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# *Politics of Constituency Representation and Legislative Ambition under the Glare of Camera Lights*

The introduction of legislative television as a transparency initiative has been welcomed in an increasing number of democracies. The impact of television cameras on parliamentary behavior, however, has received scant attention in systems where personal vote-earning attributes are thought to be of little importance (e.g., closed-list proportional representation). Additionally, studies examining this relationship relied exclusively on over-time variation in legislative behavior (i.e., before and after the introduction of television into parliament), which arguably has important deficiencies in demonstrating the true effect of legislative television. Capitalizing on a unique quasi-experimental setting, the present study aims to close these gaps in the literature by analyzing parliamentary activities in Turkey, where the legislative television was restricted to 3 days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) in 2011 after almost two decades of continuous 7-day operation. Results based on original data sets of parliamentary activities from the pre- and postreform periods (2009–11 and 2011–13) indicate that the varying presence of television cameras exacerbated the effect of electoral and reputation-building motivations on parliamentary behavior, encouraging electorally unsafe and junior MPs to shift their constituency focus to the televised proceedings. The results offer important implications for the study of legislative transparency and constituency representation in party-list proportional representation systems.

The introduction of television cameras in legislatures has sparked a big debate on potential implications of this experiment in electoral democracies. While the proponents of legislative television asserted that the presence of TV cameras in legislative proceedings contributes to transparency and strengthens the link between legislators and voters (Barnett and Gaber 1992; Soroka, Redko, and Albaugh 2015), the opponents argued that legislative

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television hinders the quality of legislative debates, as legislators start to play to the cameras (Cook 1986). Put differently, on the one hand, there is a strong normative basis for the introduction of legislative television for it allows citizens to directly observe their representatives. On the other, the fear is that the presence of TV cameras in legislatures exacerbates the effect of electoral motivations on legislative debates, where “show horses” outnumber “work horses” under the glare of camera lights (Franklin 1992; Matthews 1959). Still, a large number of electoral democracies has adopted some form of legislative broadcasting, a trend that shows no sign of abating. However, although the potential consequences of televised legislative sessions have been well formulated, surprisingly little empirical investigation has been undertaken to explore the impact of legislative television on constituency representation among representatives.

One potential reason for little systematic attention is limited data availability in legislative activities. Indeed, only a limited number of studies went beyond simply theorizing potential consequences of the introduction of TV cameras in legislatures (e.g., Mixon, Gibson, and Upadhyaya 2003; Mixon and Upadhyaya 2002). Furthermore, previous scholarship has focused almost exclusively on the most likely cases, where personalized parliamentary activities such as constituency-oriented speeches are encouraged due to the importance of personal vote-earning attributes (Carey and Shugart 1995). This study departs from previous scholarship in at least two ways. First, it focuses on a least likely case, a closed-list proportional electoral system that provides little incentive for constituency service (Heitshusen, Young, and Wood 2005), to examine the impact of legislative television on parliamentarians’ constituency-oriented behavior, as doing so provides substantial theoretical leverage to test the effect of legislative television on parliamentary behavior (see Levy 2008). Second, the study capitalizes on the quasi-experimental nature of the legislative television in Turkey, where the legislative television was restricted to 3 days per week in 2011 after almost 2 decades of continuous 7-day operation. Previous scholarship has examined legislative behavior before and after the introduction of legislative television and attributed any attitudinal differences between the pre- and postreform periods to legislative television (e.g., Mixon, Gibson, and Upadhyaya 2003; Mixon and Upadhyaya 2002; Soroka et al. 2015; but see Datta 2008). Although an analysis of over-time variance in parliamentary

behavior has its own benefits, analyzing legislative proceedings that “differ in terms of their status vis-à-vis television coverage [in the same legislative term] ... allows for a research design which is an improvement over a simple comparison of the behavior of MPs before and after the introduction of television into parliament” (Datta 2008, 8).

