

Whisper Sweet Nothings to Me Erdogan: How Economic Propaganda Works Under Authoritarianism

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Abstract

Most authoritarian regimes justify their rule based on economic performance. Yet, scholars are skeptical that authoritarian propaganda can increase performance evaluations. Through a case study of Turkey, combining qualitative, cross-sectional, and experimental analysis, this paper demonstrates that narrative-based economic propaganda can help electoral authoritarian regimes to preserve their support base even under difficult economic conditions. A national developmentalist narrative is central to the economic propaganda of Erdogan's regime. I demonstrate that the belief in this narrative is widespread among regime voters, and it is strongly related to watching pro-regime media. The exposure to the developmentalist narrative improves economic evaluations among regime voters while also evoking partisan emotions. However, I do not find any effect of this narrative on other voters, demonstrating that narrative-based propaganda cannot help the regime to broaden its support base. This study contributes to the development of a cultural perspective on public opinion formation under authoritarian regimes.

Keywords: support for authoritarian regimes; narrative; economic propaganda; emotions; Turkey

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We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries.
We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it,
or we shall be crushed.

Joseph V. Stalin, 1931

Some still consider our 2023 goals as an ordinary middle-long
term developmental plan... Our 2023 goals is a revolt against
global conspiracies.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, 2021

1 Introduction

Turkey, under the authoritarian rule of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP), has been experiencing a protracted economic decline for nearly a decade now. The country, as a whole, is getting poorer compared to other countries, and life is becoming harder for the majority of Turkish citizens. Between January 2012 and January 2022, the value of Turkish lira has nearly collapsed, decreasing from 0.53 USD to 0.07 USD. Turkey's nominal GDP has been shrinking since 2013. The unemployment rate has risen from 8% to 14% during the last decade; the current level is more than the double of the world average, according to World Bank data. Despite the bleak economic picture, Erdogan and his ruling coalition still command approval from a significant portion of the population. The total vote share of regime parties has been mostly stable throughout this period.¹

Authoritarian regimes, like Erdogan's regime in Turkey, have an advantage when dealing with public opinion: They hold unparalleled control over the information space ([Gurieva and Treisman 2019](#)). They can use their media power to stir nationalist sentiments and shift the voters' attention away from the economy ([Aytaç 2021](#); [Yilmaz et al. 2021](#); [Mattingly and Yao 2021](#)). Yet, can authoritarian propaganda also be used to shape economic perceptions and performance evaluations, especially, during periods of economic decline? Scholars are skeptical about this ([Mattingly and Yao 2021](#): 5). First of all it is emphasized that, unlike other policy areas, people can use their daily experiences to judge

¹ More information on Turkey's economic and democratic trajectory under Erdogan's rule can be found in Online Appendix Section 1.

the success of economic policies. For this reason, [Rozenas and Stukal \(2019\)](#) argue, the regime-controlled media in Russia do not attempt to censor negative economic news completely. Instead, they frame economic news such that positive developments are associated with Putin while negative developments are associated with foreign powers. Furthermore, very few authoritarian regimes actually manage to completely limit critical media channels ([Paskhalis et al. 2021](#)). Citizens usually still have access to critical voices through social and print media, and even TV channels; these channels can be effective when their economic discourse resonates with daily experiences of people. Under these conditions, propaganda carries the risk of backfiring as being exposed to explicit and excessive pro-regime propaganda can increase skepticism among citizens and decrease the trust in the regime ([Huang 2018](#); [Wedeen 1999](#)).

This article adopts a cultural perspective to explore whether and how economic propaganda works under authoritarian regimes. Economic narratives and symbols mediate the relationship between objective economic conditions and individuals' economic and political evaluations ([Anson 2017](#); [Herrera 2011](#); [Tomlinson 2017](#)). There has been very limited attention among political scientists on economic narratives of authoritarian regimes. Yet, authoritarian control over the economy and the media creates an especially fertile ground to propagate certain narratives and symbols to shape the way citizens think about the economy. My study focuses on the instrumentalization of the national developmentalist narrative (NDN) by Erdogan's regime in Turkey. This narrative has been characterized by the promise of meteoric economic development, the articulation of grandiose infrastructural projects as symbols of the realization of this promise, the description of Erdogan as the sole political will behind economic development, as well as the description of Western states and domestic opposition groups as forces working against this historic promise.

My analysis demonstrates that the NDN has sustained partisan affective ties between Erdogan and his supporters. Primarily through these emotional effects, this narrative has also improved economic expectations of regime voters and diminished the blame attributed to regime actors for economic troubles. I rely on qualitative, cross-sectional, and experimental evidence to support these arguments. First, I benefit from the qualitative analysis of online reaction videos recorded by regime supporters to theorize how the NDN influences voter behavior. Second, I use a representative survey to demonstrate that the NDN has been widely embraced among regime voters in Turkey. For example, more than half of regime voters believe that Turkey will be one of top ten economies in the world by 2023 and that Germans are jealous of the newly built Istanbul airport (one of the symbols of the NDN). Further

analysis of this data shows that the belief in the NDN mediates the relationship between watching pro-regime TV channels and expressing support for the authoritarian regime, confirming the NDN's origins as regime propaganda. Finally, I use an online experiment to test causal effects of the NDN more rigorously, as well as to explore the role of political emotions. I find that exposing regime voters to the NDN improves future economic evaluations on both a personal and national level, and that this relationship between the NDN and economic evaluations is mediated through the increased association of Erdogan with hope and enthusiasm.

My study reveals that the NDN has played an important role in building a loyal support base for Erdogan's regime. However, there are certain limits to the power of narrative-based economic propaganda. Most importantly, I show that the authoritarian propaganda does not have any effect on non-regime voters. I also find that the NDN does not evoke any negative emotions towards opposition parties, despite the regime's attempts in this direction. These results suggest that the power of economic propaganda built on the use of narratives and symbols to broaden the regime's voter base is rather limited.

This article provides a comprehensive perspective on how economic propaganda works in Turkey, enriching our understanding of political behavior under authoritarian regimes. Countering expectations, I show that narrative-based propaganda *can* improve economic evaluations at both individual and national levels, at least among certain groups of voters. This means that authoritarian-regimes can sustain their *performance-based* support even when national economic situation is bleak. Furthermore, this study draws attention to the role of positive partisan emotions under authoritarianism; a topic that has been largely ignored in the literature (Greene and Robertson 2020: 38). Finally, by showing that narratives which spread economic misperceptions can also produce positive emotions, it reveals that a focus on selective exposure to authoritarian media might be a fruitful path to explaining voters' engagement with authoritarian propaganda.

This study also contributes to the development of a cultural perspective on public opinion formation outside of Western countries, drawing on insights from history, cultural studies, and anthropology. Political instrumentalization of the utopian promise of fast national development has been widespread among leaders in the Global South. Famous historical examples include leaders such as Stalin (Kotkin 1997; Weitz 2005), Mao (Liu 2010), and Kubitschek (Ioris 2014), who led the building of an entire city, Brasília, as a symbol of the realization of this dream. More recently, scholars

have pointed to the use of similar narratives of developmentalism by leaders such as Modi in India (Sinha 2021), Magufuli in Tanzania (Paget 2020), and Xi Jinping in China (Ferdinand 2016). Despite these famous examples, developmentalist narratives and utopian promises have been seriously understudied in the political science literature. This article is the first to explore the effects of this narrative through an integrative framework, combining a descriptive account with a rigorous study of causal mechanisms.

The rest of the paper is formed of six sections. The following three sections are mainly theoretical and qualitative. First, I introduce national developmentalism as a political narrative. Following this, I discuss why Turkey is an appropriate case to study mass support under authoritarianism. Third, relying on the qualitative study of online reaction videos and insights from political psychology and cultural studies, I theorize how the NDN in Turkey produces affective reactions among regime voters. Two quantitative sections follow in which I test arguments laid out in theory sections through a representative sample and an online survey experiment. I conclude discussing future directions for this research agenda.

2 Narratives in Politics and National Developmentalism

From a political perspective, we can analyze narratives along three dimensions: Temporal, collective, and symbolic (also see Hammack and Pilecki, 2012, p. 76; Kølvråa, 2016, p. 171; Polletta et al., 2011; Skonieczny, 2018, p. 65). To begin with, the *temporal* dimension is central to the definition of narratives: narratives are sequential stories, combining certain interpretations of past and present events with a vision of future. Second, narratives include references to actors and groups. By focusing on this *collective* dimension, we can explain how narratives contribute to the formation of group identities. Finally, we should also pay attention to how narratives are inscribed and embodied in the material world, as through the reorganization of the environment and human practices. Capturing this *symbolic* dimension is important to understand how the power of narratives is reproduced through daily practices.

Political actors can use narratives *strategically* as “a communicative tool to attempt to give determined meaning to past, present, and future in order to achieve political objectives” (Miskimmon et al. 2014, 5). Strategic narratives are important in both democratic and authoritarian countries (compare, for example, Brand 2014; Sheaffer et al. 2011). However, it can be argued that the authoritarian con-

trol over the information space and the economy creates even more room for authoritarian regimes to instrumentalize narratives for political goals. Authoritarian regimes have vast resources to propagate narratives, not only through mass media, but also through the re-organization of the material space. Opposition actors in these countries, on the other hand, have a limited capacity to challenge these narratives, and they have to rely on citizens' own personal experiences and instincts as a check against the appeal of authoritarian narratives.

Economic narratives play an important role in politics, mediating the relationship between objective economic conditions and political preferences (Herrera 2011; Tomlinson 2017). According to a developmentalist perspective, fast economic development of the country and a “great leap” into the league of advanced countries is possible. As such this should be the ultimate national goal as it can solve all problems of the country and bring joy and harmony to the entire nation. Political scientists have predominantly studied developmentalism in regard to associated policy ideas and their outcomes (Kohli et al. 2004; Scott 1999; Sikkink 1991). Yet, the developmentalist conceptualization has a utopian appeal that exists independently from specific policy ideas (Coronil 1997; Inden 1995). Political leaders with various ideologies can attempt to instrumentalize this utopian core to build mass support for their political agendas.

All strategic developmentalist narratives share some defining properties. In terms of the temporal dimension, all developmentalist narratives are focused on the utopian promise of development that will take place in the future. The collective dimension of all developmentalist narratives is built on the division between the nation and advanced nations. Finally, in terms of the symbolic dimension, all developmentalist narratives produce and celebrate material symbols that represent the realization of developmentalist promises. Political actors will also add new themes to their developmentalist narratives along with their agendas and ideologies. For example, the past can be depicted as a state of deprivation or a state of glory. The competition at the international level can be depicted as a benign one or an existential one. The nation, i.e., the “us” of the narrative, can refer to the entire nation or only some parts of it. Finally, the symbolic dimension of developmentalist narratives can refer to industrialization and factories, construction and infrastructural projects, or consumer goods.

3 The Turkish Case: Erdogan's National Developmentalism

The Justice and Development Party (AKP), under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, came to power in Turkey in 2002 through a free and fair election. Since then, the country has gone through a period of autocratization, following a trajectory similar to countries such as Russia and Venezuela. Today's Turkey is a typical case of electoral authoritarian regimes, which combine some competitive electoral properties with the de facto authoritarian control of the government over the political and social space (Levitsky and Way 2010; Lührmann et al. 2018). Given the strength of popular support of Erdogan's regime in the face of a deep economic crisis, as discussed in the Introduction, Turkey is a likely case to document the relationship between authoritarian propaganda and performance evaluations.²

Erdogan's support base is usually described with references to its Islamist and populist characteristics. While these are important to understand the regime's policies and popular appeal, they should not overshadow the significance of performance evaluations for the survival of the authoritarian regime in Turkey. Academic researchers repeatedly find that economic evaluations are significant predictors of support for the AKP, even when accounting for partisanship, socio-demographic factors, and ideological self-positioning (Aytaç 2020). Importantly, however, the gap between economic perceptions of regime voters and opposition voters is increasingly growing (Aytaç 2020) and media preferences are predictive of economic assessments (Yagci and Oyvat 2020). These findings suggest that, as Turkey's economic crisis deepens, Erdogan benefits from the authoritarian media space to preserve his image of competency. The AKP has become increasingly more dominant in the media since it came to power, and the media coverage of the party has become increasingly more positive (Yıldırım et al. 2021). Currently none of the popular TV channels in Turkey can openly criticize the regime in its news programmes; the only exception was FOX TV, which is owned by Fox Networks Group. As discussed above, however, media domination is not enough to explain the success of the authoritarian propaganda; it is also necessary to pay attention to the content of the message and how it is received by its audience.

Erdogan's economic propaganda is built on a national developmentalist narrative, which gradually emerged throughout the first decade of the AKP's rule in Turkey and has become the AKP's central

² A broader and comparative discussion on Turkey's current political regime can be found in Online Appendix Section 1.

economic message since the 2011 general election. To begin with, the promise of historic economic development is at the core of the NDN. The utopian articulation of “development” in the AKP discourse has crystallized with the 2011 election campaign.³ “Turkey is ready, Target: 2023” was the official slogan of this campaign, and making Turkey one of the top ten economies by 2023 was the biggest promise of the campaign period (AKP 2011). 2023 is a carefully selected date with high symbolic and aesthetic significance; it is the centenary of the foundation of Turkish Republic. The goal itself, on the other hand, is a grandiose one. According to World Bank data, Turkey was the eighteenth biggest economy in the world by 2011, and India, the world’s tenth biggest economy by that time, had an economy that was more than twice the size of Turkey’s economy. While the goal itself was not realistic, the appeal was grounded in grandiosity. The promise of historic economic growth, along with references to 2023, has become a central part of the AKP’s propaganda since then. Most tellingly, all campaigns for general elections after 2011 used similar slogans, such as “National Will, National Power, Target 2023,” “New Turkey, New Power, Target 2023,” and “It is Turkey’s Time.”⁴

The NDN includes strong references to political actors and groups, which turn it into a collective partisan narrative. According to the NDN, the sole political will behind the 2023 vision is Erdogan; he is the one who first dreamt it, and he is the one who has pushed for it since then. Thus, the NDN plays an important role in building Erdogan’s image as a competent and visionary leader. On the other hand, references to political actors that work against Turkey’s historic development have also gradually become a central part of the narrative. These references were added when the regime started to be faced with economic and political setbacks. In those moments, the regime’s propaganda machine reversed the developmentalist frame to explain why such a successful government would face with problems and discontent. For example, “foreign conspirers that are unhappy about Turkey’s economic development” was presented as the reason behind Gezi protests, both by Erdogan and the other actors of the regime (Nefes 2017). Public surveys conducted during that period show that this narrative was successful; around 80 % of AKP supporters believed that Gezi protests were planned by foreign conspirers (Konda 2014: p.35). At other times, foreign states were ridiculed. For example, to exaggerate the significance of the new airport, which was another symbol of the NDN, the regime media frequently claimed that Germany was jealous and dismayed about this development (Zengin

³ A full list of election posters used in 2011 election campaign can be found in Online Appendix Section 2.1

⁴ These election posters can be found in Online Appendix Section 2.2.

and Ongur 2020).

