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THE IMPACT OF BALLOT PAPER DESIGN ON VOTER CHOICE: THE CASE OF 2011 DEPUTY GENERAL ELECTIONS IN TURKEY

ABSTRACT

Voters' choices are influenced by many factors. It is possible to say that one of these factors are ballot papers. Quite a few researches conducted in various parts of the world have revealed this impact. Some studies have shown that the candidate's photograph on the ballot paper and on some ballot papers the candidate's written promises as well as the party logo and the candidate's sequence number may also affect voters. However, it can be said that hardly any studies on ballot papers have been conducted in Turkey. This study deals with voters' participation resident in the central part of Gumushane and the impact that candidates' names on ballot papers have on voters. In order words, the main focus is going to be on how the candidate-centric modifications on ballot papers that are designed according the Election Law of the Republic of Turkey affect voters' choices. This study conducted prior to the parliamentary election in 2011 regarding Turkish voter's perception showed that even though voters gain familiarity with the candidates, the illustration of the party logo, the party's name and the party leader's name on ballot papers had a bigger impact on the voters' choices than slates.

Keywords: Ballot papers, Election, Candidate,
Political Communication, Visual Image

OY PUSULASI TASARIMININ SEÇMEN TERCİHİNE ETKİLERİ: TÜRKİYE 2011 MİLLETVEKİLİ GENEL SEÇİMLERİ ÖRNEĞİ

ÖZET

Seçmen tercihleri çok sayıda faktör tarafından etkilenmektedir. Bu faktörlerden birinin de oy pusulaları olduğu söylenebilir. Dünyanın farklı bölgelerinde yapılan birçok araştırmada bu etki ortaya konmuştur. Bazı çalışmalarda oy pusulalarındaki aday fotoğrafının, bazılarında yazılı vaatlerin, bazılarında parti logolarının ve bazılarında ise adayların oy pusulasındaki sırasının seçmenleri etkileyebileceği görülmüştür. Ancak Türkiye'de oy pusulaları üzerine yapılan çalışmaların yok denecek kadar az olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çalışma Gümüşhane merkez bölgesinde bulunan seçmenlerin katılımı ile oy pusulalarındaki aday isimlerinin seçmen tercihleri üzerindeki etkilerini ele almaktadır. Diğer bir anlatımla Türkiye Cumhuriyeti seçim kanununda belirtilen kurallara göre tasarlanan oy pusulasında yapılacak aday merkezli değişikliklerin seçmen tercihlerini nasıl etkilediği üzerinde durulmaktadır. Türkiye 2011 Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri öncesinde gerçekleştirilen bu çalışma seçmenlerin adayları tanıyor olmasına rağmen; oy pusulasında bulunan parti logosunun, parti isminin ve parti genel başkan isminin aday listelerine göre seçmen tercihi bakımından daha etkili olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oy Pusulası, Seçim, Aday, Siyasal İletişim,
Görsel İmaj

1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

Lippmann has stated that mankind perceives the world with images on their minds (stereotypes) or by way of with patternized thoughts (Devran, 2007:25).

It can be said that these patternized image and thoughts have a great influence on today's mankind. Particularly developments in IT technologies, the urbanization of the majority of world population and the fact that there is a stronger interdependence of economic system have increased the impact of visualization in this day and age.

Nowadays mankind is deeply influenced by visual quality. The multifaceted design of contemporary media technologies has become a part of daily life. The omnipresence of cameras shows people what is important. Cameras show people how to adopt a visualization-based perspective and they teach how to rely on the visible in order to explain the connection between the visible and reality. They teach how to adopt a visualization-based perspective and how to explain the connection between the visible and the real by adhering to the visible. The fact that visual image rapidly gains importance makes people use new techniques in order to present themselves more effectively (Finkelstein, 2007:220).

These new presentation techniques have also been used in the field of political communication and are still in use. In parallel with the development of democracy, the changes that have occurred in the election systems have at the same time made candidates gain more elbow room. In this regard, a lot of field research has been conducted concerning the factors that influence the voters' perception. Some of these researches have focused on whether the design of ballot papers and the material they are made of have an influence on voter choice.

Literature review lacks researches analyzing the effects ballot papers have on voters in Turkey. Hence, the main objective of this research conducted in Gumushane is to elicit a general view in terms of putting forth on Turkish voters' perception as regards ballot papers. In other words, this study presents the impact that authentic slates on ballot papers have on voter choice.

A literature review has been conducted in the theoretical part of this study. Within this scope, various researches concerned with visual elements and impacts of ballot papers with respect to voters' choice have been analyzed. The research method forms the second part of this study. This part of the study deals with samplings, data collections and analysis methods. In the final part of the study, the findings have been presented, interpreted and the results have been evaluated.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

In a research where voting procedures are addressed from a historical perspective and where 134 ballot papers used in 107 different countries in the past 20 years were analyzed, it was found out that in places with low literacy rate and where multi-party elections are a new phenomenon, ballot papers including colour, symbol and photographs were used more frequently. However, the preparation of ballot papers does not have a significant connection with the number of parties and the voting system. Costly and elaborate preparation of ballot papers has a low validity in terms of the decrease of incorrect vote rate and the needs of illiterate voters. There is a rather negative correlation between the design of ballot papers and erroneous vote, as historical signs have shown that ballot papers are rather a

manipulative means of the political symbolism (Reynolds and Steenbergen, 2006:572).

Thus, it can be said that ballot papers and their design have an influence on voters's choices, as ballot papers can have directive functions rather than regularly operating the voting system. In other words, rather than the regular operating of the voting system, the ballot papers' routing function is in question.