Drawing together the literatures on legislative behavior and legislative television, I argue that the restriction of legislative television in Turkey to 3 days per week should impact MPs’ constituency-oriented behavior in a strategic way. The empirical analysis based on a series of logistic regressions shows that junior and electorally unsafe MPs take advantage of the presence of TV cameras in parliament and focus on constituency matters during the days with TV cameras. The rest of the article proceeds as follows. The first section presents a brief overview of past scholarship on the costs and benefits of legislative television and provides a contextual debate on the restriction of legislative television in Turkey. The consequent sections develop theoretical propositions for the effects of legislative television in regards to constituency-oriented behavior and present the results of the empirical analyses. The discussion section offers implications for the study of legislative television and constituency representation in party-list proportional representation (PR) systems.

### **Theorizing the Impact of Legislative Television on Constituency-Oriented Behavior**

#### *Transparency and Accountability in the Context of Televising Legislatures*

Transparency and accountability in political process have often been considered as complementary in that the absence of one of them may inhibit good governance (Hood 2010; see also Prat 2005). However, transparency does not ensure the government’s full accountability to the public (O’Neill 2006). Levy (2007) contends that the decision-making process is likely to be biased towards status quo when the political process is secretive. In fact, research showed that some transparency initiatives may have adversarial impact on policy makers (Avery and Meyer 2011; Malesky, Schuler, and Tran 2012; Prat 2005; Sibert 2003; Stasavage 2004, 2007). Similarly, in the context of legislative

debates, televising legislatures may have negative impact on representatives by encouraging attention-seeking behavior (Franklin 1992). Whether or not beneficial to good governance, the spread of legislative television across electoral democracies indicates that policy makers find more value in legislatures that allow the public to observe the actions of individual representatives more directly.

Drawing on the transparency and accountability debate, economists and political scientists started to explore the potential effects of legislative television on the link between voters and representatives. Crain and Goff's study (1986) constituted a foundation for the subsequent research. Building on the work of economists Stigler (1961) and Nelson (1970, 1974), Crain and Goff argued that the qualities of politicians should be viewed as a search-experience product dichotomy: "Political services will be more like experience products if it is costly for voters to compare the advertised qualities of the candidates to actual qualities prior to voting. The lower the cost of evaluating candidates before the election, the more political services will be like search products" (1986, 23). The introduction of legislative television, the authors argued, has lowered the cost to voters of observing the advertised and actual qualities of the candidates, which had a considerable impact on election outcomes (see also Greene 1991).

The proponents of legislative transparency often cite several reasons on the basis of transparency and accountability for supporting the presence of TV cameras in legislatures. Hölmstrom (1979) argues that more information about the agent strengthens principals' hand in securing the common good, whereas lack of information about the political process may inhibit voters from holding politicians accountable (Alt, Lassen, and Skilling 2002; Besley and Burgess 2002). In line with this, Lassen (2005) convincingly shows that voters who are informed about the political process are considerably more likely than uninformed voters to turn out to vote. Furthermore, Besley (2005) posits that increasing knowledge about the characteristics of politicians discourages potentially low-quality candidates from entering politics. In short, the literature on transparency and accountability focuses on what Humphreys and Weinstein (2012) call the "agent accountability channel" and "agent selection channel," where the former refers to the incentives that shape legislators' performance and the latter refers to the selection of candidates, both of which have important implications for constituency representation in parliament. In Soroka et al.'s words, this line of reasoning holds that "overall,

an increased media presence would be beneficial to the representative democratic process, encouraging a more direct connection between representatives and their constituents” (2015, 205).