Finally, the symbolic dimension of the NDN relies on a set of grandiose construction projects, such as two suspension bridges in Istanbul, a new airport in Istanbul, an artificial water leeway between the Marmara Sea and Black Sea, as well as two new “cities” in Istanbul. These projects were first introduced as election promises in 2011, being the backbone of the AKP’s newly announced 2023 vision. They helped voters to imagine what a top-ten Turkey would look like, hence turning the abstract goal of “Target: 2023” into a concrete representation in the mind. Their function as symbols of the developmentalist promise still continues. Several of these projects have since been completed and were opened to service. The AKP’s propaganda machine vividly celebrated these openings, arguing that they heralded that the 2023 vision was turning into a reality (Cosentino et al. 2019: 97).

4 How Do Developmentalist Narratives Affect Regime Support: The Theory

But then, after all, look at what we’re doing. In a few years now we’ll be ahead of everybody industrially. We’ll all have automobiles.

One of Soviet workers at Magnitogorsk, (Scott 1942: 18)

One of the symbols of Erdogan’s national developmentalist narrative (NDN) is Osmangazi Bridge - a suspension bridge built over the Gulf of Izmit. The bridge was one of the AKP’s campaign promises in the 2011 election period, and it was later named after Osman Gazi, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. The construction of the bridge started in 2013 and it was ceremoniously opened to service on June 30, 2016. During the ceremony, Erdogan gave a speech which included references to all dimensions of the NDN (Presidency 2016):

We will continue to be the biggest friend of those who see us as a friend. In the same vein, we won’t hesitate to take any measure against those who nurture enmity toward us. No one will be able to stand in our way in the new era. No one will be able to stop us from achieving our goals for 2023.

Pro-regime TV channels made live broadcasts from the bridge throughout the entire week, dubbing June 30 as “a historic day” and “the day of pride.” Driving over the bridge was free for everyone for the next seven days and many people living in cities around the bridge took this chance to have a

“historic experience.” They joined the celebrations, took photos, danced, recorded online videos, and uploaded those videos to social media to share their excitement.

Why did a bridge infuse regime supporters with such enthusiasm? How does the NDN affect voters’ evaluations in Turkey? This section aims to develop a coherent explanation, drawing on theories from public opinion, political psychology, and cultural studies. Arguments in this section are also supported by a qualitative content analysis of thirty online reaction videos that were recorded by regime supporters during opening celebrations and in the immediate aftermath of the opening.⁵

4.1 National developmentalist narrative and affective reactions

Emotions are central to various forms of political behavior, such as the formation of collective identities, political mobilization, and motivated reasoning (Brader and Marcus 2013). There is a very close relationship between narratives and emotions, although this is not emphasized in the psychology literature (Mayer 2014: 72). By simplifying and dramatizing the complex reality surrounding us narratives can play an important role in the generation of emotional reactions.

I argue that the NDN cultivates affective ties between regime voters and Erdogan thanks to the powerful vision of future that it provides. A wide range of scholarship, from charismatic leadership and emotions literature to discourse theories, point to the relationship between the vision of the future and emotional reactions. According to the appraisal theory of emotions, goal-orientation underlies all emotional reactions; positive emotions are derived from the cognitive appraisal of approaching a desirable goal, whereas negative emotions are associated with the appraisal of obstacles (Carver et al. 2014; Lerner et al. 2015). In parallel with this insight, studies of charismatic leadership list “offering a powerful future vision” as one of the key elements of charismatic bonds between the leader and the follower (Andrews-Lee 2019) as well as being central to the elicitation of positive emotions from the followers (Antonakis et al. 2016; Bono and Ilies 2006). The NDN offers an appealing future vision for regime voters; promising welfare, prosperity, and status. The goal of being one of the leader countries in the world may be grandiose, but it is the grandiosity of promises that arouses the audience, so long as these promises are made by “credible” leaders (Andrews-Lee 2019). Furthermore, the NDN also draws on existing identities to strengthen its affective appeal.

⁵ I have reached these videos through a YouTube search. See Online Appendix Section 2.3 for more information on these videos, a methodological discussion on my use, and YouTube links to watch them.

For voters with strong national identification, the NDN offers a vision in which Turkey has a higher status in the international arena. For voters of the AKP, the NDN offers the pride of being a part of the political party that achieves the historical transformation of Turkey.

Online reaction videos demonstrate that the encounter with a symbol of the NDN was an affective experience. This is clear in expressions of awe, repeated words of exclamation, heightened voice, and increased attention to the environment. In nearly one third of all videos, AKP supporters listen to high volume, fast tempo, strongly rhythmic partisan marches as they drive over the bridge.

One of the crucial functions of the narrative structure is to produce a sense of historical significance (Bottici 2007), and it is this sense of historical significance which underlies the affective experiences seen in these videos. As they drive over the bridge, people in the videos appear to feel that they are experiencing a historical moment. For example, in one of the videos mentioned above, a mother tells her children that this is a day to be told to their grandchildren. In many videos, supporters thank God for giving these days to them: “My God, thank You for sending Tayyip [Erdoğan] to us so that we could see these days.” They express awe about the fact that they are really are driving over that bridge: “Oh my God, were we supposed to see these days?”

This sense of historicity arises from the belief that the utopian vision of the AKP is turning into reality. Some supporters directly refer to “2023” as they encounter the bridge. For example, seeming to feel enchanted, one of the supporters says: “This is not the half of it; wait until 2023.” Some others try to imagine the level of development that the bridge will bring. One says, “There will be another Istanbul here.” In another video, we hear “You know what, I cannot even imagine how this area will be in ten years time.” These remarks also show that hope, as well as enthusiasm, is evoked by the NDN.

4.2 National developmentalist narrative and economic evaluations

I argue that the NDN improves economic evaluations both by offering cognitive shortcuts to evaluate the performance of the economy and through its emotional effects.

To begin with, the NDN provides a framework to evaluate the economic performance of the regime, and this framework heavily favors the regime. A large amount of literature in political science suggests that people use national economic indicators more than personal economic indicators to judge

the incumbent government's economic performance ([Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000](#)). We know less, however, about how people make up their minds on something as complex as “national economic situation” ([Anson 2017](#)). Recent research shows that international comparisons, such as cross-national performance comparisons and references to foreign socioeconomic conditions can influence the way people judge domestic performance ([Aytaç 2018](#); [Hansen et al. 2015](#); [Huang 2015](#); [Kayser and Peress 2012](#)). The NDN, by definition, draws attention to international comparisons of the economy. Crucially, the narrative also provides “benchmarks” that can be used to judge Turkey's comparative economic performance. These are the symbols of the NDN: bridges, airports, fast train lines etc. These projects are frequently described in comparison to their counterparts in the Western world. For example, when Istanbul airport was completed, the regime media compared this with Frankfurt Airport, one of the largest airports in the world. The comparison underlied the claim that Germans were envious of Turks and the new Istanbul airport (for example, see [Türkiye 2018](#); [Habertürk 2018](#)). Given that building these infrastructural projects is easier than creating millions of new jobs, the NDN provided a cheaper way to construct the image of competency in the eyes of Turkish people who regarded the regime media and Erdogan credible, and who engaged with the narrative.

When we look at the online reaction videos again, we see that international comparison was central to the way people interpreted the opening of this new bridge. Certainly, there are references to the immediate economic benefits of the bridge; in nearly half of the videos, people mention its expected positive impacts on the traffic congestion. Yet, supporters frequently go beyond these practical effects and compare the Osmangazi Bridge to those in Europe and the United States. Several speakers mention that this is the fourth longest bridge in the world. In one of the videos, the driver, who has a relatively calm tone, asks another passenger in the car: “How do you find this in comparison to those in Europe?” Some others are more thrilled: “Wow, are we in Europe? Is this Frankfurt or London?”. “Even [United States of] America cannot do this, they will go crazy now,” exclaims yet another one. Thus, owing to regime propaganda, the bridge symbolizes Turkey's economic development and welfare on a global stage, at least for people who seriously engaged with the propaganda.

Second, it is also important to establish the link between the narrative structure of the NDN, which generates emotional reactions, and the NDN's impact on economic evaluations. According to the affective intelligence theory ([Marcus et al. 2000](#)), individuals who are angry or enthusiastic are more likely to rely on their existing dispositions during the reasoning process. In politics, this means that these individuals will rely more on the source of the message rather than its content

when they process a message, and thus, they will stick more closely to their partisan and ideological commitments (Lerner et al. 2015; Marcus et al. 2019). If the NDN is evoking partisan emotions among certain individuals, as it is argued above, then we would expect these people to update their economic evaluations along with their partisan preferences and adopt a motivated form of reasoning.

4.3 Which voter group is the national developmentalist narrative for?

The NDN promises economic development for the entire nation. Yet, there are reasons to argue that it will be more effective at changing economic and affective evaluations of some voters than others.

First, regime critics under authoritarian regimes develop a defense mechanism against propaganda channels and any news spread by these channels. As a result, it is harder to influence political opinions of these voters through propaganda (Shirikov 2021). Given that the NDN promotes serious economic misperceptions, such as the claim that Turkey will be one of top ten economies in the world by 2023, it is probable that opposition voters will be more cautious when engaging with these claims.

Second, the NDN includes partisan elements, such as “the heroic role of Erdogan” and “obstacles laid out by opposition parties.” These partisan elements might discourage opposition voters from engaging with the narrative. As the concept “narrative proximity” describes, a certain level of resonance between the ideas and the language of the narrative and the audience is necessary for the narrative to be influential (Sheafer et al. 2011: 318). On the other hand, partisan elements of the NDN can make it easier to evoke pro-AKP emotions among voters who, are close to the regime, for sociological, ideological, or economic reasons. Through its emotional effects, the NDN can play an important role in turning these voters into partisans and, thus, building a loyal partisan base for regime parties.

YouTube videos illustrate these partisan effects of the NDN, which can make it harder for opposition supporters to engage with the narrative. Nearly all of the thirty videos that include speech also include partisan references; only in three videos we do not hear any explicit partisan material. Supporters overwhelmingly mention Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the will behind the bridge and express their gratitude to him; in 21 videos we see direct mentions of Erdoğan. Reflecting the charismatic bond between Erdogan and his supporters, supporters in these videos refer to Erdoğan either by his first name, Tayyip, or by his nickname, *reis*, meaning “the leader.” On the other hand, there are frequent insults to opposition supporters, who were critical of the building of the bridge. During

the videos, supporters quickly transition between praises for the AKP and insults towards opponents. During these moments, their voices increase in volume and their speech becomes emphatic. Stressing each word, they narrate how much harm opponents have caused to the nation throughout history.

5 Cross-sectional Study: Media Preferences, National Developmentalist Narrative, and Support for Erdogan’s Regime

I have so far argued that the national developmentalist narrative (NDN) has been the backbone of the economic propaganda of the Erdogan regime, and that it has successfully affected economic and affective evaluations of Turkish voters. This section provides an initial test of these arguments with a representative and face-to-face survey.

5.1 Introducing the data

The data used in this section comes from a survey conducted by Konda Survey Company in October 2018.⁶ The survey was conducted face-to-face with 2676 respondents from 148 district, which were randomly chosen from a total of 49,000 districts through a multi-stage, stratified cluster sampling design (Konda 2018). The survey took place four months after the 2018 general election, in which Erdogan was reelected as president in the first round with a vote share of 53%. That election year was a particularly difficult year for Turkish economy. The Turkish lira depreciated 72% against the dollar between January and October 2018, and the majority of the decline happened after the election. Steinberg (2021) shows that the currency crisis reduced support in the government. The Konda survey was conducted immediately after this sudden depreciation. It, therefore, allows us the opportunity to study the public opinion in the face of an economic crisis.

In addition to a wide range of questions, survey participants were also asked to express the extent to which they agreed with two statements that were directly linked to the NDN: “Turkey will be one of the top ten economies in the world by 2023” and “Germany is jealous of our third airport.” As detailed in the theory section, these two questions capture core dimensions of the NDN: the promise of historic economic development by 2023, Istanbul airport as a symbol of the NDN, and Western

⁶ Konda is one of the most reputable survey companies in Turkey, and this survey has already been used for academic research (see, Balta et al. 2021). For more information on the survey, visit <https://konda.com.tr/en/home/>.

states' uneasiness about and hostility towards Turkey's economic development. The correlation between these two statements is 0.65. In the following regression analyses in this section, I use a "belief in the NDN" variable, that I created taking the average of these two statements. Other variables used in my analyses will be introduced in relevant sections.

5.2 Hypotheses and Theoretical Expectations

In this section, I list the hypotheses and expectations that need to be supported by representative data if the arguments developed in the theory section are correct.

To begin with, the first expectation is to find that a significant portion of Turkish voters believe in the NDN. This is more about *substantial* significance than statistical significance.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *A significant portion of Turkish voters believe in the NDN.*

Second, given that mass media is the medium through which authoritarian propaganda is disseminated, it follows that we should see a strong relationship between the belief in the NDN and pro-regime media preferences, if, indeed, this belief is really grounded in regime propaganda. This relationship should hold even when we control for a set of political and demographic variables that can confound this relationship. To summarize:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *Watching pro-regime media channels is positively correlated with the belief in the NDN even when we control for confounder variables.*

Third, if the belief in the NDN sustains regime support, as it is argued in this article, then we should see a relationship between the belief in the NDN and variables measuring regime support. This relationship should hold even when we control for a set of demographic and political variables that can confound this relationship. Thus, my third hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The belief in the NDN is positively correlated with regime support even when we control for confounder variables.*

Finally, we would expect to see the relationship between authoritarian propaganda channels and regime support to be mediated through the belief in the NDN. It is not realistic to expect a relationship of full mediation since pro-regime authoritarian media will propagate more than one narrative and

serve various functions. Yet, finding at least a partial mediation can strengthen our confidence in the theoretical framework. This brings us to my final hypothesis in this section:

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *The belief in the NDN mediates the relationship between watching pro-regime media channels and supporting the regime.*

5.3 Analysis and Results

5.3.1 H1: How widespread is the belief in the NDN?

I start my analysis by exploring the proportion of the Turkish electorate who believe in the NDN. Table 1 lists proportions for three groups: respondents who voted for the ruling coalition (AKP and MHP) in the 2018 general election,⁷ respondents who did not vote for these parties in the same election, and the entire sample. I will call the first group of voters “regime voters” in the rest of this article.