This study deals with the impacts ballot papers have on voters' choices in a candidate-centric manner. To this end, an authentic ballot paper and a different ballot paper prepared in accordance with the existing ballot paper currently used for Turkish elections were designed and a research randomly participated by voters in Gumushane was conducted prior to general parliamentary elections in the year 2011. No prior studies concerned with this issue have been identified in Turkey as a result of the literature review carried out. In this respect, putting forward the current situation in Turkey regarding this matter will contribute to the establishment of a novel reality in terms of factors having an impact on voter's behaviour.

3. Visuality Factor and Voter Perception
(Görsellik Faktörü ve Seçmen Algısı)

The role of visual image in political studies is increasing due to the impact of TV and internet. Nowadays, political campaigns and the administration are performed in a mass media democracy where images are prevalent. Not only campaigns are conducted by means of images, but also administration and this illustrated image constitutes the political culture, within the scope of which candidates and politicians are negotiated (Schill, 2012: 133). Notably the visual environment provided by TV has become a predominant source in terms of dissemination of political information. For this reason visual symbols gain more importance. In other words, visual symbols have proven to be a vital component of political communication (Schill, 2012:118).

The functions of these symbols can be defined as follows: serving as arguments in image formation, raising agenda, dramatising, sentimentality, image ellicitation, association, documentation, establishing a connection with social symbols, exciting the target audience and increasing uncertainty (Schill, 2012:122).

Researchers conducted in speechless communication in general terms as well as specific researches conducted regarding candidates' perception have demonstrated the fact that candidates' images and styles have an impact on voters' perceptions and their choices regarding candidates (Rosenberg and McCafferty, 2001:33).

The research based on these results has proven that different presentations regarding the appearance of the very same candidate have an impact on the voters' choices (Rosenberg and McCafferty, 2001:42).

In this respect, visual presentation emerges as a significant component of electoral campaigns. For instance, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton hugged each other during the hustings in New Hampshire that were held in 2008 while wearing colours compatible with each other, laughing, making similar statements and posing in front of a banner where U-N-I-T-Y in divided syllables with capital letters was written (Schill, 2012:121).

Voters normally support good-looking candidates, because voters like watching them and good-looking politicians are more successful when it comes to social interaction (Berggren et al., 2010:1). A research conducted has reached the conclusion that the facial appearance has a significant influence on leader choice. Results have demonstrated that the differences in candidates facial appearance

enable the estimation of who will win and who will lose. However, it has also been observed that in different atmospheres such as war and peace, a more attractive face type can change (Little et al. 2007:26). A candidate's positive appearance influences the voter. However, when positive and negative images are compared with each other, it can be said that the candidate's negative appearance has a bigger impact on the voter's choice as regards casting his/her vote than the positive appearance (Spezio et al. 2008:344).

Unless the characteristics swiftly deduced from candidate's facial appearance reflects his/her true personality traits; these immediate judgements suggest the probability of making a wrong decision and voting erroneously (Banducci et al. 2008: 914). In other words, the appearances of candidates have an impact on their images forming as regards their projects and on the votes they gain (Rosenberg and McCafferty, 2001:34).

Voters value candidates who are physically attractive more than those who are not attractive. However, if the voter makes a verification regarding the relevant candidate and if this verification is enough, the impact of visual attractiveness decreases. A high cognitive capacity and motivation are required in order to make this verification. Voters endowed with this capacity are convinced that relying on physical appearance is inappropriate (Hart et al. 2011:199). To put it differently, solely certain features regarding physical appearance may not be enough for the source to draw the interest and attention of the target group (Anık, 2000:42).

A candidate's visual presentation is closely linked to his/her image. This presentation affects voters' perception in matters such as the candidate's appropriacy for being elected, his integrity, adequacy and cordiality (Rosenberg and McCafferty, 2001:37). However, it has been concluded as a result of a research conducted that the impact of a candidate's physical appearance is dependent upon the party's characteristic features. Candidates have become more successful in the presence of a similarity between their own characteristics stemming from physical appearance and those of their party (Hoegg and Lewis, 2011:905). Therefore, a more attractive candidate does not definitely guarantee an election victory. Consensus on the subject may have a stronger influence. Despite the ability of voters to assimilate their opinions diverging from the more attractive candidate, a consensus on the subject can function as a more important factor for both the attractive and non-attractive candidate (Schubert et al., 2011:47).

With regard to voting behaviour, there is a correlation between visual factors and socio-demographic features of voters. For instance, the gender of both voters and candidates influences the perception regarding the candidate's appearance in terms of voting behavior. More amiable male candidates and attractive female candidates are more likely to win an election. Notably female voters are more likely to vote for amiable male candidates while it is highly likely that male voters will vote for attractive female candidates (Chiao et al., 2008:1).

With regard to the perception of visual elements, one of the most important socio-demographic features can be deemed as educational background of voters. Voters at low levels of political knowledge are more influenced by the appearance of candidates on TV (Lenz and Lawson, 2011:579). TV has a strong visual presentation feature as well as functioning as a source of information.

A research conducted in Konya prior to the local elections in Turkey in 2009 has laid down the conclusion that TV has a significant impact on the voters' judgment during election terms regarding the

candidates' personal features and strengths. Voters at low levels of education have notably been more influenced by TV (Balcı et al., 2011:60).

Other researchers conducted in Konya have demonstrated that different voter groups generally attach importance to TV broadcasts in their decision-making process (Kalender, 2005:176) and TV is considered more important than other tools of media (Kalender, 2002:34).

