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POLITICAL FORTUNES OF THE TURKISH INCUMBENT PARTY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE ECONOMIC CRISES

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Abstract: The Justice and Development Party (AKP), the ruling party in Turkey was founded in 2001, the year in which Turkey experienced its fourth economic crisis in then years. It came to power the following year, in an election which ousted all of the other political parties in the previous parliament. The party's vote share kept increasing in the 2004 local administrations, and 2007 parliamentary elections, as the economy boomed and inflation rate dropped. Then it suffered its first vote loss in the 2009 local administrations election when the global economic crisis hit the country. Now that the economy is out of crisis and humming again, the AKP is expected to raise its vote share substantially in the 12 June 2011 parliamentary election. The aim of the present study is to determine how much of the vote changes which occurred between the elections mentioned, is caused by the economy. For this purpose a vote equation, which is specified in light of the economic voting literature, and fit to data covering twenty-seven National Assembly, Senate, and Provincial Council elections, held between 1950 and 2009, is used to decompose vote swings for the AKP into parts attributable to economic conditions, strategic voting, cost of ruling, incumbency advantage, political realignment, and other factors.