In his seminal work, Andrea Prat has posed an important question: “When is the principal hurt from observing more information about her agent?” (2005, 862). Distinguishing between information on the consequence of the agent’s action and information directly on the agent’s action, Prat argues that the latter kind may result in conformist behavior that hinders achieving better political outcomes (see also Stasavage 2007). That is, the principal’s (voter) information on the agent’s (legislator) action may have unintended consequences, especially when the cost of obtaining information is high. Following this line of thought, one may argue that the introduction of the legislative television has unintended consequences for the legislative behavior of representatives. As the cost to journalists of searching out information in legislatures has diminished with the legislative television, those who seek publicity, or “show horses,” may become more dominant (Ranney 1983). Simply put, the pessimistic camp emphasizes the possibility that legislators lose track of the substance of policy issues, treating parliamentary procedures as a showcase product. Indeed, Mixon, Hobson, and Upadhyaya (2001) show that the presence of C-SPAN cameras has increased the length of 2-year sessions in the US House and Senate by 250 and 431 hours, respectively. Likewise, Mixon, Gibson, and Upadhyaya (2003) suggest that the presence of legislative television has provided incentive for Senate filibusters. Succinctly, no consensus exists as to whether the benefits of legislative television outweigh the cost of it, due in part to little empirical research investigating the potential consequences of legislative television.

### *Legislative Television in Turkey*

The legislative television in Turkey was introduced in the late 1994 as a consequence of growing support for a more transparent parliament. Since then, the legislative television has broadcast all the parliamentary activities, including the legislative proceedings that were scheduled for weekends. However, the practice of continuous 7-day operation of the legislative television was restricted to 3 days per week in late 2011. Starting from October 2011, televised legislative proceedings were restricted to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, while the legislative proceedings that

were held on other days were not televised (see the online supporting information).

The restriction of legislative television in Turkey provides us with an immense opportunity to test the previously formulated propositions about the effects of TV cameras on parliamentary behavior. Except the study by Datta (2008), such a quasi-experimental test has never before been undertaken in addressing the issue; empirical findings on the effects of legislative television were mostly derived from studies that compared legislative behavior before and after the introduction of TV cameras in parliament. Such before/after analyses are often susceptible to omitted variable bias, as it is very difficult to account for the unobserved factors that may emerge from the introduction or restriction of TV cameras. The Turkish case provides us with a unique setting to fill this gap, one in which we are able to examine both over-time (i.e., before and after the reform) and within-case variations (i.e., televised and nontelevised proceedings) in constituency focus.

### *Hypotheses*

In this study, I argue that the absence of legislative television in particular proceedings should encourage MPs to shift their constituency focus to the televised days, as such behavior is mostly free from party discipline and has low cost. In particular, I argue that the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week made the legislative television a scarce resource that representatives can capitalize on to signal interest in constituency matters. Nonetheless, the decision to take the floor during the presence of TV cameras should be a function of representatives' electoral and reputation-building motivations.

There is a plethora of research on the importance of constituency-oriented behavior in legislatures (Denemark 2000; Kerevel 2015; Lancaster 1986; Soroka, Penner, and Blidook 2009; Strøm 1997; Tavits 2009). These studies show that MPs may engage in constituency-oriented behavior for various reasons. Strøm argues that reselection and re-election are the primary motivations behind legislative roles, which "can be viewed as behavioral strategies conditioned by the institutional framework in which parliamentarians operate" (1997, 157; see also Carey and Shugart 1995). To that end, MPs might see value in

performing constituency-oriented activities to present themselves as a “constituency servant” (Searing 1994), signaling their close ties with regional constituencies to the party leadership (Lancaster 1986; Strøm 1997). “[B]eing locally known frees legislators from relying solely on their party for their future careers” (Tavits, 2010, 218; see also Desposato 2006; Golden and Picci 2008; Tavits 2009, 2010), and this is especially true for MPs who are ideologically distant from the party leadership (Proksch and Slapin 2012).