Visual elements constitute a more significant factor in voters' choice due to the level of education. However, a situation to the contrary may also be the case. To define more explicitly, for voters at low levels of education, visuals such as the party leader's image or the party logo can jeopardize the intelligibility of party policies. In this regard, during the preparation of visuals such as party poster, association of oneself with the party leader is not an adequate approach. A presentation related to party policy needs to be realized (Faurie and Froneman, 2001:184).

4. Ballot Papers With Regard to Voter Perception
   ## (Seçmen Algısı Bakımından Oy Pusulaları)

In many countries ruled by democracy, ballot papers have different features in terms of their design. Many researchers have been done with a view to identifying the kind of impact these differences have on the perception of choice. The studies conducted have dealt with the effect of sequence of candidate's name, symbols and especially candidate's photograph used in ballot papers with respect to electoral behavior. These researches have revealed that ballot papers can be influential with regard to perception of voters.

Ballot paper and its design may have a bigger impact with regard to the voters' behavior in subsidiary selections such as election of governors (Kimball and Kropf, 2005:527). It can be said that ballot papers in different regions can bring about different impacts with regard to the perception of voters. A research conducted has demonstrated that ballot papers have less impact in Great Britain than in Australia. The reason for this is considered to be the obligation to vote in Australia that forces illiterate voters to vote and the fact that voters do not have the right to make a preference among the candidates (Kelley and Mcallister, 1984:464).

A research conducted regarding the governorship elections that took place in the USA in 250 provinces located in 5 States has demonstrated that the design of ballot paper is an important factor with regard to the voters' casting correct votes (Kimball and Kropf, 2005:526).

Nevertheless, Reynbolds and Steenbergen have conducted an experimental study with the participation of 402 university students in order to examine the impact of ballot paper design on voters' behaviour. This study has put forward the conclusion that ballot paper design is not a considerable factor in facilitating casting of votes. However, a whole host of anecdotal evidence has been found affirming that ballot papers bear political signs with respect to voting behaviour (Reynolds and Steenbergen, 2006:589). The conduct of this research with university students can be regarded as significant in terms of arousal of such a consequence, as it is possible to say visual design can also bear the quality of being a guide to ensure the correctness of votes cast by illiterate voters

When the effects of voting are addressed, it is observed that name sequence of candidates is an important research topic. For instance, a research analyzing a ballot paper containing six names has

shown that the name which ranked the second is more advantageous. The name ranking the first has been proved to be less advantageous than the name in the second position. Furthermore, it has been shown that the name that ranks the last on the ballot paper is disadvantaged (Upton and Brook, 1975:280).

Another research was conducted in England in 1973. This research has suggested that the candidate's name sequence is influential with regard to the gained voting rate and that the candidates whose names are in lower ranks are more disadvantaged (Brook and Upton, 1974: 414). Another research that was conducted during the London local elections in 2010 yielded similar results. A strong correlation was found between the candidate's position on the ballot paper and the votes he gained (Wood et al., 2011:2390).

Some researchers conducted have demonstrated that the impact of the candidate's name sequence cannot be definitely proven. A research dealing with the elections in Britain and in Australia in the 1970s has demonstrated that the order of the candidate on ballot paper does not have an impact on the votes gained in Britain; however, in Australia it was seen that the candidates holding the first three positions were more advantaged. Furthermore, according to the research results, female candidates were more disadvantaged in comparison with male candidates (Kelley and Mcallister, 1984:464).

Compared with other factors, the usage of the candidate's picture in ballot paper design can positively influence voter's perception besides having a negative impact. Especially in low-information election contexts, this effect can become more conspicuous. Yet, it is possible to say that the countries using the candidate's photograph on ballot papers are few.

The research dealing with the ballot papers in 130 countries has demonstrated that 30 of them have used the candidate's photograph on ballot papers. The candidate's photograph has been used more frequently in presidential elections. The usage of photograph on ballot papers has been observed in Africa, in Latin American countries, in Cyprus, in Papua New Guinea, in Haiti and since 2001 in the Republic of Ireland. Papua New Guinea is the country where photographic signs are most commonly used. Besides the photographs of the candidates who are supported by a party have been observed to be submitted along with the party leader's photograph (Reynolds and Steenbergen, 2006:577).

It can be stated that the characteristics of successful candidates are more likely to be attributed to attractive candidates. These characteristics derived from facial appearance have an impact on election results. These characteristics also stem from candidate's physical appearance such as age, race and ethnicity that are clearly obvious from the photograph. For this reason, especially in a low-information election context, first impressions are essential for the determination of election results (Banducci et al., 2008:903).

In another study conducted, the candidate's skin colour as well as his/her facial appearance has been analyzed in terms of voters' choices. The results have demonstrated that the candidate's facial beauty has a positive impact on voting rate. In addition to this, the effect of skin colour has increased, depending on the density of native population. The correlation between skin colour and election performance has been stronger for candidates coming up for elections for the first time (Leigh and Susilo, 2009:68).

In this research conducted in northern part of Australia, no conclusion has been reached as regards the correlation between vote rate and skin colour in case of non-usage of photograph on ballot

papers. The impact of skin colour on the ballot paper has been very
strong on voting behavior in the region, though. In this respect, it
is possible to say that the effect of skin colour is uncertain in
cases where photos are not used on ballot papers. However, removing
photographs from ballot papers can bring about a disadvantage. Taking
the low literacy rate in northern part of Australia into account, the
removal of photos from ballot papers can increase voting errors.
Furthermore, it can decrease the turnout rates (Leigh and Susilo,
2009:69).