Table 1: Proportion of the Turkish electorate agreeing and disagreeing with the NDN, with samples divided based on past vote choice

	Agree			Disagree		
	Regime Voters	Others	Entire Sample	Regime Voters	Others	Entire Sample
Turkey will be a top ten economy by 2023	56%	15%	34%	19%	68%	46%
Germany is jealous of Istanbul Airport	67%	25%	45%	16%	55%	37%
Both statements	48%	11%	28%	9%	50%	31%

Note: “Strongly agree” and “agree” categories and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” categories are combined. “Neither agree nor disagree” category is skipped. Survey weights provided by the company are applied.

Table 1 reveals that nearly half of regime voters believe in *both* statements. The results are striking given that these statements reflect serious misperceptions about the situation of the economy in Turkey. Results also reveal that Turkish voters are polarized over the NDN, as there are two equally sized groups of strong believers and strong deniers of the NDN formed along partisan lines. 48% of respondents who voted for the AKP or MHP in the last election express agreement with both statements, while only 11% of remaining respondents agree with them both. Symmetrically, only 9% of regime voters express disagreement with both statements, while half of remaining respondents reject both statements. Given that the statements asked in the survey did not include any partisan cues, the

⁷ MHP has been a key element of the ruling coalition since 2016. See Online Appendix Section 4.9 for more discussion on the inclusion of MHP voters among regime voters.

partisan divide in responses verifies the partisan nature of the NDN.

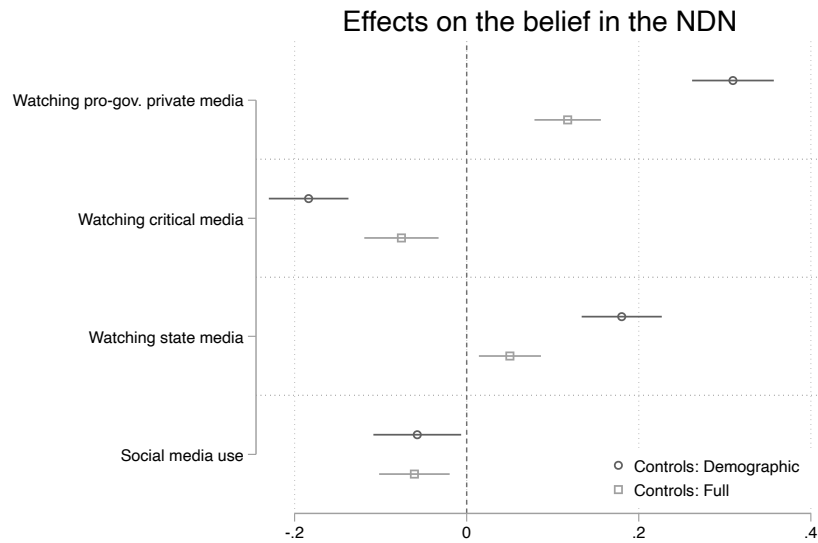
5.3.2 H2: Is the belief in the NDN correlated with media preferences?

I measure media preferences through a question that asked respondents which TV channel they use to watch news. I created three binary variables based on responses to this question: Following news through the regime's privately owned propaganda channels (ATV and A Haber), through state media (TRT 1), and through critical private media (FOX TV). Respectively, these three groups correspond to 20%, 10%, and 25% of survey respondents. While all TV channels in Turkey, except FOX TV, avoid criticisms of the regime, it is ATV and A Haber -both owned by Erdogan's son-in-law's family- that excel at sensational style regime propaganda. The survey also included a question that asked respondents whether they use social media. 65% of respondents said that they did. This question is added to regression models as another measure of media preferences since social media use in Turkey still offers an opportunity to be exposed to critical perspectives.

In order to simplify the analysis, I combine two NDN items into a single variable taking their row average. This variable is called "belief in the NDN." Two groups of control variables are added to models. The first group is formed only of demographic variables: Age, level of education, household income, and gender. The second group additionally includes a set of political and attitudinal variables: Religiosity, populism scale, conspiratorial thinking scale, ideology, political knowledge, experiencing personal economic hardship in the last year, vote for regime parties in the last election, and vote for opposition parties in the last election. A full list of survey questions used to create these variables and descriptive statistics summarizing properties of these variables can be found in the Online Appendix Section 3.1.

Results, shared in Figure 1, reveal a strong relationship between media preferences and belief in the NDN. Most significantly, watching pro-regime private media increases the likelihood to believe in the NDN more than 0.1 standard deviation, even when we control for a wide range of political variables, including vote choice in the election held three months before the survey took place. Importantly, watching critical private media and using social media are negatively associated with the belief in the NDN. This shows the importance of alternative sources of information in resisting government propaganda.

Figure 1: OLS results measuring the relationship between media preferences and the belief in the NDN



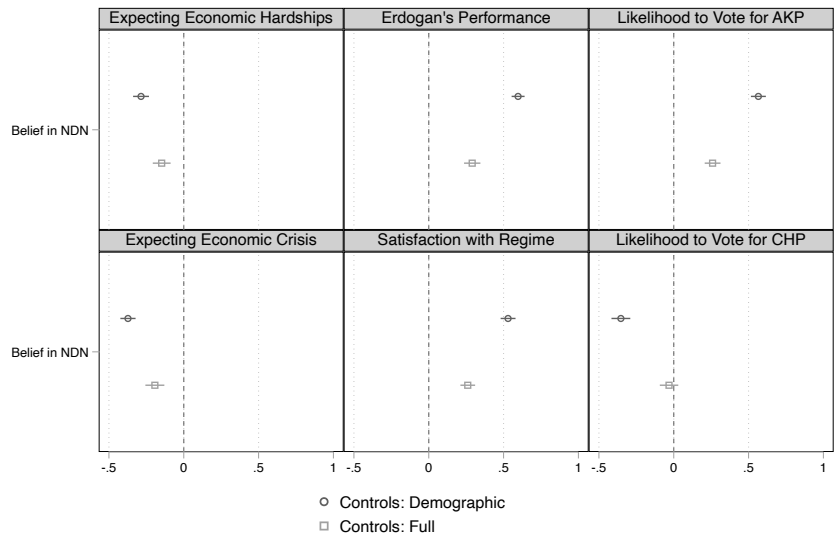
Note: All values are standardized. See Online Appendix Section 3.2 for full table and further explanations.

5.3.3 H3: Is the belief in the NDN correlated with regime support?

The Konda survey also allows us to measure the relationship between the NDN and regime support. I use six different variables, created from six different questions, to measure various dimensions of regime support. First, the survey includes two questions to measure future economic expectations: “expectations of personal economic hardship in the coming months” and “expectation of an economic crisis in the coming months.” Furthermore, one question asks respondents about the level of satisfaction with democracy in the country; one question asks respondents to evaluate Erdogan’s performance; and a series of questions ask respondents how likely they are to vote for each of political parties in Turkey, including the AKP and the main opposition party CHP, in an immediate election. These are the six questions that are used to measure regime support. All demographic and political control variables introduced in the previous subsection are added in the models along with variables measuring media preferences. Results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2 supports Hypothesis 3; belief in the NDN is strongly associated with all indicators of regime support, except the likelihood of voting for the opposition party. These relationships are substantially significant as well. For example, the belief in developmentalism increases Erdogan’s performance evaluations by 0.3 standard deviation, even when we control for a wide range of demo-

Figure 2: OLS results measuring the relationship between the belief in the NDN and political and economic outcomes



Note: All values are standardized. See Online Appendix Section 3.3 for the full table and explanations.

graphic and political variables.

5.3.4 H4: Mediation analysis

Finally, I conduct two separate causal mediation analyses (Imai et al. 2011) to test Hypothesis 4. In one of the causal mediation analyses, I use performance evaluations for Erdogan as the dependent variable; in the second mediation analysis, I use the likelihood of voting for the AKP in an immediate election as the dependent variable. For the independent variable, I create a binary variable of pro-regime media preferences by combining people who watch news through pro-regime private media and state-owned media in one group. The mediating variable is the belief in the NDN. All demographic and political control variables introduced in previous subsections were also added to models in this section.

According to results, presented in Online Appendix Section 3.4, around a quarter of the effect of media preferences on regime support in Turkey is mediated through belief in the NDN. This effect is statistically significant, and results do not change between two different measures of regime support. Given that the regime media serves a variety of purposes and uses a wide range of narratives, this effect should be considered substantially significant as well.

To summarize, results from the representative survey data demonstrate that there is a relationship between exposure to regime propaganda, developmentalist beliefs, and regime support. Believing that Turkey is experiencing a historic economic growth and the developed world is envious of this growth is a strong component of regime support in Turkey. However, the observational nature of the data limits the reliability of causal claims we can make over these relationships. Furthermore, this data makes it very difficult to explore how the impact of the NDN depend on the preexisting political preferences and vote choice of respondents, since these preferences were also endogenous to belief in the NDN. Finally, observational data does not allow us to study emotions' mediating role directly. I tackle all of these issues in the next section with the help of an experimental design.

6 Experimental Study: Testing effects of the national developmentalist narrative

I conducted an online survey experiment in Turkey during Fall 2021 to explore causal effects of the national developmentalist narrative (NDN).⁸ The goal of the experimental design was to make people, who were randomly assigned to the treatment group, think about the NDN and then to measure what kind of attitudinal and emotional changes would occur among those people. If the belief in the NDN was simply a result of partisan cue taking from the AKP elites and Erdogan, without any further political implications, we would not see any spillover effects of *thinking* about the NDN on questions that were not directly about the content of the NDN, such as political emotions about political actors. Yet, as will be explained below, I have found significant attitudinal and emotional changes in respondents assigned to the treatment condition.

6.1 Introducing the data

Participants in the experiment were recruited through Facebook paid advertisements, which then directed them to a survey page hosted on Qualtrics.⁹ The survey was registered on September 21 and the data collection lasted from September 22 to October 1.¹⁰ In total, 1543 people participated in the

⁸ Exemption from Institutional Review was received from XXX University on February 25, 2020.

⁹ More explanation on this method and information about our advertisement materials can be found in the Section 4.1 of Online Appendix.

¹⁰ An anonymous link to the registration plan is available at https://osf.io/hjekf?view_only=0ee72af8939a40daa665069853d8fb9d. There were only two diversions from the registration plan: collection of a larger sample than initially planned and the inclusion of MHP voters among regime voters category. These

survey, 773 of which had voted for the AKP or MHP in the last general election in 2018.

The advantage of recruiting participants through online means and letting them to complete the survey through their own devices is to increase the power of the treatment. This was especially important as my intention was to evoke emotions through a set of questions and images. The challenge, on the other hand, is to reach a representative sample. Demographic distribution of respondents in this study is available in the Online Appendix Section 4.3, along with the comparison to probability-based Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) 2018 Turkey sample. Thanks to the use of targeting tools offered by Facebook and material incentives, there are no vast differences between the online sample and the Turkish population. The survey lasted less than ten minutes, and a full list of questions asked in the survey are provided in Online Appendix Section 4.4. Outcome variables will be introduced in the relevant parts of this section; a full list of all questions and outcome variables used in the study, along with descriptive statistics, is available in the Online Appendix Section 4.6.

6.2 Introducing the treatment

Around half of survey participants were randomly assigned to a treatment condition after answering a set of pre-treatment questions. Randomization was conducted through Qualtrics. Balance tests, presented in Online Appendix Section 4.2, demonstrate that randomization worked as planned with only small differences between treatment and control groups.¹¹

Theoretically, the treatment was exposure to the NDN. In practice, respondents in the treatment condition were asked five questions about the NDN before they were directed into post-treatment questions, while respondents in the control group did not see these questions. Images of Osmangazi Bridge and Istanbul Airport accompanied the questions in the treatment group. These images were taken from pro-regime websites, and two of them also included logos of pro-regime media outlets along with propaganda phrases pasted on the image in the original version, such as “Germans are in dismay.” Survey questions, on the other hand, were objectively phrased, e.g. “Some media outlets

changes are detailed in Online Appendix Section 4.9.

¹¹ All of the nine pre-treatment variables were used for balance tests. Results have shown that, among regime voters, respondents in the treatment group were more religious than respondents in the control group ($p=0.043$). Among other voters, respondents in the treatment group had less political interest than respondents in the control group ($p=0.047$). Following the pre-analysis plan, I added all nine pre-treatment variables to the models presented in this section as control variables. Results without control variables are presented in Online Appendix Section 4.7; there are no serious differences.

Table 2: Short versions of questions asked to the treatment group and the distribution of responses

Questions asked to the treatment group: (together with images from pro-regime media)	Agree			Disagree		
	Regime Voters	Others	Entire Sample	Regime Voters	Others	Entire Sample
Q1: Do you support investments for 2023 targets?	77%	27%	52%	5%	41%	23%
Q2: Will Turkey be a top ten economy by 2023?	64%	14%	39%	18%	65%	42%
Q3: Are Germans envious of the third airport?	65%	17%	41%	17%	65%	41%
Q4: Are foreign states conspiring against 2023 targets?	68%	23%	45%	11%	55%	33%
Q5: Do you agree with opposition parties' criticisms?	17%	52%	35%	60%	20%	40%

Note: “Strongly agree” and “agree” categories and “strongly disagree” and “disagree” categories are combined. “Neither agree nor disagree” category is skipped.

claim that Germans are envious of third airport. Do you agree with this claim?” I designed the treatment in the form of objective questions, rather than a text or a video, to avoid giving the impression that the survey was conducted by a pro-regime organization. This could cause experimenter demand effects or backlash effects, especially with respect to questions asking about future economic evaluations (Mummolo and Peterson 2019). Summaries of these five questions are listed in Table 2; you can see Online Appendix Section 4.5 for the full treatment, including both images and questions. Table 2 also lists the proportion of respondents in the treatment group that expressed agreement or disagreement with each of these five questions.¹² The second question and the third question are same with the questions asked in the representative survey used in the previous section; this allows us to compare two samples. Results are similar across two samples. 56% of respondents in the representative survey conducted in 2018 believed that Turkey would be one of top ten economies by 2023. This proportion was 64% in the online sample, conducted in 2021.