It is often assumed that party-centered systems discourage MPs from developing personal vote-earning attributes, as party brand is much more important in determining electoral success in such systems (Carey and Shugart 1995). However, an increasing number of studies show that constituency-oriented activity is hardly unique to systems where personal reputation is of considerable importance for electoral success (Ciftci and Yildirim 2017; Heitshusen, Young, and Wood 2005; Martin 2010), which can be explained in part by factors other than the motivation for developing personal vote (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1984; Louwerse and Otjes 2016; Searing 1994). In the Turkish case, the personal reputation of the MP in the regional constituency may attract political parties (Ciftci, Forrest, and Tekin 2008). Since party switching among Turkish parliamentarians is not uncommon, particularly in times of declining party popularity (Kemahlioglu and Sayari 2017), having strong ties with the regional constituency may enhance one’s career prospects significantly. Consequently, given that parliamentary activities are an important low-cost means through which MPs can signal interest in constituency matters to establish close ties with the regional constituency (see Franklin and Norton 1993, 197; Martin 2011), there are good reasons for MPs to resort to this approach to develop the “constituency servant” image.

Legislators make use of floor time strategically to further their career (Searing 1994, 96), as “floor speeches provide an opportunity for ‘position-taking’, ‘advertising’ and ‘credit-claiming’, key strategies for enhancing one’s chances of being reelected” (Maltzman and Sigelman 1996, 821). Legislative television provides legislators with an important opportunity to achieve some of these goals. Legislators are cognizant of the pros and cons of speaking under the glare of camera lights, and anecdotal evidence supporting this view is abundant. A former MP in the

Turkish parliament once wrote that MPs seek to show interest in their regional constituency by performing nonlegislative activities, knowing that legislative proceedings are televised (Kocaoglu 2003, 47). When asked in an interview how the legislative television impacted MPs' behavior, a Canadian parliamentarian argued that the legislative television allowed the constituents to observe whether their representatives were actually doing what they claimed to be doing in parliament for the regional constituency (Akriotis 2012, 5). Indeed, Morris (2001) shows that legislators appeal to the audience watching the debates on C-SPAN, where he finds that the time zone of the constituency is related to legislators' tendency to speak. Harris (1998) notes that the rise of the public speakership among legislators is associated with the increasing importance of C-SPAN and the spread of alternative media such as talk radio and the Internet, signaling legislators' increasing awareness of public speakership. This anecdotal and empirical evidence ties in nicely with my argument that the restriction of legislative television to 3 days per week in Turkey should encourage MPs to shift their constituency-oriented activities to the televised proceedings.

I further argue that the motivation to engage in constituency matters during televised legislative proceedings should be more pronounced for two groups of MPs. First, electorally safe MPs may have little motivation to strengthen their relations with the regional constituency (André et al., 2015; Heitshusen, Young, and Wood 2005; Kellermann 2015; Morris 2001), as obtaining a safe rank in the party list is already satisfactory for re-election in most cases in closed-list PR systems. In contrast, electorally unsafe MPs should be more likely to take advantage of the varying presence of TV cameras. Second, I argue that the effect of legislative television should be more pronounced for junior MPs, who are more likely than senior MPs to have reputational motivations to engage in constituency matters. Comparing "reputational" and "electoral" explanations to account for the variance in parliamentary performance, Shomer (2009) shows that reputation-building motivations are as important as electoral motivations in shaping legislative behavior. In short, if parliamentary activities are an "invaluable device for getting noticed" and "an opportunity to keep one's name in the local press" (Franklin and Norton 1993, 197), those with higher electoral and reputation-building motivations should take advantage of the varying presence of the



legislative television more frequently to get noticed by the party leadership and the media.

*Hypothesis 1:* The propensity to perform constituency-oriented activities should be higher in televised legislative proceedings.

*Hypothesis 2:* The propensity to perform constituency-oriented activities in televised legislative proceedings should be lower for electorally safer members of parliament.

*Hypothesis 3:* The propensity to perform constituency-oriented activities in televised legislative proceedings should be lower for senior members of parliament.