The image created with the use of a photograph can be an
influential component of defining the other characteristic features of
the candidate (Güllüpınar, 2010:133). In this respect, the use of
photograph can be considered as a positive image and as a significant
factor, not only on ballot papers but also in different election
contexts (Rosenberg and McCafferty, 2001:45; Rasenberg et al.,
1986:108).

Various researches conducted suggest these effects, as
photographs provide clues regarding the candidate's image in low-
information contexts where there is little knowledge about the
candidates (Buckley et al, 2007: 180). In other words, in low-
information election contexts, voters use short cuts by relying on
photographs. Evidence concerning this matter can be found in the
literature. Basically, the matter here is which knowledge voters
acquire from photographs. A study in an election context in Ireland
where the majority of voters have no knowledge of candidates has
indicated that voters take the photographs on ballot papers into
consideration during their decision-making process (Buckley et al,
2007:180).

Usage of a photo showing the candidate better than his/her real
appearance is an effective practice with respect to creative open
field advertisements(Reilly, 2011:108). A study conducted has revealed
that a candidate, coming up for parliamentary elections for the first
time, get a higher voting rate in case of usage of a nice photo. A
strong correlation was found between usage of a nice photo of the
candidate and voter's perception regarding candidate's integrity and
adequacy. This result holds true not only for married but also for
single candidates (Berggren et al., 2010:8). Another study has shown
that the photograph can influence voters's perception with regard to
the candidate's adequacy, his leadership ability, attractiveness,
congeniality and integrity (Rosenberg et al., 1986:123).

For this reason, a photoshoot can be evaluated as an important
election practice. The perspective technique used in the photoshoot
can create a positive perception of the candidate. For instance, a
photoshoot realized by placing the camera on the candidate's eye level
offers the possibility to create an affinity, warmth and association
between the candidate and the voter (Uztuğ, 2004:357).

The aforementioned researches have demonstrated that the use of
photograph on ballot paper has an impact on voter's behavior.
However; in some studies, it is possible to observe that the use of
photograph may prove to have no effect at all or that its effect is
very little. One of these studies has demonstrated that the
photographs on ballot papers have an impact on voters' behavior,
however, this effect should not be magnified. Even though photographs
on ballot papers constitute an important hint, they do not have a
significant effect on voter's electoral behavior. The primary reason
for this is the fact that the appearance of the candidate is one of
the many factors that play a role during elections. Furthermore, the
use of candidate's photo on ballot paper interacts with other factors.

The primary factor among them is the fact that photographs are very effective during a competition taking place between male and female candidates, the second is that the use of a photograph provides young candidates with an advantage. As for the third factor, it is the fact that the photo on ballot paper can influence choices, even with respect to the voters stating that they associate themselves with one of the parties (Johns and Shephard, 2011:653).

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS (ARAŞTIRMA SORULARI)

In the theoretical part of the study, as a result of analysis of various studies previously conducted, it can be seen that ballot paper can be effective with regard to voter's perception and choice. In various countries of the world, there are different types of ballot paper designs.

Ballot papers in Turkey thrust the party and the party leader to the forefront. As for the candidates' names, they are in smaller font size at the bottom of ballot paper. No visuals such as photographs are included. This situation leads to the fact that the candidate appears as if he/she is of secondary importance with regard to voter's perception.

In this regard, the basic questions of the research in the experimental study conducted with the aim of determining how different ballot papers designed in the study affect electoral behavior have been identified as such:

- Do the alterations made in ballot papers create a difference with regard to the parties' or candidates' vote rates?
- What is the impact of the slates on the ballot paper with regard to the Turkish voter?
- Do ballot papers putting the candidates forward create a difference in vote rates gained by parties in comparison with existing ballot papers?
- Is there a correlation between voters' educational background, gender, age and ballot papers designed differently from one another?
- Is there a correlation among the ballot papers that were defined in the section of data collecting tools of the study in terms of voting behaviors?

6. METHOD (METOT)
6.1. The Application of the Research and Sample Survey (Araştırmanın Uygulanması ve Örneklem)

This research has been conducted with the objective of analyzing whether there is a difference with regard to candidate-centered voters' behaviors in terms of differently designed ballot papers and how this correlation comes into existence.

This research was conducted in the city center of Gumushane prior to the general parliamentary elections held on 12 June 2011 in the first week of June 2011. In some big cities, many voters are not familiar with most of MP candidates. This research was conducted in the city of Gumushane whose central population consists of 32.000 inhabitants.

Therefore, the fact that such a research was conducted in a small dwelling unit where MP candidates are more likely to be known and the differences to be laid down in this research within the context of ballot papers in terms of voters' choice are considered to contribute to a better understanding of the subject. This research was conducted with voters casting their votes on five ballot papers

designed differently from one another (information about ballot papers
is provided in the next part and examples are included in the
appendix).

In order to prevent the research from any kind of inducement,
the experimental subject was provided with each ballot paper
separately and in order to guarantee real electoral conditions,
attention was paid to ensure that the experimental subject would be
alone. After the voting process, each ballot paper was put folded in
to the envelope. Furthermore, after the voting procedures,
participants in the study went through a little survey where they were
inquired about their demographic features.

For this research conducted as a field study, random sampling
method was used. The research was done with 200 participants. Yet, in
the evaluation phase, 18 envelopes were cancelled for reliability
reasons and a total of 182 practices were analyzed.

6.2. Means of Data Collection (Veri Toplama Araçları)

Five separate ballot papers were prepared to lay down the
difference created by ballot paper design in terms of voters' choice
and a mini-survey was created in order to identify the socio-
demographic features of the participants.