6.3 Hypotheses

Building on the theoretical framework developed in Section 4, I tested three pre-registered hypotheses through the experimental data:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *Being exposed to the NDN evokes positive emotions towards Erdogan and negative emotions towards the opposition parties.*

Hypothesis 6 (H6): *Being exposed to the NDN improves economic evaluations.*

Hypothesis 7 (H7): *Being exposed to the NDN improves pro-regime political preferences.*

¹² I am presenting the results on Table 2 for informative purposes only. These responses are not used as part of any models in this study.

Following the registration plan, regime voters and non-regime voters were separated at the data analysis stage. Regime voters are respondents who said, during the pre-treatment part of the survey, that they voted for the AKP or MHP in the last election, i.e. 2018 legislative election. Non-regime voters are all other respondents, who either voted for other parties or did not vote at all. Pre-registered hypotheses referred to regime voters, but I have also tested the influence of the NDN on other voters.

Finally, I conducted moderation and mediation analyses to better interpret the causal effects of the NDN. Moderation analyses explored whether the effects of the NDN depended on partisanship strength. Mediation analysis tested whether emotions mediated the relationship between the treatment and the change in economic and political preferences.

6.4 Analysis and Results

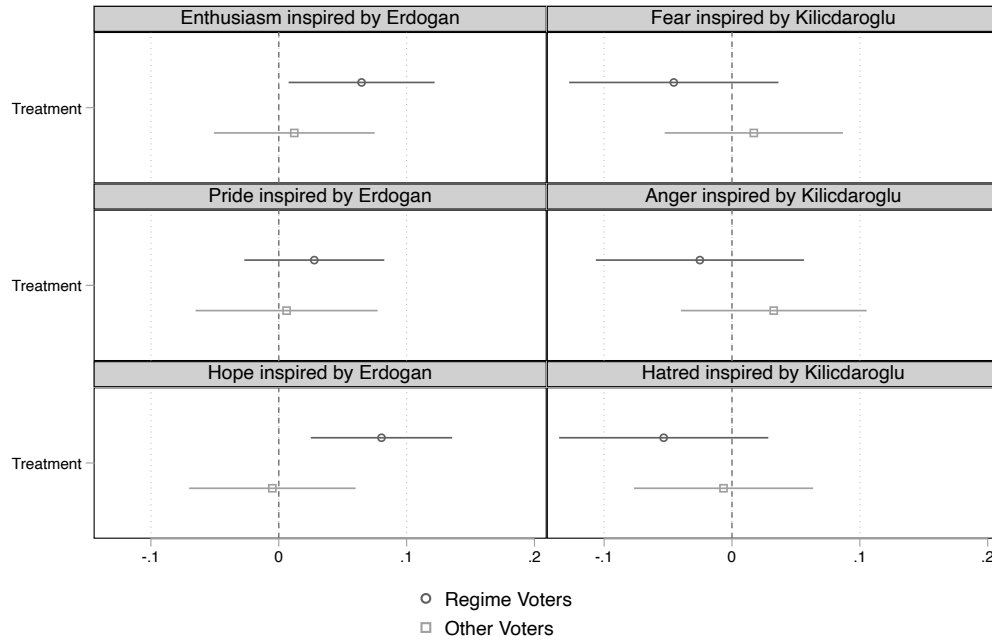
6.4.1 H5: Does exposure to the NDN affect partisan emotions?

One of the main arguments of this paper is that the NDN evokes affective reactions from regime voters. Respondents' affective reactions were measured through twelve self-reported questions. I asked respondents to what extent Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu (the leader of the main opposition party, CHP) evoked emotions of enthusiasm, pride, hope, fear, anger, and hatred from them. These emotions were selected as they were visible in the qualitative study of online reaction videos described in the theory section. As pre-registered, I only analyzed the emotions of enthusiasm, pride, and hope for Erdogan and emotions of fear, anger, and hatred for Kilicdaroglu. The emotions scale ranged from 0 to 10. Following the registration plan, I analyzed regime voters and opposition voters separately.

Results, shown in Figure 3, support Hypothesis 5; regime voters who were exposed to the NDN were more likely to associate enthusiasm and hope with Erdogan. More specifically, regime voters' association of Erdogan with hope and enthusiasm increased around 0.1 standard deviation when asked whether they agreed with the premises of the NDN. These results verify that the narrative structure of the propaganda is effective at building affective and charismatic ties between Erdogan and his supporters.

Unlike hope and enthusiasm, we do not find any relationship between the treatment and pride. There are two alternative explanations here, which are probably both true. Firstly, among regime voters in the control group, the level of pride was higher than levels of enthusiasm and hope, as it

Figure 3: The effect of the NDN treatment on emotions, based on voting behavior in 2018



Note: See the full table in Online Appendix Section 4.7.

can be seen in Online Appendix Section 4.6. Thus, there was less room to manipulate pride. In addition to this, it can be argued that the origin of pride is different from the origin of enthusiasm and hope among regime voters. Pride might be especially associated with partisan group identities and feelings of superiority vis-a-vis other partisan groups in Turkey, while hope and enthusiasm are associated with the vision of future.

We also do not find any relationship between the NDN and negative partisan emotions. This finding contradicts the results from the qualitative analysis, which demonstrated that the NDN evoked anger towards the opposition parties. Yet, it is in line with the finding from the representative study, which showed no relationship between belief in the NDN and the likelihood of voting for the opposition party. We can, therefore, conclude that the relationship between the NDN and negative partisan emotions is a spurious one.

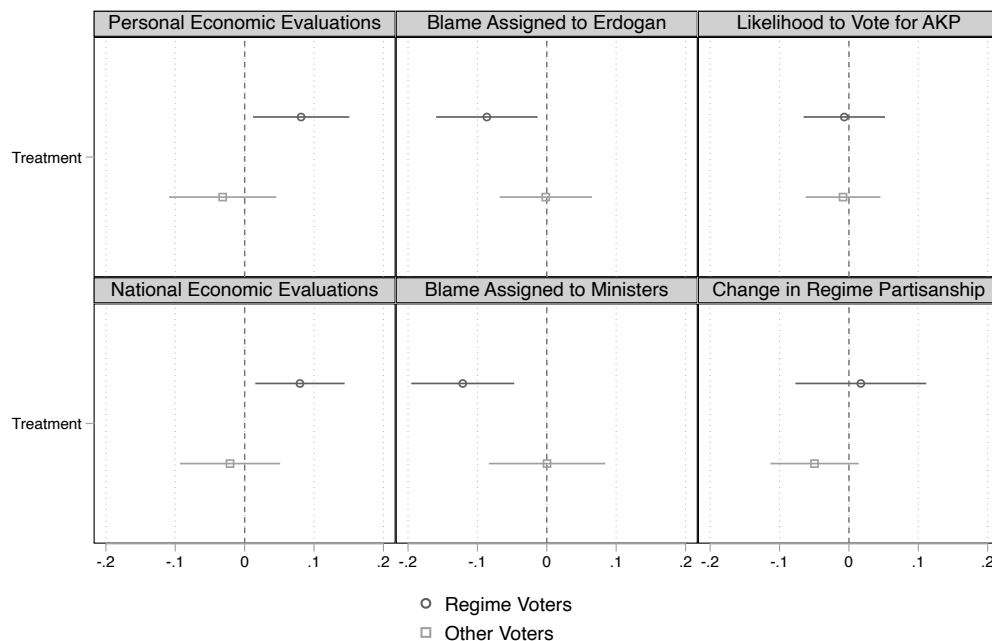
As argued in Section 4.3, we do not find any effect of the treatment on other voters. This is an important finding, which shows the limitations of narrative-based economic propaganda.

6.4.2 H6: Does exposure to the NDN affect economic evaluations?

I use four variables to measure economic evaluations. The first two variables are future economic expectations on an individual level and a national level. Each of these variables are the averages of responses to one positively-worded and one negatively-worded and reverse-coded question, on a scale of 1 to 5. The third and fourth variables measure to what extent respondents believe that Erdogan or ministers of economy are to blame for the economic troubles of the country. These variables are produced from two separate questions, asking respondents to express blame assignment on a scale of 1 to 5.

The first two columns of Figure 4 present the results, which consistently demonstrate that exposure to the NDN improves economic evaluations among regime voters. Regime voters not only express positive economic expectations for the future direction of the economy and their personal economic situation, but they also put less blame on Erdogan and his ministers for current economic troubles in the country.

Figure 4: The effect of the NDN treatment on economic and political evaluations, based on voting behavior in 2018



Note: The full table is presented in Online Appendix Section 4.7.

6.4.3 H7: Does exposure to the NDN affect political preferences?

Finally, I use two variables to measure political preferences. The first variable measures how likely respondents were to vote for the AKP if there was an immediate election. The scale ranged from 1 to 5. The second variable was built on the partisanship item used in the CSES. I asked respondents whether they felt close to any political party and how close they felt (if they felt at all), from 1 to 3. This set of questions was asked both before the treatment and after the treatment. As indicated in the registration plan, I created a variable, ranging from -3 to 3, measuring the individual level change in partisanship occurring as a result of the treatment.

Results are presented in the third column of Figure 4. An unexpected result is that we do not find any relationships between the treatment and political preferences. As I have already established that the NDN improves both economic and affective evaluations, my only explanation is that the room for experimental manipulation was more limited in these questions, compared to other questions. The analysis of heterogeneous treatment effects in the following subsection allows us to explore if this really was the case.

6.4.4 Exploring Causal Effects: The role of non-partisans and emotions

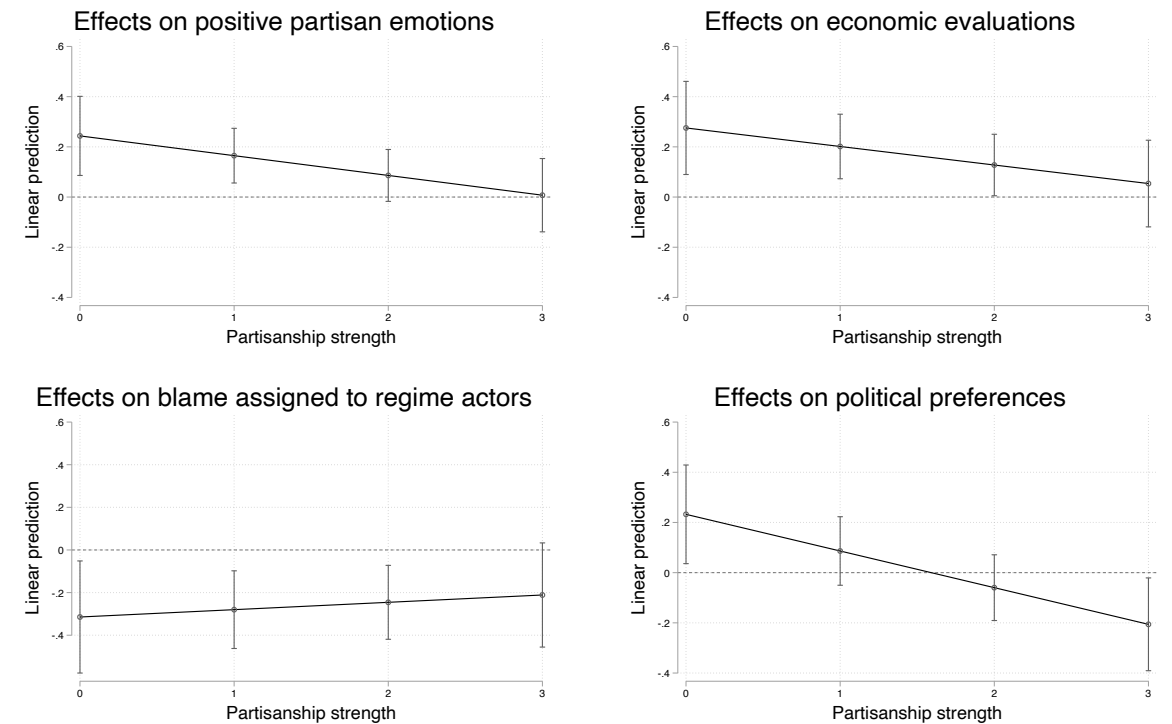
To have a better understanding of causal effects, I ran moderation and mediation analyses over regime voters' responses.

Firstly, I explored how partisanship and its strength moderated the effect of the treatment on emotional, economic and political responses. Partisanship is a very important factor in Turkish politics, and it is important to see whether there are any distinctions between strong partisans and non-partisans with respect to the effect of the NDN. I created aggregate measures to simplify the analysis by taking row averages of relevant variables. All three variables of positive partisan emotion (hope, enthusiasm, and pride) were combined to form an aggregate positive emotions variable; personal and national economic evaluations were combined to form an aggregate economic evaluations measure; blame assigned to Erdogan and ministers were combined to form an aggregate blame assignment variable, and vote and partisanship were combined to create an aggregate political preferences measure.

The results, presented in Figure 5, consistently demonstrate that treatment effects were strongest

among non-partisan regime voters. This means that the NDN helps the regime to sustain its support among one of the most crucial voter groups in terms of the regime survival, that is, voters who voted for regime parties in the last election but do not feel close to those parties currently. Given that these people are probably more likely to abstain or defect in the next election than strong partisans, these results reveal that the NDN serves an important political function.

Figure 5: The moderating effect of partisanship on the relationship between developmentalism treatment and aggregate measures



Note: Full tables are presented in Online Appendix Section 4.8.

Interestingly, causal effects were nearly absent among strong partisan regime voters, which formed around 30% of regime voters in the sample. We can interpret these results as an indication of ceiling effects. For example, while the average level of positive partisan emotions among strong regime partisans was 9 over 10, the average level of positive partisan emotions among the rest of regime voters was 6.2. Similarly, these results suggest that our inability to confirm Hypothesis 7 in Figure 4, i.e. the effect of the NDN on political preferences, was because of the lack of room for experimental manipulation among strong partisans. Exposure to the NDN do move political preferences among non-partisans.