*Alternative Explanations.* It may well be the case that televised sessions are dominated by particular types of parliamentary activities that are perhaps more likely to be constituency oriented, such as parliamentary questions (Martin 2011). Also, it has been shown that differences in legislative behavior are a product of early socialization experiences such as formal education (Clarke 1978; Schwarz and Lambert 1972, 70) and gender (Kahn 1994; Kahn and Goldenberg 1991; Norris, Vallance, and Lovenduski 1992; Yildirim 2018). Although formal education does not necessarily make better political leaders (Carnes and Lupu 2016), it is one of the important factors that help shape the skills legislators need to work effectively (see Clarke 1978; Thomas 1992). It is therefore important to control for these factors in our empirical models.

Studies also show that there are other important disparities in attitudes toward constituency work (Richardson and Freeman 1995; Thomas 1992). As regards institutional factors, the literature emphasizes the importance of district magnitude in explaining legislative behavior (Carey and Shugart 1995; Shugart et al. 2005). MPs who were born in the regional constituency they represent may have stronger ties with the constituency and higher tendency to bring constituency matters to legislative proceedings. For these reasons, I control for social and political characteristics of individual legislators, along with institutional factors that may shape legislators' constituency-oriented behavior in the parliament. In addition, I control for specific issue types because MPs may have higher motivation to focus on "hard issues" (e.g., defense, energy, science, government operations) (see Bäck, Debus,

and Müller 2014) during televised sessions, which are likely to be negatively correlated with constituency matters.

### **Empirical Approach**

I make use of an original data set of parliamentary activities performed between roughly 2 years before and 2 years after the restriction of television cameras to 3 days per week in October, 2011 (2009–11 and 2011–13). The data set consists of randomly selected 1,880 parliamentary statements, oral and written questions performed by 248 MPs who served in the parliament in the 23rd and 24th legislative terms. The main selection criterion for these activities is that party leadership imposes no formal restriction on MPs for such activities; compared with other forms of parliamentary activities, parliamentary questions and speeches are relatively low-cost and discipline-free initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, as Bäck and Debus succinctly put it, parliamentary statements, compared with other activities, are less prone to selection bias because “although controversial issues may give rise to more speeches, even the most uncontroversial ones will attract some attention from MPs” (2016, 16). That is, parliamentary statements have much more variation in terms of content and the characteristics of MPs performing these activities.

The parliamentary activities were collected from the Grand National Assembly’s online archives based on two samples of randomly selected legislative proceedings from the pre- and postreform periods. I first extracted the dates of the legislative proceedings and then assigned numbers to each legislative day. Using a random sampling method of a statistical program, I then selected a total of 70 full days of legislative proceedings (35 from each period) between December 2009 and July 2013. The resulting sample indicates that non-TWTs (i.e., Monday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday) constituted 62% of the sample. Also, 56% of the legislative activities in the sample (1,051/1,880) came from non-TWTs.

Information about regional and political characteristics such as district magnitude and the number of seats won by each party per electoral province come from the Turkish Statistical Institute. The first sample includes parliamentary activities from randomly selected proceedings that were held before the restriction of TV cameras in 2011. The second sample consists of a similar number of parliamentary speeches and questions from randomly selected proceedings in the postreform period.

TABLE 1  
Mean Values of Variables in the Pre- and Postreform Periods

Variables	Prereform	Postreform
Constituency-Oriented Activities	0.198	0.195
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	0.33	0.52
Seniority	51	52
Electoral Safety	1.51	1.48
Localness	0.83	0.55
Education	3.63	3.66
Female	0.05	0.07
District Magnitude	9.05	11.9
AKP	0.16	0.14
MHP	0.52	0.31
Hard Issues	0.43	0.53
Parliamentary Questions	0.12	0.46

Analyzing constituency-oriented behavior in both periods increases our confidence in our empirical approach. In particular, if the hypothesized differences between days of the week were present even before the intervention (e.g., the restriction of TV cameras), then this would raise major concerns in regards to the hypothesized effect of legislative television on constituency-oriented behavior.