Depending on the fact that each party taking part in the
elections could not present any candidates in Gumushane, candidates of
minor parties came up for elections just in order to perform their
function of participation in the election in general terms and they
did not run any campaigns; the parties passing general parliamentary
election threshold and gaining access to the parliament in 2007 and
the candidates for general parliamentary elections of 2011 were
included in the ballot papers.

Gumushane is entitled to elect two MPs. In this respect, the
complete lists of candidates of Justice and Development Party (Ak
Party), Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party
(MHP) for MP quotas in 2011 general parliamentary elections have been
analyzed in this research.

The first one of ballot papers prepared is the authentic ballot
paper used in MP elections in Turkey (Ballot Paper 1).

Law no. 5819 on MP Elections stipulates that the party's
specific symbol, abbreviated and unabridged name, the party leader's
name and names of MP candidates shall be included on ballot papers.

In the second ballot paper prepared for the research, the place
of rosters containing MP candidates has been changed; unlike the
authentic ballot paper (Ballot Paper 2).The party's slate has been
introduced as another party's slate. This ballot paper is also called
a faulty ballot paper in the text.

On the third ballot paper, unlike the authentic ballot paper,
the political party's logo, nickname, the party's full name and the
leader names have not been indicated and only candidate rosters have
been illustrated (Ballot Paper 3).

As for the fourth ballot paper, only names of MP candidates were
written one by one on ballot papers (Ballot Paper 4). As for the fifth
ballot paper, only the photos of MP candidates have been separately
used (Ballot Paper 5). Furthermore on every ballot paper the sequence
of the political parties has been changed. The ballot papers prepared
can be found in the appendix part of the research. In this study, a
little survey was applied to the participants along with ballot
papers.

In this survey, questions concerning the participants' age,
gender, educational status, occupation, income, choice as regards the

party for which they would vote in general parliamentary elections on 12 June 2011 were prepared.

A pre-test belonging to the ballot papers and mini-survey form prepared was applied with the participation of 40 people. Practice phase was initiated subsequent to the completion of the arrangements required.

6.3. Data Analysis and Tests in Use
(Verilerin Analizi ve Kullanılan Testler)

The data obtained in research has been analyzed electronically by using the SPSS 15.0 programme. As for the data analysis, with the scope of putting forward the socio-demographic characteristics and the electoral behaviour of the participants regarding the 2011 Parliament general election, descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions have been used. While encoding the, the candidate lists were referred to. More clearly, which column belongs to which party was identified with respect to the candidates.

In order to present the difference related to the vote rate of political parties and the candidates in the context of real ballot paper and other ballot papers, the percentage distribution has been stated for each ballot paper.

In order to determine the relationship between the ballot papers regarding the voters' preferences, a correlation analysis and with the scope of determining the correlation between ballot papers and demographic variables, a chi-square analysis was conducted.

7. THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
(ARAŞTIRMAYA KATILANLARIN SOSYO-DEMOGRAFİK ÖZELLİKLER)

The participants of this research have been analyzed with regards to socio-demographic characteristics such as age, education, gender, profession and income.

Considering the age status, it was observed that 25.7% of the participants belong to the age group 18-27, 25.1% to the age group 2835, 24% to the age group 36-47 and %25 to the age group 48-86. 28.9% of the research participants were female, 71.1% of it were male participants. Considering the educational background, 27.4% of the participants are primary school graduates, 30.7% high-school graduates, 31.8% bachelors, 10.1% postgraduates.

Furthermore 23.8% of the research participants have an income of 1-800 TL, 25.2% an income of 801-1300TL, 25.9% an income of 1301-1900TL and 25.2% an income of 1901-6000TL. Research participants have been asked which party they will be voting for and according to the results, AK Party has received 53.1%, CHP 12. 8, MHP %27.9 and other parties 6.2%. When examining Gumushane center voting results, Ak Party has received 61.3%, MHP Party 23.3% and CHP Party 9.46%. Comparing these results with the distribution of the participants according to political parties, having similar values can be evaluated as a positive factor in terms of the authenticity of the samples.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS (BULGULAR VE TARTIŞMA)
8.1. Ballot Papers and Political Parties' Vote Rates
(Oy Pusulaları ve Siyasal Parti Oy Oranları)

In this part of the study the changes of the voters' electoral behaviour depending on ballot papers have been set out with percentages rates. It can be deduced that the change of rates of political parties' votes depend on the ballot papers, since the

participants of the research have voted in real election conditions
and have voted separately on each planned ballot paper.

The conducted study has shown that especially in ballot paper 2
there is a significant difference in votes with regards to each of the
three parties. As for the voters' electoral behavior there has been a
difference in percentage between 'ballot paper 1, ballot paper 4 and
ballot paper 5'. However, this difference did not appear to be as big
as in the ballot paper 2. Nevertheless, a significant difference of
percentage was not detected in ballot paper 3 compared to ballot paper
1(Table1). Consequently, even though the voters know the candidates to
a great extent, compared to the party logo, party name and the party
leader it can be said that as for the voters' choice the candidates
are far behind. Because, very close results like the right ballot
papers have been obtained in the ballot papers where only the
lawmakers' lists were given. Regarding the preferences of participants
of the research according to ballot paper 1, the rates appear to be
for Ak Party 59.3%, CHP 11% and MHP 29.7% (Table 1). These results
seem to be very close to the results obtained in the 2011
Parliamentary Election (Ak Party 61.3%, MHP 23.3% and CHP 9.46%).
Moreover, the subjects of the research were asked which party to vote
in the General Elections in 2011 and a slight difference of results
were observed. (Ak Party 53.1%, CHP 12. 8%, MHP 27.9%). This can be
attributed to the existence of three parties on the prepared ballot
papers that exceeded the election threshold. Other parties did not
take place on the real ballot paper that was used in the research.