Second, I ran three different mediation analyses, exploring how the change in aggregate posi-

tive emotions variable mediate the effect of the treatment on three different variables: Aggregate economic evaluations measure, aggregate blame assignment variable, and aggregate political preferences measure. Results are presented in Online Appendix Section 4.8.3. Results demonstrate that for each of the three outcome variables there is a statistically significant effect between the treatment and the outcome variable that is mediated through partisan emotions. The size of this effect is around 0.1 standard deviation. This corresponds to more than 40% of the effect on economic evaluations and 30% of the effect on blame assignment. It is important to note that positive emotions *fully* mediate the significant and positive relationship between the treatment and pro-regime political preferences.

7 Conclusions

This article demonstrates that national developmentalist narratives, which are strategically adopted by especially authoritarian leaders in the Global South, can evoke affective and charismatic attachments between the leader and voters, improve economic evaluations, and increase political support for the regime. These results are supported by both representative survey data and experimental data from Turkey. Representative survey data confirms that a significant portion of regime voters in Turkey hold economic misperceptions originating from the national developmentalist narrative, and that these beliefs form a significant component of regime support. It could be argued that this relationship was simply the result of partisan cue-taking from the regime media with no further political consequences of its own. Yet, the experimental design overcomes this objection by showing that exposure to developmentalist narratives results in emotional and attitudinal changes that cannot be explained by cue-taking. On the contrary, this article shows how partisanship itself develops and is sustained in less institutionalized political systems.

This article contributes to our understanding of support for authoritarian regimes, both in Turkey and beyond. It has been an open question whether authoritarian regimes could improve their performance evaluations through propaganda. This study shows that the narrative structure, which offers a powerful and appealing vision for future, can help authoritarian regimes to free themselves of the responsibility for current economic troubles, while also strengthening affective bonds to their voters. To be clear, Turkey's economic crisis does weaken support for the regime (see, for example, [Steinberg 2021](#)). Yet, its effects have so far been much more limited than what the Turkish opposition expected, and this paper explains why this has been the case. On the other hand, the study

also reveals the limits of partisan narratives in shaping public opinion. The Erdogan regime's developmentalist narrative does not influence the attitudes of opposition voters, nor it can evoke negative emotions towards opposition parties.

Going beyond the case of Turkey and the topic of authoritarianism, this article also contributes to the study of ideological formations in the Global South. Historians and anthropologists have long pointed to the role of utopian developmentalist ideologies in developing countries (e.g. [Coronil 1997](#); [Ioris 2014](#); [Inden 1995](#); [Kotkin 1997](#); [Scott 1999](#)). Yet, political scientists' engagement with this discourse has been limited to the study of developmentalist policy ideas and their results ([Kohli et al. 2004](#); [Sikkink 1991](#)). This article introduces developmentalism as a popular narrative that needs to be taken into account.

This study also opens new avenues for future research at both cross-national and behavioral levels. Firstly, we need to explore the variation in the adoption and success of certain forms of authoritarian narratives. Many leaders in the Global South attempt to use promises of fast economic development to build public support and legitimacy. When do these promises work to mobilize support? Are institutional features of the regime, such as the level of personalization, a determinant in the adoption or success of these narratives? For instance in Turkey, the centralization of the NDN within the regime went together with the personalization of the regime rule under Erdogan. It is, of course, a challenge to conduct cross-national studies of narratives as this requires a high level of competence in multiple non-European languages. Nevertheless, this is also necessary to improve our understanding of public opinion in authoritarian countries.

Secondly, another direction for future research should be exploring psychological mechanisms explaining exposure to authoritarian propaganda. Although selective exposure theories are now dominant among scholars of media consumption in democracies, we rarely consider the consumption of authoritarian propaganda as a choice, rather than an unavoidable fact of living under authoritarianism. Yet, people living in authoritarian countries decide to what extent they will be exposed to propaganda. This paper demonstrates that being exposed to the regime propaganda can elicit positive emotions. In other words, authoritarian propaganda offers a way to feel happy and enthusiastic, and that might be why some people prefer to consume authoritarian propaganda, as predicted by mood adjustment theories.

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Whisper Sweet Nothings to Me Erdogan: How Economic Propaganda Works Under Authoritarianism

Supplementary Analysis

Contents

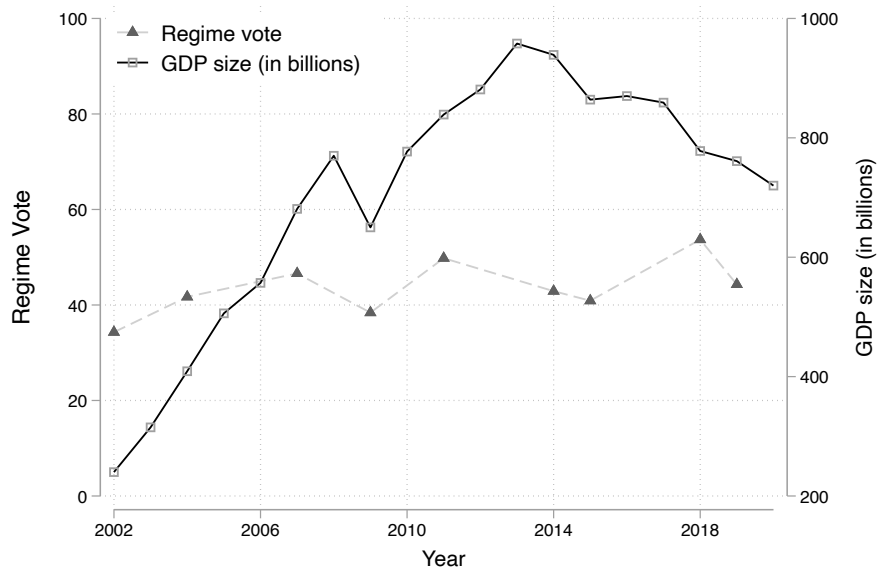
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1 Case Selection: Turkey's Political Regime in Comparative Perspective

Before 2002, Turkey had an electoral democratic regime, which also had some serious flaws. Throughout 1990s, military and bureaucratic elites in the country had attempted to prevent rising Kurdish and Islamist movements from gaining more political power through party closures and political bans. After an economic crisis hit the country in 2001, 2002 snap elections brought the Justice and Development Party (AKP) into power. The party had Islamist origins, and it was only one year old when it gained a majority of seats in the parliament. Its founder and leader was Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The AKP's first term in government coincided with favorable international economic and political conditions. Like many other middle-income countries during the same period, such as Brazil, Russia, and China, Turkey was able to catch historic economic growth rates. During this period, the AKP's vote share increased from 34 % to 49 % in 2007. Despite economic setbacks during the later terms of the AKP's rule, the vote share of regime parties stayed mostly stable. Figure A.1 shows the performance of the economy under Erdogan's rule, in addition to the vote share of regime parties during the last two decades.

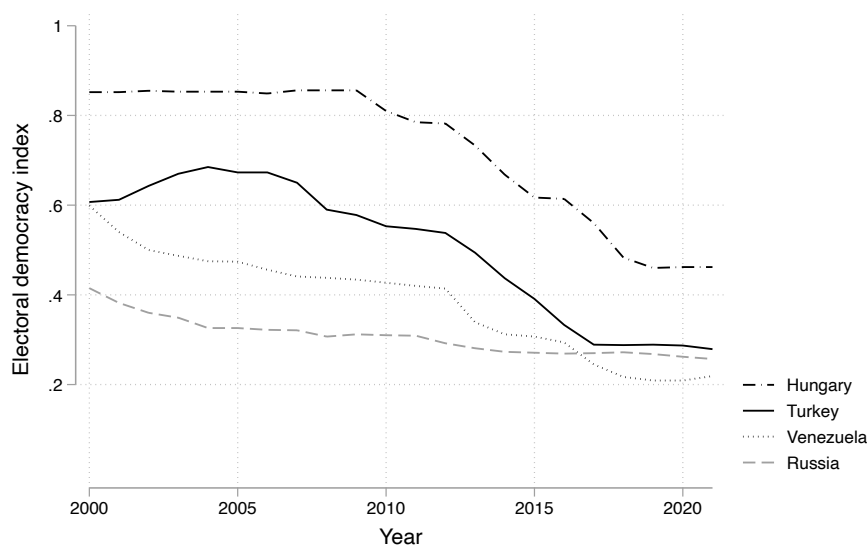
Figure A.1: Turkey's GDP and regime vote



Especially from 2007 onwards, the AKP and its leader Erdoğan relied on strong popular support to gradually change the political system of Turkey into a hybrid regime under their full control. Turkey's democratic trajectory under Erdogan's rule can be seen in Figure A.2. Between 2010 and 2017, the country went through a rapid process of autocratization and personalization. Erdogan benefitted from political crises, such as Gezi Protests (2013), corruption probes (2014), and the coup attempt (2016), by further consolidating his power over the country (Cleary and Öztürk 2022). By 2021, Turkey has a similar level of democracy to infamous cases such as Russia and Venezuela.

Regular multi-party elections for the chief executive and legislative branches still exist in Turkey, and opposition parties preserve their historical support base grounded in ideological, religious, and ethnic cleavages. Yet, Erdogan regime uses a variety of repressive and manipulative tactics to effectively undermine electoral competition and deny opposition parties the chance to gain broader polit-

Figure A.2: Turkey in comparison to other electoral authoritarian regimes



Source: V-Dem

ical power. First of all, the regime has gradually established firm control over the media space(Yesil 2014; Yeşil 2018). The regime has also nearly full control over the judiciary, and it uses this power to prevent the formation of political alternatives. Politicians, including the charismatic leader of the Kurdish opposition party, prominent civil society leaders, and influential journalists have been jailed during the last decade. Even ballot box victories are not always enough for opposition parties to gain office. The Erdogan regime has a history of removing elected opposition mayors from power or forcing a repeat of local elections when they lose (Demiralp and Balta 2021; Tutkal 2021).

2 Qualitative Data and Analysis

2.1 AKP's 2011 Election Campaign Posters

To start with, we can divide these posters into two groups, which differed with regards to the shared slogans, design, and content. The first group of the posters was about promises for the future, while the second group was about past successes and services of the government.

2.1.1 First group

Posters in the first group were directly focused on the goal of establishing a developmentalist narrative. These posters specified a temporal location for the utopia, provided detailed descriptions of the promised future, and articulated “development” as the nodal point of the entire AKP discourse.

To start with, all of the posters in this group were branded with the slogan “Turkey is ready; Target 2023.” The 2011 election was the first time AKP adopted “Target 2023” as a party slogan, and this was the most widely used slogan throughout the entire election campaign. Whenever Erdoğan made a campaign speech, for example, “Target 2023” was written on the background. TV commercials of AKP broadcasted right before the election started and ended with this same slogan. Erdoğan himself referred to this slogan many times in his speeches. After the 2011 elections, the slogan continued to be one of the main slogans of the party, and a common reference point among party members from all ranks.

An analysis of the election posters in the first group reveals the content of AKP's utopia: a developmentalist utopia that largely relied on the construction of large-scale infrastructural projects. The star of these projects was an artificial water leeway to be constructed between the Black Sea and Marmara Sea. Indicating that the main goal of these projects was being grandiose, AKP proudly introduced this project as the “magnificent project” in the relevant election poster.

Figure A.3: Election Poster 1 (left) and 2 (right)



Table A.1: List of Election Posters in Group 1

No	Promise on the left	Slogan on the right
1	One of world's ten biggest economies	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
2	3rd Bridge and 3rd Airport to Istanbul	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
3	500 billion dollars export	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
4	Magnificent Project Kanal Istanbul	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
5	One of five biggest economies in the world in agriculture	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
6	Our domestic aircraft is in the sky	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
7	Our domestic satellite Gokturk is in the space	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
8	500,000 new homes	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
9	Our domestic car is coming	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
10	Our domestic fighter aircraft and helicopter are coming	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
11	Final solution to 2/B land: Everyone will get their own land permit	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
12	10 new fast train line	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
13	Metro lines to all over Ankara	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
14	Highway from Istanbul to Izmir	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
15	Fully furnished 100,000 homes to newly wedded couples	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
16	22 grand city hospitals	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
17	Free e-textbook to every students	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
18	Railway from Esenboga to Kizilay	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
19	Two new cities to Istanbul, one is in Europe, one is in Asia	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
20	Rail Tunnel under the Bosphorus	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.
21	Two huge stadiums and sport complex to izmir	Turkey is ready. Target 2023.

Figure A.4: Election Poster 3 (left) and 4 (right)



Figure A.5: Election Poster 5 (left) and 6 (right)



Figure A.6: Election Poster 7 (left) and 8 (right)



Figure A.7: Election Poster 9 (left) and 10 (right)



Figure A.8: Election Poster 11 (left) and 12 (right)



Figure A.9: Election Poster 13 (left) and 14 (right)



Figure A.10: Election Poster 15 (left) and 16 (right)



Figure A.11: Election Poster 17 (left) and 18 (right)



Figure A.12: Election Poster 19 (left) and 20 (right)



Figure A.13: Election Poster 21



2.1.2 Second group

Second group is formed of 15 posters, which all shared the slogan “it was a dream; it came true”. In addition to this shared slogan, each poster included a statement that can be attributed to a citizen and a statement from the party, repeating the citizen’s message. All of these posters were about past services of the government. Some of these alleged past services included cheap credits, increased social spending, agricultural subsidies, free textbooks for schoolchildren, improved health services, the first national aircraft, the first national satellite, and high-speed rail. It can be inferred that these posters’ primary goal was to address daily economic concerns by referring to improvements in government services. On the other hand, however, the notion of “a dream coming true” and the expressed pride in producing objects of technological superiority, such as a satellite and an aircraft, point to the developmentalist mindset behind the 2011 election campaign.

A closer look at one of the posters, number 34, is informative in this sense. This poster is about fast trains. On the left side of the poster, we see a young Turkish woman wearing a headscarf. She smiles in an enthusiastic way. Next to the woman, it reads “artık bizim de hızlı trenimiz var”. “Artık” calls three different meanings simultaneously: “from now on”, “finally”, and “now”. So, the sentence can be translated as: “now, we also have fast train”. On the right side, there is a photo of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Next to him, it reads “Türkiye’yi yüksek hızlı trenle tanıştırdık”. This can be translated as “we introduced fast train to Turkey”. Finally, at the bottom, it reads “hayaldti, gerçek oldu”. As I have mentioned above, this means, “it was a dream, it became real”.