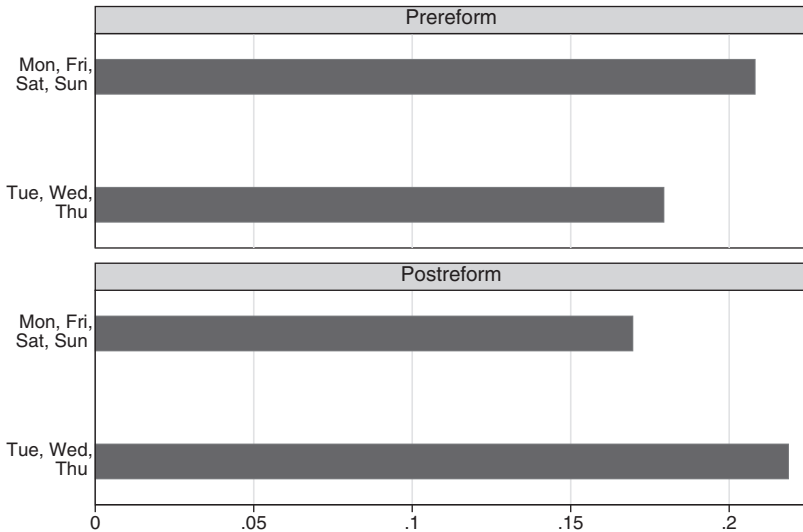
Balance across treatment constitutes a key component of our research design; it is of particular importance to minimize the effect of potentially confounding factors on the outcome variable. In the context of this study, one needs to ensure that the characteristics of MPs and policy issues are uncorrelated with the treatment, as failing to do so may result in spurious relationships. Table 1 presents the mean values of the dependent and independent variables for the pre- and postreform periods. For instance, the mean values of the electoral safety scores from the pre- and postreform periods were 1.51 and 1.48, the average age of the MPs who served in the pre- and postreform periods was 51 and 52, respectively. Of the 1,885 parliamentary speeches and questions, 1,085 came from the postchange period, roughly half of which was from the televised legislative proceedings. In both periods, the constituency-related activities constitute around 20% of all the parliamentary activities. A closer look at the data reveals that neither of the variables differed greatly between the pre- and postreform periods (see Tables 1–3 in the online supporting

information). In fact, there are important political similarities between the pre- and postreform periods. To name a few, all three major parties—AKP, CHP, and MHP—won similar numbers of parliamentary seats in the 2007 and 2011 elections, and AKP was the ruling party in both periods. More detailed information about the pre- and postchange periods and legislative proceedings can be found in the online supporting information.

A team of two researchers participated in the coding process, after receiving an intense training to ensure high intercoder reliability (see the online supporting information). The coders first determined whether the performed parliamentary activities were related to MPs' regional constituency. In order for an activity to be constituency-oriented, it should mention MP's electoral district or the organizations and events that are known to have taken place in the province. The coders then assigned a topic category to each parliamentary activity using the codebook of the Turkish Policy Agendas Project (Bulut and Yildirim 2019).<sup>2</sup> Finally, these assigned topics were recoded as "hard," "soft," or "neutral" following Bäck, Debus, and Müller's (2014) issue classification.

I estimate a series of logistic regression models that predict constituency focus in legislative proceedings, where robust standard errors are clustered by MPs. Parliamentary activities related to MP's regional constituency were coded as 1, and 0 otherwise. The main variable of interest is TWTs, a dichotomous variable indicating the proceedings that were held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and its interaction with MP's electoral safety and seniority. The second set of variables refers to political characteristics such as party identification and electoral safety. Party identification is operationalized in the form of dichotomous variables, whereas electoral safety is calculated by subtracting the MP's party rank at which he or she is placed in an electoral province from the total number of seats his or her party obtained in that province in the previous election. As an example, if an MP is placed at the fourth rank in a province where the MP's party obtained 5 seats, then the electoral safety of the MP is 1. The longer the distance between MP's rank and the number of seats his or her party won in the previous election, the safer the MP is.<sup>3</sup> MP seniority is a continuous variable that measures the age of the MP at the time of her election. Lastly, I control for education, gender, district magnitude, and the type (i.e., parliamentary questions) and content (i.e., "hard issues") of parliamentary activity. Parliamentary questions, hard issues, and gender