Table 1. The vote rates that political parties have received in
different ballot papers
(Tablo 1. Oy pusulalarında siyasal partilerin aldığı oy oranları)

			Political Parties' vote rates			Total (%)
			Ak Party (%)	CHP (%)	MHP (%)	
Ballot papers		Ballot Paper 1	59.3	11	29.7	100
		Ballot Paper 2	21.5	25.6	52.9	100
		Ballot Paper 3	52.4	13.7	33.9	100
	Ballot paper 4	1st Candidate	24.3	12.7	11	
		2nd Candidate	24.3	1.2	26.6	
		Total	48.6	13.9	37.6	100
	Ballot paper 5	1st Candidate	23.7	16.2	11	
		2nd Candidate	22.5	0.6	26	
		Total	46.2	16.8	37	100

Regarding the rates of percentages of votes in the ballot paper
1 and 3, we see that in the ballot paper 3 (Ak Party 52.4%, MHP:33.9%,
CHP:13.7%), there has been a low change in the percentages compared to
the ballot paper 1 (Ak Party:59.3%, MHP:29.7% and CHP:11%).

This situation shows that most of the voters are familiar with
the candidates. Because, in the ballot paper 3, only the lists of the
lawmakers appeared and while compared to ballot paper 1, it is
observed that most of the voters chose the right candidate lists. It
can be thought as a reason of this result that Gumushane is small city
and voters closely know the candidates.

There has been a significant change of vote rates of the
parties, comparing the ballot papers 1 (Ak Party: %59.3, MHP: %29.7
and CHP:11%) and 2 (Ak Party 21.5%, CHP 25.6% and MHP 52.9%)(Table 1).
This shows that, regarding the voters' preference, the party logo,
party name and the leader are more important than candidates. Because,
while there has been found important differences in terms of

percentage rates between the ballot paper 2 where the lawmakers' lists were faulty and the ballot paper 1; there has been observed low differences in ballot paper 3 where only the candidate lists appeared. In other words, despite the voters knew the candidates, they primarily preferred the party logo, party name and the leader more than the candidate name lists. This situation shows that voters have a tendency focused party. In addition, it shows that parties are an influential factor regarding voters' choice in Turkey.

Considering the ballot papers 4 and 5, it is observable that an average level of change of vote rates took place compared to ballot paper 1. In ballot paper 4, the Ak Party candidates won the 48,6% of the votes, while MHP won 37,6% and CHP won 13,9%. And in ballot paper 5, the Ak Party candidates won the 46,2% of the votes, MHP won 37% and CHP won 16,89%. Thus, on the ballot paper 4 where the party candidates lists were individually given and on the ballot paper 5 where the candidate photos were listed one by one, there has been detected a considerably low level of change compared to the real ballot paper in terms of vote rates. In both ballot papers 4 and 5, for the parties CHP and MHP, the percentages of votes are on the rise, compared to the real ballot paper, while the situation is the opposite for the Ak Party. This can be interpreted as; the MHP and CHP candidates are more well-known visually and in terms of names and the party itself has a minor effect in the rates of votes. When it is compared effects of party and candidate in terms of voter's choice, These results can be commented that effects of candidate increase depending on decreasing vote rates of party, Although effects of candidate decrease depending on increasing vote rates of party.

Another evidence that the party logo, party name and the leader are more important than the candidates appears in the chi-square analysis of ballot paper one and two (Table 2).

In the ballot paper 2, compared to ballot paper 1, the votes of Ak Party go to MHP, the votes of CHP go to Ak Party and the votes of MHP go to CHP. The reason for this may be that, the MHP candidate list is under Ak Party logo/ party name/ name of the leader, while the Ak Party candidate list is under CHP logo/ party name/ name of the leader and the CHP candidate list is under MHP logo/ party name/ name of the leader (See Appendices)

Table 2. Chi-square of Ballot Paper 1 and Ballot Paper 2
(Tablo 2. Oy Pusulası 1 ve Oy Pusulası 2 Ki-Kare Analizi)

			Faulty Ballot Paper (BP2)			Total
			Ak Party (%)	CHP (%)	MHP (%)	
Real Ballot Paper (BP1)	Ak Party	Count	16	1	84	101
		% within GOP1	15.8	1.0	83.2	100.0
		% of total	9.4	.6	49.1	59.1
	CHP	Count	18	1	0	19
		% within GOP1	94.7	5.3	.0	100.0
		% of total	10.5	.6	.0	11.1
	MHP	Count	2	42	7	51
		% within GOP1	3.9	82.4	13.7	100.0
		% of total	1.2	24.6	4.1	29.8
Total		Count	36	44	91	171
		% within GOP1	21.1	25.7	53.2	100.0
		% of total	21.1	25.7	53.2	100.0

X^2 =190.161   df = 4   c= .726   p=.000

According to the analysis, there has been found a considerably high and meaningful (p=.000) correlation (.726) between the ballot papers 1 and 2. According to the results, 15% of the Ak Party voters voted again for the Ak Party on the faulty ballot paper. This figure is 1% for CHP and 83,2% for MHP. On the real ballot paper, 5.3% of the CHP voters voted again for CHP on the faulty ballot paper. This figure is 94,7% for Ak Party and 0% for MHP. On the real ballot paper, 13.7% of the MHP voters voted again for MHP on the faulty ballot paper. This figure is 3.9% for Ak Party and 82.4% for CHP. For this reason, it can be said that party is more important than candidate regarding voter's choice. Because, it is observed that in the ballot paper 2 where candidate lists are changed, very few voters voted again the same party when it is compared ballot paper 1.