The most important question here is why the first sentence, “now, we also have fast train”, included the word “also”. The service of providing fast train to Turkey could be conveyed just using the sentence “now, we have fast train”. I believe that “also” creates a crucial difference here. If we exclude “also” from the sentence, the function of the remaining sentence is limited to describing a material service that provides comfortable, fast and cheap travel. When you include “also” in the sentence, however, this suddenly turns into a sentence of developmentalist frame. Now, it refers to a competition between nations and how Turkey could finally catch up with advanced nations. The fast train is no more about material benefits of cheap and comfortable travel; it is about the fulfillment of a symbol of developed countries.

Figure A.14: Election Poster 22 (left) and 23 (right)



Figure A.15: Election Poster 24 (left) and 25 (right)



Figure A.16: Election Poster 26 (left) and 27 (right)



Figure A.17: Election Poster 28 (left) and 29 (right)



Figure A.18: Election Poster 30 (left) and 31 (right)



Figure A.19: Election Poster 32 (left) and 33 (right)



Figure A.20: Election Poster 34 (left) and 35 (right)



Figure A.21: Election Poster 36



Table A.2: List of election posters in Group 2

22	Citizen:	I am getting my textbooks for free
	AKP:	We have delivered 1 billion free textbooks
23	Citizen:	I got my credit, I grew my business
	AKP:	We gave full support to small businesses
24	Citizen:	I receive treatment in whichever hospital I want
	AKP:	We united hospitals, we ended the shame of being kept as hostage
25	Citizen:	Now our family has a doctor
	AKP:	We started family practice
26	Citizen:	What I sow is under state guarantee
	AKP:	We started agricultural insurance
27	Citizen:	I am getting subsidies for produces and fuel
	AKP:	We gave full support to our farmers
28	Citizen:	We got rid of inflation
	AKP:	We dropped the inflation from 30% to 4%
29	Citizen:	6 zeros removed, my money got more valuable
	AKP:	We removed six zeros from Turkish lira
30	Citizen:	I travel safely in divided highways
	AKP:	We constructed 13,500 km divided highway
31	Citizen:	I became home owner as if I was paying regular rent
	AKP:	We built 490,000 homes
32	Citizen:	I receive my prescription from whichever pharmacy I want and for 80% cheaper.
	AKP:	We discounted drug prices hugely.
33	Citizen:	I fly to my hometown.
	AKP:	We turned airports into people's airports.
34	Citizen:	Now we also have fast train.
	AKP:	We introduced fast trains to Turkey.
35	Citizen:	I am traveling to many countries without visas.
	AKP:	We removed visas with 47 countries.
36	Citizen:	I am getting support for my disabled child.
	AKP:	We are paying minimum wages to 285,000 caretakers for disabled citizens

Citizens' statements are located on the left-hand side of the poster, while the AKP's statements are located on the right-hand side of the poster.

2.2 Selected election posters in the following general elections

Figure A.22: Election Poster for 2014 Presidential Election



The election poster seen on Figure A.22 was used in the 2014 presidential election campaign. The slogan at the center reads "National Will, National Power, Target 2023, Target 2053, Target 2071."

Figure A.23: Election Poster for 2015 Parliamentary Election



The election poster seen on Figure A.23 was used in the 2015 election campaign. The slogan at the center reads "New Turkey, New Power, Target 2023." Due to Turkey's electoral laws during the time, which required recently elected president Erdoğan to be impartial in the election, the AKP used prime minister Davutoglu's image in the election campaign.

Figure A.24: Election Poster for 2018 Presidential and Parliamentary Election



The election poster seen on Figure A.24 was used in the 2018 election campaign. The main slogan at the center reads "Great Turkey Needs Strong Leader." Below it reads "Recep Tayyip Erdogan for Kanal Istanbul, new bridges, new airports, nation's gardens." On the left corner, it reads "Time for Turkey." This was also the slogan of the entire campaign.

2.3 Online Reaction Videos

Survey experiments, laboratory experiments, or interviews share the common weakness of non-natural evocation of emotions. In this respect, video data analysis provides researchers with a special opportunity to observe emotional reactions directly (Collins 2009; Nassauer and Legewie 2019), and this method is increasingly used in various fields such as sociology (Nassauer and Legewie 2021) and human geography (Laurier 2016). I used online reaction videos with the same purpose: to be able to directly capture regime supporters' emotional and discursive engagement with the national developmentalist narrative (NDN).

To ensure the systematic nature of the study, I limited my sample of online reaction videos to a single situation (first physical encounter with a symbol of the NDN), a single location (Osman Gazi Bridge, a suspension bridge over the Marmara Sea), and a single temporal period (all videos were recorded during the first week after the bridge was officially opened in July 2016).

I conducted a search on YouTube, using keywords such as "Osmangazi Koprusu." This search returned 72 reaction videos that fit with the properties listed above, i.e. recorded by ordinary people driving over the Osman Gazi Bridge during the first week of its official opening. These reaction videos can be classified into three groups with respect to their utility for this study. The first group, the most useful for this research, included videos in which people talked and openly shared their feelings and thoughts. I have found 30 videos of this type, and stopped looking for further videos at that point. The findings presented in the article predominantly rely on this group of videos. In the second group of videos, video recorders broadcast partisan music (marches with strong rhythms and symbolic lyrics) and the footage of their drive over the bridge but there was no talk. I found 16 videos of this type. Although these videos did not include any speech, the musical content suggested that supporters recording these videos were also aroused by the encounter with the bridge. Finally, the third group of videos included neither talk, nor partisan music. Although titles or descriptions of these videos in YouTube usually included some partisan slogans, their content was not very useful for the analysis of affective stances.

In interpreting these videos, I explored discursive and affective themes shared across different videos. As I analyzed affective themes, I studied both subjective descriptions of the emotional state (e.g., "I am very proud today"), and vocal characteristics of speeches, like higher levels of pitch or frequent use of exclamations and interjections (Mauss and Robinson 2009). As I analyzed discursive themes, I explored the narrative characteristics as introduced in the theory section. For example, I wanted to see whether supporters talked about the bridge as a service that improves the quality of everyday life, or as part of a narrative theme linking past and present with future.

It is important to remind that I do not argue that the individuals in these videos represent the group of regime voters. It is quite possible that these are core partisans, who had already developed strong affective ties to the regime for reasons different from the NDN. On the other hand, I argue that the emotional and discursive reactions that we see in these videos are quite genuine. All of the videos analyzed here belong to ordinary citizens; they were not produced by the party organization or a media company. Thus, a study of these videos allows us to learn about the way partisans engage with the NDN. Representativeness of these engagements were later tested with representative and experimental data.

Table A.3: List of first thirty videos

1	Title of the video:	"OSMANGAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ"nden Geçen Kamyoncu (Süper) :D
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNFH2JDkLbI
	Publishing Date:	2-Jul-16
2	Title of the video:	Osmangazi Köprüsü açıldı. Bizde geçtik. 01.07.2016
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBuyh6B1Dyo
	Publishing Date:	1-Jul-16
3	Title of the video:	Orhan gazi körfez köprüsü ilk geçiş
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiFzj7CGMYg
	Publishing Date:	12-Jul-16
4	Title of the video:	OSMAN GAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ-2016
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXGUZiZYbRc
	Publishing Date:	9-Jul-16
5	Title of the video:	Osmangazi köprüsü süper
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA0aHUQUC4s
	Publishing Date:	30-Jun-16
6	Title of the video:	Osmangazi Köprüsü Vatana ve millete Hayırlı olsun.
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kycqjaCwLMO
	Publishing Date:	7-Jul-16
7	Title of the video:	Osman Gazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdpCyn3Igeo
	Publishing Date:	7-Jul-16
8	Title of the video:	Mehter marşı eşliğinde osman gazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWlbe6o1Zp0
	Publishing Date:	7-Jul-16
9	Title of the video:	Osmangazi Köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEcBwP71kh8
	Publishing Date:	9-Jul-11
		Not available by 14 May 2022
10	Title of the video:	OSMAN GAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ GECE GEÇİŞİ
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utbVb2aSIJw&t
	Publishing Date:	4-Jul-16
11	Title of the video:	Osman gazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RMr4_4NlgKo
	Publishing Date:	4-Jul-16
12	Title of the video:	osmangazi köprüsü hizmetin hası
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cRuNpR6Jt7g
	Publishing Date:	4-Jul-16
		Not available by 14 May 2022
13	Title of the video:	osmangazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW9jBU5f86Q
	Publishing Date:	5-Jul-16
14	Title of the video:	Osmangazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ48iKQAobQ
	Publishing Date:	9-Jul-16
		Not available by 14 May 2022
15	Title of the video:	Osman gazi köprüsü
	Link:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoWbiDhCQio
	Publishing Date:	7-Jul-16

- 16 Title of the video: işte osmangazi köprüsü mehter marşı ile :))
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YX2tleSW5eI>
Publishing Date: 6-Jul-16
- 17 Title of the video: Osmangazi köprüsü. Dombıra
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbgEY1MUMSO>
Publishing Date: 6-Jul-16
- 18 Title of the video: TÜRKÜN KÖPRÜSÜ OSMANGAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1Zcms6vM14>
Publishing Date: 7-Jul-16
- 19 Title of the video: Osman gazi köprüsü onlar konuşur akp yapar
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BwrygWj1v1o>
Publishing Date: 6-Jul-16
Not available by 14 May 2022
- 20 Title of the video: ALLAH TAYİP ERDOĞANI başımızdan eksik etmesin.
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw3tt5jRXwQ>
Publishing Date: 2-Jul-16
- 21 Title of the video: 3 Temmuz 2016 OSMANGAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYyvw0xsMuc>
Publishing Date: 3-Jul-16
- 22 Title of the video: Osmangazi köprüsü ilk geçişimiz
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKBzM-OKSRU>
Publishing Date: 5-Jul-16
- 23 Title of the video: Osmangazi Köprüsü
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS4K7TtVGN8>
Publishing Date: 5-Jul-16
- 24 Title of the video: Osmangazi köprüsü
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe5A5fepJZI>
Publishing Date: 5-Jul-16
Not available by 14 May 2022
- 25 Title of the video: Osman Gazi köprüsü instagram yalcincoban02
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ji4e3XLyVnY>
Publishing Date: 4-Jul-16
- 26 Title of the video: Allah bin kere razı olsun bu millet için çalışanlara
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1RJDOWOZ1g>
Publishing Date: 4-Jul-16
Not available by 14 May 2022
- 27 Title of the video: RTY#Osman gazi#köprü#Mzl
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bo841Jh0miw>
Publishing Date: 7-Jul-16
- 28 Title of the video: Osmangazi koprusu neşet kara
Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrwlZQNGHsw>
Publishing Date: July 4 2016
- 29 Title of the video: Osman gazi köprüsü ilk görüntüler
Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdPs-y_sE5c
Publishing Date: 4-Jul-16
- 30 Title of the video: OSMAN GAZİ KÖPRÜSÜ.
Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN_60eayVEI
Publishing Date: 3-Jul-16

3 Representative Survey Data and Analysis

3.1 Descriptive statistics for variables

Table A.4: Descriptive statistics for all variables used in Study 1

	Regime Voters					Entire Sample		
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	Count
NDN: top ten	1	5	3.54	1.09	1279	2.88	1.32	2567
NDN: 3rd airport	1	5	3.77	1.12	1285	3.15	1.37	2577
Media: Critical	0	1	0.07	0.25	1315	0.21	0.41	2662
Media: Pro-regime private	0	1	0.37	0.48	1315	0.22	0.41	2662
Media: State	0	1	0.16	0.37	1315	0.10	0.30	2662
Social Media	0	1	0.60	0.49	1309	0.66	0.47	2638
Age	18	91	43.62	14.84	1311	41.93	15.20	2658
Female	0	1	0.51	0.50	1304	0.51	0.50	2647
Education	1	7	3.94	1.37	1310	4.19	1.44	2652
Household Income	1	6	3.79	1.14	1228	3.90	1.19	2460
Religiosity	1	4	3.00	0.61	1306	2.79	0.73	2623
Populism scale	1	5	3.59	0.63	1306	3.63	0.63	2638
Conspiratorial thinking scale	1	5	3.53	0.69	1294	3.30	0.82	2611
Right wing ideology	1	10	7.64	2.09	1265	6.12	2.78	2526
Knowledge 1	0	1	0.51	0.50	1257	0.56	0.50	2537
Knowledge 2	0	1	0.17	0.38	1225	0.21	0.41	2490
Political knowledge: index	0	1	0.35	0.37	1262	0.39	0.38	2555
Economy: retrospective	1	4	2.28	0.90	1312	2.36	0.93	2652
Regime voter	0	1	1.00	0.00	1315	0.50	0.50	2611
Opposition voter	0	1	0.00	0.00	1315	0.31	0.46	2611
NDN: index	1	5	3.66	0.95	1290	3.01	1.22	2592
Economy future: personal	0	1	0.55	0.50	1296	0.67	0.47	2618
Economy future: sociotropic	0	1	0.48	0.50	1298	0.65	0.48	2614
Regime satisfaction	1	10	6.58	2.55	1298	4.97	2.94	2625
Erdogan's performance	1	5	4.07	1.08	1310	3.17	1.48	2614
Vote likelihood: CHP	1	4	1.54	0.66	1275	2.00	1.01	2503
Vote likelihood: AKP	1	4	3.16	0.92	1291	2.48	1.14	2535

3.2 Full table demonstrating determinants of developmentalist beliefs

Table A.5: OLS results measuring the determinants of the agreement with the NDN statements

	(1)	(2)
Watching critical media	-0.184*** (0.023)	-0.076*** (0.022)
Watching pro-gov. private media	0.310*** (0.024)	0.117*** (0.020)
Watching state media	0.180*** (0.024)	0.050** (0.018)
Social media use	-0.057* (0.026)	-0.061** (0.021)
Age	-0.052 (0.028)	-0.056* (0.022)
Female	0.014 (0.021)	0.008 (0.019)
Level of education	-0.142*** (0.033)	-0.042 (0.028)
Household income	-0.077** (0.029)	-0.052* (0.024)
Religiosity		0.072** (0.023)
Populism scale		-0.045* (0.020)
Conspiratorial thinking scale		0.275*** (0.027)
Ideology: right-wing		0.133*** (0.029)
Political knowledge		-0.074*** (0.020)
Past personal economic hardships		-0.058** (0.021)
Voted for pro-gov. parties		0.148*** (0.029)
Voted for opposition		-0.154*** (0.029)
Constant	-0.050 (0.033)	-0.026 (0.025)
Observations	2328	2091

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. Standard errors are in parenthesis. All values are standardized. Weights provided by the survey company are applied. Standard errors are clustered at district level.