FIGURE 1  
Distribution of Constituency-Oriented Activities (Mean Values)  
across Days of the Week in the Pre- and Postreform Periods



TV days before the reform: All days  
TV days after the reform: Tue, Wed, Thu

are dichotomous variables, whereas education and district magnitude are continuous. It is important to note that the variation in gender and education is very limited, as the great majority of the representatives are male and university graduates. Tables 1–3 in the online supporting information present the summary statistics.

Before reporting the results from empirical models, I present the distribution of constituency-oriented activities across days of the week in the pre- and postreform periods. Note that all the sessions were televised prior to the reform, where the legislators had presumably no incentive to make strategic choices about taking the floor on particular days of the week. As is evident from Figure 1, the majority of constituency-oriented activities in the prereform sample were undertaken on Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, whereas constituency focus appears to have shifted to the televised sessions (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday) in the postreform period. Although the difference-in-differences between TWTs/non-TWTs in the two time periods is not gigantic in substantive terms, the figure lends initial support to the

TABLE 2  
 Determinants of Constituency-Oriented Behavior Before and  
 After the Restriction of TV Cameras to 3 Days per Week

	Prereform Sample	Prereform Sample	Postreform Sample	Postreform Sample
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
TWTs (Tue, Wed, Thu)	-0.121 (0.206)	0.915 (1.955)	0.354* (0.199)	4.457*** (1.620)
Seniority	-0.0136 (0.0295)	0.0228 (0.0363)	0.0280 (0.0184)	0.0659** (0.0290)
Electoral Safety	0.00553 (0.0524)	0.0104 (0.110)	-0.142*** (0.0521)	0.189* (0.103)
Seniority × TWTs		-0.0234 (0.0384)		-0.0737*** (0.0285)
Electoral Safety × TWTs		0.0615 (0.0870)		-0.266*** (0.0875)
AKP		1.261** (0.622)		-1.312* (0.672)
MHP		0.569 (0.349)		-0.318 (0.310)
Born in Constituency		0.265*** (0.0719)		0.353 (0.331)
District Magnitude		-0.0768 (0.0601)		-0.0429 (0.0274)
Education		-0.132 (0.141)		-0.658*** (0.179)
Female		0.871 (0.678)		-0.343 (0.535)
Hard Issues		-1.192*** (0.325)		-0.975*** (0.178)
Parl. Questions		1.619*** (0.346)		0.772*** (0.216)
Constant	-0.650 (1.561)	-2.102 (1.848)	-2.851*** (0.968)	-2.272 (1.895)
Pseudo $R^2$	0.002	0.1435	0.0231	0.1341
Log Likelihood	-367.76	-315.61	-446.01	-395.09
Observations	732	732	903	902

Note. Robust standard errors (clustered by MPs) in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

hypothesis that the varying presence of TV cameras in the parliament altered the strategic calculations of MPs regarding their constituency-oriented parliamentary activities.