8.2. Ballot Paper Variables with Regards to Their Interrelation (Aralarındaki İlişkiler Bakımından Oy Pusulası Değişkenleri)

This part of the study deals with the electoral behaviuor regarding the real ballot paper and the correlation between the other ballot papers. According to the result figures, the positive correlations among the variables are at a high level while the negative correlations are low (Table 3).

If we compare the ballot paper 1 with the others in terms of correlations; it is low (-,383) between the voters' preference on the BP1 and BP2, negative and meaningful (p=,000), it is high (,824) between the voters' preference on the BP1 and BP3, positive and meaningful (p=,000), it is high (,770) between the voters' preference on the BP1 and BP4, positive and meaningful (p=,000), it is high (,713) between the voters' preference on the BP1 and BP5, positive and meaningful (p=,000) (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis Among the Ballot Paper Variables
(Tablo 3. Oy Pusulası Değişkenleri Arasında Korelasyon Analizi)

Ballot Papers	BP1	BP2	BP3	BP4	BP5
BP1	1	-,383** ,000 171	,824** ,000 163	,770** ,000 165	,713** ,000 164
BP2		1	-,234** ,003 163	-,237** ,002 165	-,194* ,013 164
BP3			1	,892** ,000 167	,879** ,000 164
BP4				1	,891** ,000 170
BP5					1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
 *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

There is a negative correlation between the real ballot paper and ballot papers where the lawmaker lists are faulty (BP2). This supports the fact that, in terms of voters' preference, party logo, name and leader are more important than the candidates. Because, there is a positive and high level correlation between the real ballot paper and three other ballot papers (BP3, BP4 and BP5) where party logo, name and leader's name do not exist. Therefore, the voters are

familiar with the candidates and they vote for their parties on the ballot papers where only the candidates are listed. However, when the party logo, party name and the name of the party leader are included in the ballot paper, the effect of the candidates lessens. More clearly, usually, the voters do not vote for their party candidates, they vote for the party logo, party name and the leader. In addition, it can be said that commitment of voters to party which they vote and party leader are important factor regarding voters' choice.

8.3. Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Ballot Paper Variables (Sosyo-Demografik Özellikler ve Oy Pusulası Değişkenleri)

This part of the study deals with the correlation between the socio-demographic characteristics of the research participants and the ballot papers. In this context, the correlation of educations, age distributions and genders of the participants of the research, the real ballot paper (BP1) and the faulty ballot paper (BP2) where the candidate lists are altered, was investigated. Because, the biggest difference of rates of votes happened between BP1 and BP2. Thus, there has been no multiple comparison among other devised ballot papers (BP3, BP4, BP5), socio-demographic variables and the real ballot paper. Considering the level of education levels of the participants of the research; in terms of all education levels, we can see that there is a meaningful and considerably high correlation between the vote rates of BP1 and BP2. There has been a meaningful correlation in the Primary School Level (x^2=84.919; df=4; c=,808; p=,000), High School Level (x^2=49,681; df=4; c=,702; p=,000), University, (x^2=48,521; df=4; c=,685; p=,000), post graduate levels (x^2=19,493; df=4; c=,731; p=,001). In the figures for Ak Party and MHP, a parallel increase and decrease has been observed depending on the change of level of education. None of the primary school level voters who voted for the Ak Party in BP1, vote again for it in the BP2; this figure is 18.2% for high school level voters, 21.9% for the university level voters, 26.7% for the post graduate level voters. According to this result, rate of conscious vote increases depending on rising of education level for Ak Party's voters

As for the voters of MHP in the real ballot paper, 8.3% of the primary school level voters, 8% high school level, 30.8% university level voted for MHP in the BP2.

As for the postgraduate level, only 1% of the voters voted for MHP in the real ballot paper, and thus, the necessary calculations could not have been done for this education level.

As for CHP, none of its voters in primary school, university and post graduate levels in the real ballot paper voted again for CHP in the BP2, while this figure is 25% for the high school level. Obviously, for CHP, there has not been a change of vote rates depending on the level of education, in terms of increase or decrease. The reason for this is, by and large, the vote rate of CHP is fairly low. Because, on the Chi-square analysis table, there hasn't been a sufficient distribution of votes related to education levels of CHP voters.

In the Chi-Square analysis done among the ages of the participants of the research, BP1 and BP2, there has been a meaningful and generally high correlation in all age intervals, here are the figures: ages between 18-27 (x^2=34,609; df=4; c=,664; p=,000), ages between 28-35 (x^2=53.710; df=4; c=,753; p=,000), ages between 36-47 (x^2=38.371; df=4; c=,704; p=,000) and ages between 48-86 (x^2=72.256; df=4; c=,788; p=,000) On the cross-table, considering the results in

BP1 and BP2; it is detected that a precise usage of votes did not happen depending on the increase or decrease of age rate in BP2. In the faulty ballot paper (BP2), for Ak Party, the highest vote usage is seen in the age interval 18-27 (23.3%), this figure is 23% for MHP in the age interval 36-47.

Comparing the gender factor and BP1 and BP2, there has been observed a meaningful and considerably high correlation between voting behaviors females (x^2=48,048; df=4; c=,700; p=,000) and males (x^2=140.336; df=4; c=,736; p=,000) in BP1 and BP2.