3.3 Full table demonstrating effects of developmentalist beliefs

Table A.6: OLS results measuring the determinants of the agreement with the NDN statements

	Future Economic Hardship		Political Outcomes			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Personal	National	Regime Satisfaction	Erdogan's Performance	Vote for CHP	Vote for AKP
Developmentalist beliefs	-0.164*** (0.030)	-0.221*** (0.032)	0.284*** (0.025)	0.325*** (0.028)	-0.052 (0.032)	0.290*** (0.027)
Age	-0.069** (0.025)	-0.023 (0.024)	-0.025 (0.018)	-0.004 (0.019)	0.105*** (0.025)	-0.004 (0.018)
Female	0.040 (0.022)	0.058** (0.019)	0.016 (0.018)	0.031 (0.016)	0.075*** (0.021)	0.061*** (0.015)
Level of education	-0.034 (0.033)	-0.018 (0.034)	0.011 (0.027)	-0.012 (0.022)	0.024 (0.034)	-0.027 (0.025)
Household income	-0.090** (0.028)	-0.041 (0.024)	0.013 (0.023)	0.004 (0.020)	0.055 (0.031)	0.019 (0.019)
Religiosity	-0.008 (0.028)	-0.012 (0.025)	0.033 (0.024)	0.051** (0.018)	-0.088** (0.029)	0.049* (0.019)
Populism scale	0.106*** (0.028)	0.099*** (0.023)	-0.058** (0.022)	-0.074*** (0.018)	-0.016 (0.025)	-0.070*** (0.017)
Conspiratorial thinking	0.048* (0.024)	0.024 (0.024)	-0.024 (0.020)	-0.007 (0.021)	0.017 (0.035)	-0.005 (0.021)
Ideology: right-wing	-0.007 (0.026)	-0.087** (0.026)	0.217*** (0.030)	0.154*** (0.025)	-0.223*** (0.036)	0.146*** (0.025)
Political knowledge	0.029 (0.030)	-0.000 (0.030)	-0.035 (0.024)	-0.024 (0.019)	0.018 (0.027)	-0.051* (0.020)
Personal economic hards.	0.274*** (0.023)	0.150*** (0.020)	-0.096*** (0.019)	-0.056*** (0.017)	-0.046* (0.023)	-0.074*** (0.017)
Voted for regime	-0.074 (0.039)	-0.090* (0.044)	0.190*** (0.029)	0.154*** (0.026)	-0.078* (0.034)	0.214*** (0.029)
Voted for opposition	0.099** (0.030)	0.111*** (0.032)	-0.089** (0.029)	-0.204*** (0.025)	0.277*** (0.034)	-0.147*** (0.025)
Observations	2078	2081	2094	2089	2026	2046

Note: *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05. Standard errors are in parenthesis. All values are standardized. Weights provided by the survey company are applied. Standard errors are clustered at district level.

3.4 Mediation analysis

Table A.7: Mediation analysis: Media preferences, belief in the NDN, and regime support

	Mean	95% Confidence Interval	
Outcome: Erdogan's Performance Evaluations			
ACME			
Pro-regime Media → Belief in the NDN → Support for Erdogan	0.04	0.03	0.06
Direct Effect			
Pro-regime Media → Support for Erdogan	0.14	0.10	0.17
Total Effect			
Pro-regime Media → Support for Erdogan	0.18	0.14	0.21
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.23	0.19	0.30
Outcome: Likelihood to Vote for AKP			
ACME			
Pro-regime Media → Belief in the NDN → Likelihood to vote for AKP	0.04	0.02	0.05
Direct Effect			
Pro-regime Media → Likelihood to Vote for AKP	0.10	0.06	0.14
Total Effect			
Pro-regime Media → Likelihood to Vote for AKP	0.14	0.10	0.18
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.26	0.20	0.37

Note: All demographic and political control variables are added to both models. Standard errors are clustered at the district level. Survey weights provided by the survey company are applied. Analysis conduct in Stata with mediation package.

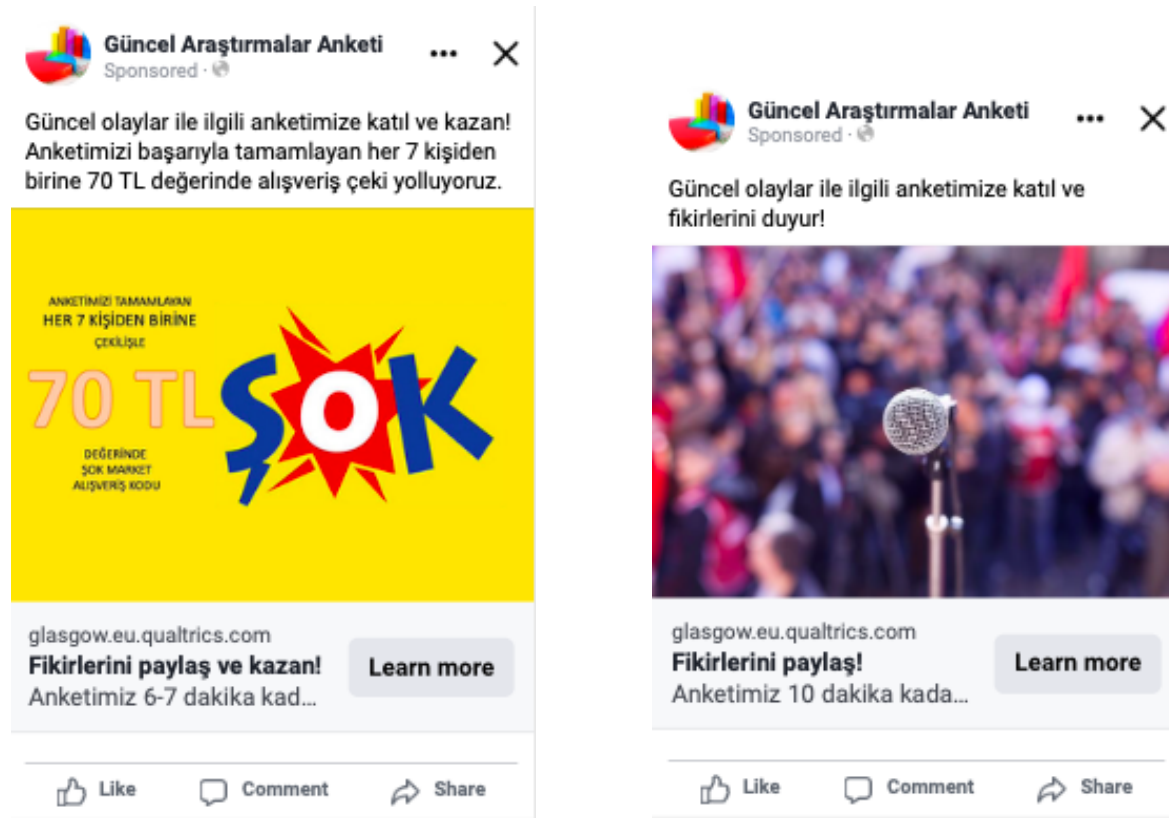
4 Experimental Data and Analysis

4.1 Participant Recruitment Through Facebook Paid Advertisements

In order to recruit participants, I used paid advertisements on Facebook. As Facebook offers a user base of billions of people all around the world, this method is becoming increasingly common among comparative political scientists (Neundorf and Öztürk 2021a, b).

Although Facebook has a very wide user base in Turkey, advertisements can end up recruiting only politically interested Facebook users. To increase the representativeness of the sample, I have used advertisements offering incentives, as well as advertisements without incentives. I used grocery store vouchers as material incentives; incentives were delivered to winners shortly after the completion of the survey. Written permission was taken from the grocery store to use their brand name in the advertisement. Below are advertisements used to recruit participants for this study.

Figure A.25: Facebook paid advertisements used for participant recruitment



I have also used Meta's targeting tools to increase representativeness (Neundorf and Öztürk 2021a, b). I have created separate advertisements for gender, age, and education categories.

4.2 Balance Tests

Table A.8: Balance test of treatment allocation: Logistic regression with treatment as dependent variable and pre-treatment variables as independent variable

Sample	Regime voters	Other voters
Year of birth	-0.000 [0.008]	0.001 0.007
Female	0.273 [0.192]	-0.070 [0.195]
Education	-0.168 [0.112]	0.116 [0.122]
Income	0.007 [0.068]	0.075 [0.070]
Region (ref: Istanbul)		
Aegean	-0.5+ [0.284]	-0.076 [0.267]
Ankara	-0.364 [0.309]	0.468 [0.354]
Mediterranean	0.147 [0.291]	0.345 [0.291]
Southeast Anatolia	0.125 [0.368]	-0.404 [0.494]
East Anatolia	-0.315 [0.229]	0.325 [0.497]
Black Sea	0.156 [0.349]	-0.516 [0.340]
Marmara - except Istanbul	-0.051 [0.299]	0.316 [0.294]
Central Anatolia - except Ankara	-0.206 [0.269]	0.223 [0.326]
Political Interest	0.077 [0.111]	-0.191* [0.096]
Regime partisanship strength	0.087 [0.071]	0.232 [0.189]
Nationalism	-0.034 [0.036]	-0.007 [0.030]
Religiosity	0.085* [0.042]	-0.000 [0.032]
Constant	0.275 [16.048]	-2.737 [13.879]
Observations	672	621

Significance levels: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$ + $p < 0.1$.

Note: The table reports logit regression coefficients and standard errors.

4.3 Comparison of the online sample with CSES along key variables

Table A.9: Descriptive statistics of the pre-treatment questions measured for Study 2 and the comparison of sample characteristics with a probabilistic face-to-face sample

		Online Sample	CSES Sample
Gender	Female	44%	51%
	Male	56%	49%
Education	Primary School and below	23%	57%
	High School	41%	25%
	College and above	36%	18%
Age	18-34	29%	37%
	35-54	47%	38%
	55+	23%	25%
Geography	Istanbul	18%	18%
	Rest	82%	82%
Political Interest	Very Interested	20%	14%
	Somewhat interested	45%	39%
	Not much interested	23%	23%
	Not interested at all	12%	25%
Partisan	Not partisan	42%	32%
	Partisan	58%	68%
Vote in 2018	AKP	45%	37%
	MHP	6%	9%
	CHP	21%	20%
	IYI	6%	9%
	HDP	1%	9%
	Did not vote	15%	14%

Note: CSES Sample is the sample of Comparative Study of Electoral System survey conducted in Turkey in 2018. For Vote in 2018 comparison, I use official election results.

4.4 Survey questions

Table A.10: Full list of survey questions used for Study 2

Female	What is your gender?	Categorical
Age	Which year were you born in?	Categorical
Past vote	Which party did you vote for in 2018 Parliamentary General Election?	Categorical
Education	What is the highest education level that you have attained or about to attain?	Categorical
Religiosity	Irregardless of how often you pray, how religious do you regard yourself?	0 to 10
Nationalism	And how nationalist do you regard yourself?	0 to 10
Region	Which of the regions below do you reside in?	Categorical
Income	What is the average monthly income of your household?	Categorical
Political interest	How interested are you in politics?	1 to 4
Partisanship 1	Is there any political party that you feel yourself close to?	Yes or No
Partisanship 2	What is the name of this party? How close do you feel to this party?	1 to 3
Treatment Questions	<i>See Relevant Section</i>	
Vote: AKP	If there was an election next Sunday, how close are you to this option: vote for AKP	1 to 5
Vote: MHP	If there was an election next Sunday, how close are you to this option: vote for MHP	1 to 5
Vote: No vote	If there was an election next Sunday, how close are you to this option: not vote	1 to 5
Vote: Nation	If there was an election next Sunday, how close are you to this option: vote for Nation Alliance	1 to 5
Vote: Other	If there was an election next Sunday, how close are you to this option: vote for other parties	1 to 5
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Enthusiasm	0 to 10
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Pride	0 to 10
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Hope	0 to 10
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Fear	0 to 10
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Anger	0 to 10
Emotions by Erdogan	To what extent, the AKP and its leader Erdogan evoke this emotion at you: Hatred	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Enthusiasm	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Pride	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Hope	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Fear	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Anger	0 to 10
Emotions by Kilicdaroglu	To what extent, the CHP and its leader Kilicdaroglu evoke this emotion at you: Hatred	0 to 10
Personal economy 1	How do you expect your personal economic situation to change in the next few years?	1 to 5
Personal economy 2	Do you expect economic difficulties for you or for your family in the next few years?	1 to 5
National economy 1	How do you expect Turkey's economic situation to change in the next few years?	1 to 5
National economy 2	Do you expect economic troubles for Turkey in the next few years?	1 to 5
Blame: Erdogan	It is said that Turkey is recently having some economic troubles. To what extent do you think the actors below is responsible: Erdogan	1 to 5
Blame: Ministers	It is said that Turkey is recently having some economic troubles. To what extent do you think the actors below is responsible: Economy ministers	1 to 5
Blame: External	It is said that Turkey is recently having some economic troubles. To what extent do you think the actors below is responsible: External factors	1 to 5

4.5 Treatment

Treatment was formed of two surveys pages. Respondents assigned to the treatment group first saw a page that included A.26, Question 1, and Question 2. When they clicked on the “Next Page,” they saw A.27, Question 3, Question 4, and Question 5

Figure A.26: First image of the treatment



HEDEF
2023

Note: Image 1 was presented on the first page along with Question 1 and 2.

Question 1 in Turkish: Fotoğraflarda 2023 Hedefleri kapsamında inşa edilen Osmangazi Köprüsünü ve Üçüncü Havalimanını görmektesiniz. Bu yatırımları ne ölçüde desteklediğinizi bizimle paylaşmısınız?

English translation of Question 1: In the images above, you see Osmangazi Bridge and the Third Airport, which were built along 2023 Targets. Can you please share with us the extent to which you support these investments?

Question 2 in Turkish: “Türkiye 2023 yılında dünyanın en büyük on ekonomisinden birisi olacak.” Bu iddiaya ne ölçüde katılıyorsunuz?

English translation of Question 2: “Turkey will be one of the biggest ten economies in the world in 2023.” To what extent do you agree with this claim?

Figure A.27: Second image of the treatment



Note: Image 2 was presented on the second page along with Question 3, 4, and 5.

