coup supporters, we can exploit whether they were “very supportive” (22 respondents) or “somewhat supportive” (4 respondents) of the coup attempt in the direct
question. Does their level of support for the coup vary by their agreement with each of these ideational or power-seeking statements?

Table 3 presents the percent of respondents who were “very supportive” of the coup attempt among those who disagree and agree with each statement. Once again, the one power-seeking hypothesis – that the coup would bring the opposition to power – is the best predictor of coup support. Among those who agreed that the coup would bring the opposition to power, 100% were very supportive of the coup, compared to only 71% of those who disagreed (p=0.17 in two-sided t-test, p=0.086 one-sided). No other hypothesis was close to significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>P-value (t-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opposition to power</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succeed</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save Democracy</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join EU</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int’l Actors</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the sample size is small, these results among the open coup supporters corroborate those among the coup ‘opponents.’ Power-seeking considerations – especially whether the coup would bring the opposition to power – appear to drive support for the coup.