Considering the cross-tables, a higher percent of males (19.4%) voted more precisely than the females (7.1%) who voted for AKP in the real ballot paper, this situation is the other way around for CHP and MHP, namely the females voted more precisely than the males. As for the female voters of CHP in BP1, 11% of them voted for the same party in the BP2. But none of the male voters of CHP in BP1, voted again for CHP in BP2.

As for the female voters of MHP in BP1, 30.8% of them voted for the same party in the BP2. But 8.1% of the male voters of MHP in BP1, voted again for MHP in BP2. Therefore, in the faulty ballot paper (BP2), there hasn't been an increase or decrease in terms of precise voting, which demonstrates a parallel change depending on the gender.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS (SONUÇ VE ÖNERILER)

Political parties have an idiosyncratic personage and image, regardless of their leader, candidate members of parliament, workers and their physical structure.

Even if this image changes through time, it has an important place in electorate's perception (Polat vd. 2004:113). Therefore in Turkey, the rates of voting for independent candidates are fairly low (Eroğul, 1991:211). It has also been observed in the recent elections that under normal election circumstances, the rates of voting for independent candidates were notably low. In the 2011 General Elections, there is just one independent candidate in Gumushane, where this research took place. According to the election results, the number of votes for the independent candidates is 30 (http://www.ysk.gov.tr).

A party leader and party logo might be considered as one of the most important image indicators of the political parties in terms of voters' perception.

Therefore, since voting in Turkey is dominantly based on parties (namely, not candidates), writing the party logo and name and party leader's name, briefly and clearly, has an important effect. This study has shown that, in terms of voting behaviors of the voters, the name lists of the candidates on the ballot papers is not a very important factor.

More clearly, on the real ballot paper where the party logo, short name of the party, full name of the party, name of the head of the party and lawmaker candidate lists appear, the most important elements are the party logo, party name and the leader's name. Because in the study, we observe significant differences between the voting behaviors in the real ballot paper and voting behaviors on the faulty ballot paper where the candidate lists were altered – provided that all other elements remain the same-

Although the voters do know the party candidates, such a result strengthens the idea that the party logo, name and leader are much more effective than the candidate lists on the ballot papers. Because, on the BP3 where only the lawmakers name list appear, it is observed that most of the voters voted again for the same party as they did on

the real ballot paper. Besides, the misusage of the votes is due to the wrong location of the party logo, name and leader's name on the ballot paper.

Another important result obtained from the research is that; although a negative correlation appears between the real and faulty ballot papers, there is a positive correlation between BP1 and other ballot papers. In other words, BP3 where only the candidate name lists appear, BP4 where all the candidates were listed one by one, BP5 where the photos of the candidates exist individually, there exists a positive correlation among BP1 (the real ballot paper) and BP3, BP4 and BP5. This demonstrates that the voters are familiar with the candidates. However, the fact that there exists a negative correlation between BP1 and BP2, shows that the candidate lists do not play a significant role in voters' preferences. Because, in the BP2, the candidate lists were false, although the general design was preserved as in BP1.

There has been detected a slight difference in terms of percentage rates between the distribution of votes on the ballot papers where the names or the photos of the candidates are remarkable and the votes won in the real ballot paper. This situation may be because of the low population in Gumushane, and thus a wide familiarity of the candidates by most of the public. Because, there has not been a significant prominence of any candidates in both ballot papers where the names appear and in the ballot papers where the photos appear, compared to the real ballot paper.

In the research, it is found that, the educational status of the participants is an important factor, regarding voting behaviors. Parallel with the increase of education level, we observe that the voters tend to vote more precisely on the faulty ballot paper. Thus, we can deduce that, the educational status of the voters appear to be an important factor for voting consciously.

This study has investigated the influence of candidates on the ballot papers. The results show that, regarding the voters' preferences, despite the familiarity of candidates by the voters, factors like the party logo, party name and the head of the party play a more important role.

In this respect, in future, the researches that will take place in the more-populated regions where the candidates have less familiarity, will put forward more clearly the influence of visual factors that exist or must exist on the ballot papers, in terms of voters' behaviors.

Other researches which will be realised through devising more than one ballot paper where only the party logo, party name and party leader's name appear or different face types of the candidates are shown, will contribute to a more thorough investigation of the issue. Moreover, making researches in different regions will contribute to clarification of the issue; whether the design of the ballot paper makes a difference on voters' preferences depending on the demographic features.

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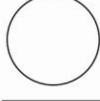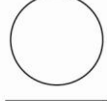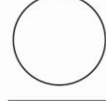
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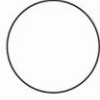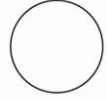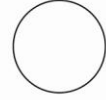
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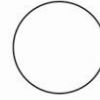
APPENDIX (EKLER)
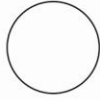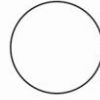
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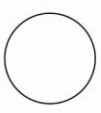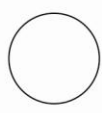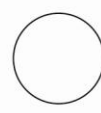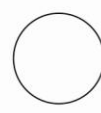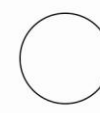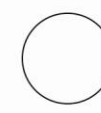
- **Ballot Paper 2. (Oy Pusulası 2)**

- **Ballot Paper 3.(Oy Pusulası 3)**

- **Ballot Paper 4. (Oy Pusulası 4)**

| Çetin Işık | Ercan Özdemir | Bedri Yaşar | Mutlu Gürler | Kemalettin Aydın | Feramuz Üstün |

- **Ballot Paper 5. (Oy Pusulası 5)**