Question 3 in Turkish: Yukarıdaki resimlerde gördüğünüz gibi, basında yabancıların üçüncü havalimanından rahatsız oldukları ve onu kıskandıkları yolunda haberler okuduk. Siz Almanların üçüncü havalimanını kıskandıklarına katılıyor musunuz?

English translation of Question 3: As you see in the images above, we read news about how foreigners were uncomfortable about the third airport and they were envious of it. Do you agree that Germans are envious of the third airport?

Question 4 in Turkish: Peki yabancı devletlerin bu projeleri ve Türkiye'nin 2023 hedeflerini engellemek için Türkiye'ye karşı komplo düzenledikleri iddialarına katılıyor musunuz?

English translation of Question 4: And do you agree that foreign states are conspiring against

Turkey to prevent these projects and Turkey's 2023 targets?

Question 5 in Turkish: CHP başta olmak üzere muhalefet partilerinden yetkililer bu projelerin maliyetini ve yapılış şeklini eleştirdiler. Siz bu eleştirilere katılıyor musunuz?

English translation of Question 5: Representatives from opposition parties, CHP being the primary among them, criticized the cost of these projects and how they were built. Do you agree with these criticisms?

One reason to use a treatment formed of questions, rather than video or a text, was to avoid experimenter demand effect. In other words, if we provided a propaganda text or video to respondents, some of them could think that we wanted survey respondents to agree with the content of propaganda and attempt to behave as expected (also see, [Mummolo and Peterson 2019](#)). To avoid this possibility, I designed the treatment in the form of objective questions. Another reason to use this formula was to increase the engagement of respondents with the treatment.

4.6 Descriptive statistics for outcome variables

Table A.11: Descriptive statistics for the outcome variables used in Study 2

	Regime Voters					Others		
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Count	Mean	SD	Count
Personal Economy -1	1	5	3.52	1.05	724	2.82	1.17	682
Personal Economy -2	1	5	2.71	1.13	723	2.16	1.05	676
Personal Economy - Index	1	5	3.12	0.90	727	2.49	0.90	683
National Economy -1	1	5	3.82	1.21	717	2.86	1.38	691
National Economy -2	1	5	2.74	1.18	718	2.00	1.09	686
National Economy - Index	1	5	3.28	1.03	725	2.44	1.06	695
Blame: Erdogan	1	5	3.17	1.27	694	4.07	1.18	645
Blame: Ministers	1	5	3.54	1.14	692	3.97	1.22	636
Vote: AKP	1	5	3.66	1.37	725	1.97	1.22	668
Partisan Change	-3	3	0.07	0.74	680	0.06	0.44	624
Enthusiasm by Erdogan	0	10	6.92	3.25	684	2.73	3.29	603
Pride by Erdogan	0	10	7.31	3.10	688	3.19	3.50	605
Hope by Erdogan	0	10	7.07	3.20	688	2.98	3.51	612
Fear by Kilicdar	0	10	5.63	4.02	677	3.34	3.39	601
Anger by Kilicdar	0	10	5.65	4.02	675	3.46	3.43	599
Hatred by Kilicdar	0	10	5.24	3.96	677	2.93	3.25	597

4.7 Tables Presenting Results

In this section, I present results discussed in the main article in a table form.

Table A.12: The effect of the NDN treatment on emotions, based on voting behavior in 2018

	Emotions inspired by Erdogan			Emotions inspired by Kilicdar		
	Enthusiasm	Pride	Hope	Fear	Anger	Hatred
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, no covariates</i>)	0.059+ (0.032)	0.038 (0.030)	0.087** (0.031)	-0.056 (0.040)	-0.026 (0.040)	-0.042 (0.040)
Observations	684	688	688	677	675	677
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, with covariates</i>)	0.065* (0.029)	0.028 (0.028)	0.080** (0.028)	-0.045 (0.042)	-0.025 (0.041)	-0.053 (0.042)
Observations	612	610	612	606	600	603
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Other voters, no covariates</i>)	0.024 (0.035)	0.023 (0.037)	0.008 (0.036)	0.046 (0.035)	0.052 (0.036)	0.021 (0.035)
Observations	603	605	612	601	599	597
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Other voters, with covariates</i>)	0.012 (0.032)	0.006 (0.036)	-0.005 (0.033)	0.017 (0.035)	0.033 (0.037)	-0.007 (0.036)
Observations	503	506	511	504	505	502

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.10$. Models with covariate include all pre-treatment variables: age, gender, education, region, income, partisanship, nationalism, religiosity, interest in politics.

Table A.13: The average treatment effect of developmentalism treatment on partisan emotions, based on voting behavior in 2018

	Economic Expectations		Blame Assignment		Political Preferences	
	Personal	National	Erdogan	Ministers	Vote for AKP	Partisan Strength
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, no covariates</i>)	0.095** (0.035)	0.078* (0.034)	-0.078* (0.037)	-0.128*** (0.036)	0.023 (0.033)	0.023 (0.046)
Observations	727	725	694	692	725	680
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, with covariates</i>)	0.081* (0.035)	0.080* (0.033)	-0.086* (0.037)	-0.121** (0.038)	-0.007 (0.030)	0.017 (0.048)
Observations	638	637	610	609	635	603
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, no covariates</i>)	-0.012 (0.036)	-0.001 (0.036)	-0.030 (0.036)	-0.041 (0.040)	0.012 (0.030)	-0.026 (0.029)
Observations	683	695	645	636	668	624
Treatment: Exposure to the NDN (<i>Regime voters, with covariates</i>)	-0.032 (0.039)	-0.021 (0.037)	-0.001 (0.034)	0.000 (0.043)	-0.008 (0.027)	-0.050 (0.032)
Observations	556	565	533	528	550	514

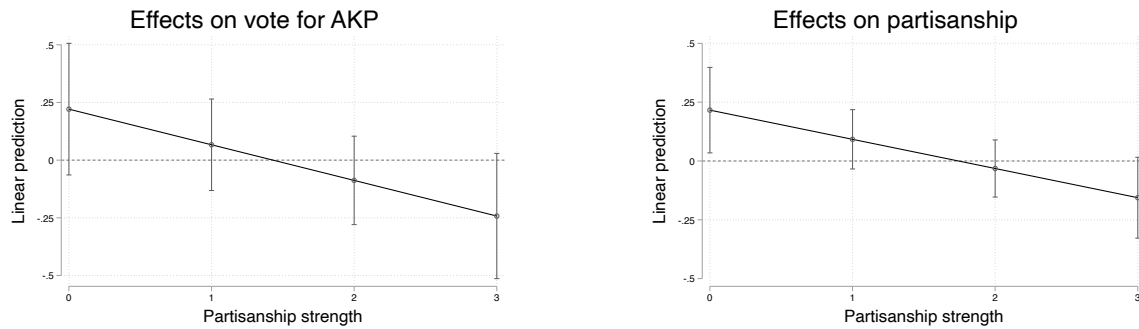
Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.10$. All values are standardized. See the full table in the Online Appendix.

4.8 Subgroup analysis

4.8.1 Moderation by partisanship strength

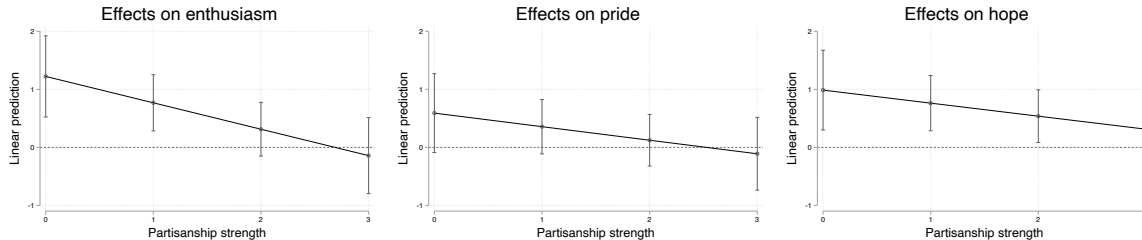
First, I explore how partisanship strength moderates the effects of the treatment on political preferences and emotions. Figure A.28 demonstrates how the effects of the treatment on vote behavior and the change in partisanship score are moderated by the preexisting level of partisanship strength. Figure A.31, on the other hand, demonstrates how the effects of the treatment on positive partisan emotions change, depending on preexisting levels of partisanship strength.

Figure A.28: The effect of the interaction between partisanship and developmentalism treatment on political preferences among government voters



Note: Only regime voters. Controls are added.

Figure A.29: The effect of the interaction between partisanship and developmentalism treatment on positive partisan emotions among government voters



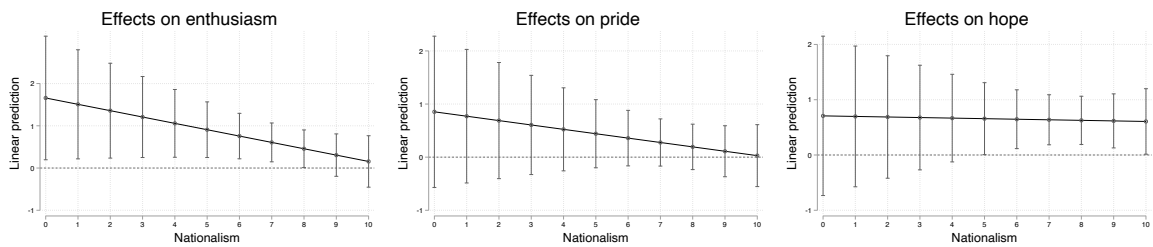
Note: Only regime voters. Controls are added.

We find a consistent pattern across all figures. The treatment demonstrates most effect among non-partisan regime voters, while we cannot find any effect among strong partisans. As discussed in the main article, I believe that the most plausible explanation of this pattern is the existence of a ceiling effect.

4.8.2 Moderation by preexisting religious and nationalist attitudes

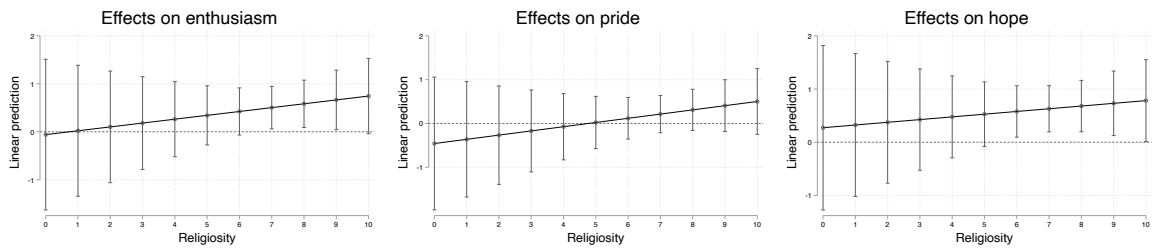
Following Hypotheses 7 and 8 in the registration plan, I explore how the effect of the treatment on positive partisan emotions change depending on existing levels of nationalism and religiosity. We see a significant moderation effect only on enthusiasm. The moderating effect of nationalism is similar to partisanship strength: the treatment is effective especially among regime voters with *lower* levels of nationalism. On the other hand, the treatment is more effective at regime voters with *higher* levels of religiosity.

Figure A.30: The effect of the interaction between nationalism and developmentalism treatment on positive partisan emotions among regime voters



Note: Only regime voters. Controls are added.

Figure A.31: The effect of the interaction between religiosity and developmentalism treatment on positive partisan emotions among regime voters



Note: Only regime voters. Controls are added.

4.8.3 Mediation analysis: Mediating role of positive partisan emotions

Table A.14: Mediation analysis: Treatment, Emotions, Economic and Political Preferences

	Mean	95% Confidence Interval	
Outcome: Future Economic Evaluations			
ACME			
Treatment → Positive Emotions → Future Economic Evaluations	0.07	0.01	0.13
Direct Effect			
Treatment → Future Economic Evaluations	0.10	-0.00	0.20
Total Effect			
Treatment → Future Economic Evaluations	0.17	0.05	0.28
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.42	0.25	1.24
Outcome: Blame Assignment			
ACME			
Treatment → Positive Emotions → Blame Assignment	-0.08	-0.14	-0.02
Direct Effect			
Treatment → Blame Assignment	-0.18	-0.33	-0.02
Total Effect			
Treatment → Blame Assignment	-0.25	-0.42	-0.10
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.30	0.18	0.76
Outcome: Political Preferences			
ACME			
Treatment → Positive Emotions → Political Preferences	0.09	0.02	0.15
Direct Effect			
Treatment → Political Preferences	-0.07	-0.17	0.03
Total Effect			
Treatment → Political Preferences	0.02	-0.10	0.14
Proportion of total effect mediated	0.87	-25.37	17.20

Note: All control variables are added to all models. Analysis conduct in Stata with mediation package.

4.9 Diversions from the registration plan

The results presented in the article are based on the registration plan. All of the eight hypotheses listed in the registration plan are tested and results are presented either in the main text or in the Online Appendix. There are only two changes between the registration plan and the analysis conducted in this paper; both of these changes were conducted to improve the statistical power and representativeness.

First, registration plan refers to AKP voters, while the article refers to regime voters, grouping the AKP voters together with MHP voters. The registration plan's omission of the MHP was a mistake, and the inclusion of the MHP within the "regime voters" category, rather than the category of "other respondents" is the theoretically justified decision. The MHP is an ultra-nationalist party that has been supporting Erdogan and his policies since 2016. The MHP's support was decisive in the institutionalization of the authoritarian regime in Turkey. The party voted for transition to a presidential system in the 2017 referendum, and it formed an official electoral alliance with the AKP before 2018 general election. The electoral coalition continued after the election as well as the AKP needed the MHP's support for parliamentary majority. The political shift of the MHP in 2016 changed the MHP's electoral base. Party members that were critical of the emerging alliance between the MHP and the AKP joined to a new party, called Good Party, that positioned itself within the opposition bloc. A significant portion of MHP voters that felt closer to the opposition bloc changed their votes to the Good Party in 2018 election, while some AKP voters started to vote for the MHP (Sözen 2019: 304). Thus, the MHP's and the AKP's voter bases share significant similarities today. I conducted all analyses in the paper with the AKP voters only, and I could not find significant differences.

Secondly, while I had initially planned to recruit 1000 participants, I ended up recruiting 1500 participants. The goal was to increase both the representativeness of the sample, as presented in Table A.9 and the statistical power, which is needed especially for moderation analyses. The lower than expected costs through Facebook's paid advertisements facilitated the increase in the sample size.

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