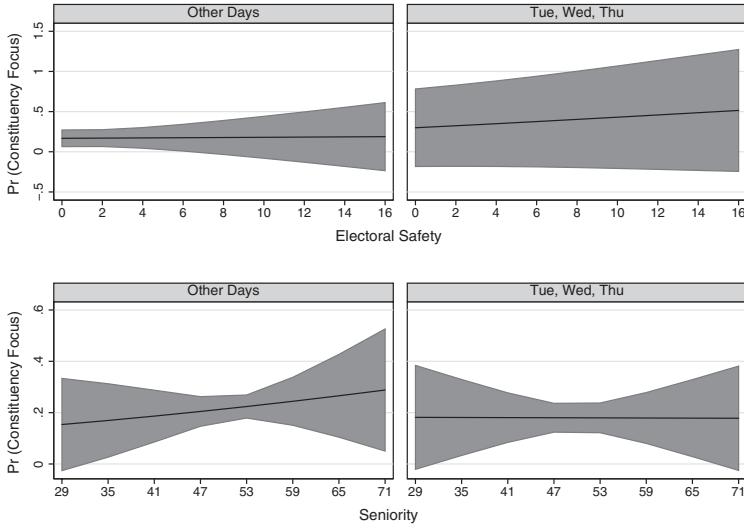
## Results

For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in both the pre- and postreform periods as “TWTs” throughout this section. I will begin my empirical analysis by exploring potential differences in parliamentary behavior between TWTs and the other days of the week in the prereform period and then replicate the models based on the postreform sample. This research design will increase our confidence in attributing any differences in constituency-oriented behavior between the pre- and postreform periods to the restriction of legislative television to 3 days (i.e., TWTs).

The results are presented in Table 2. The findings obtained from logistic regressions in Models 1 and 2 clearly show that there is no difference in constituency-oriented behavior between TWTs and the other days of the week in the prereform period. In other words, the amount of constituency work undertaken by MPs did not differ between TWTs and other days prior to the restriction of the legislative TV. In particular, it is clearly shown in the table that the effect of seniority and electoral safety on constituency-oriented behavior in the parliament does not vary with TWTs, a finding that strengthens the credibility of the quasi-experimental design.

Models 3 and 4 paint a quite different picture of the constituency-oriented behavior in the proceedings that were held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays (TWTs). Remember that the legislative television was restricted to 3 days per week (TWTs) in 2011, whereas all other proceedings held on Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays were not televised. Models 1 and 2 showed that prior to the reform, TWTs were no different than other days in terms of constituency focus, and I argue that the restriction of TV cameras to particular proceedings should lead some MPs to shift their constituency work to the televised proceedings. The findings presented in Models 3 and 4 lend strong support to this hypothesis. According to this, unlike in the prereform period, TWTs in the postreform period were positively associated with constituency-oriented behavior. That is, on average, the likelihood of a parliamentary statement or question being related to the regional constituency of the MP is higher in the proceedings with TV cameras. Yet, not every MP equally capitalizes on the presence of TV cameras in the legislative proceedings. As argued previously, the marginal utility of expressing

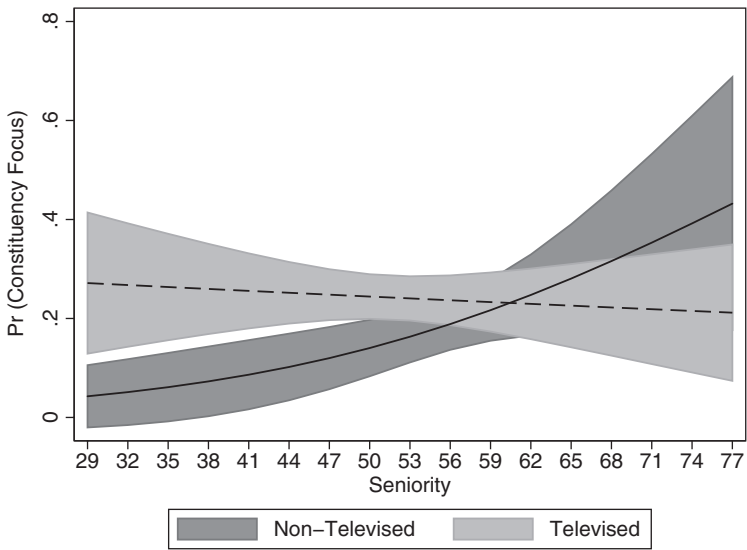
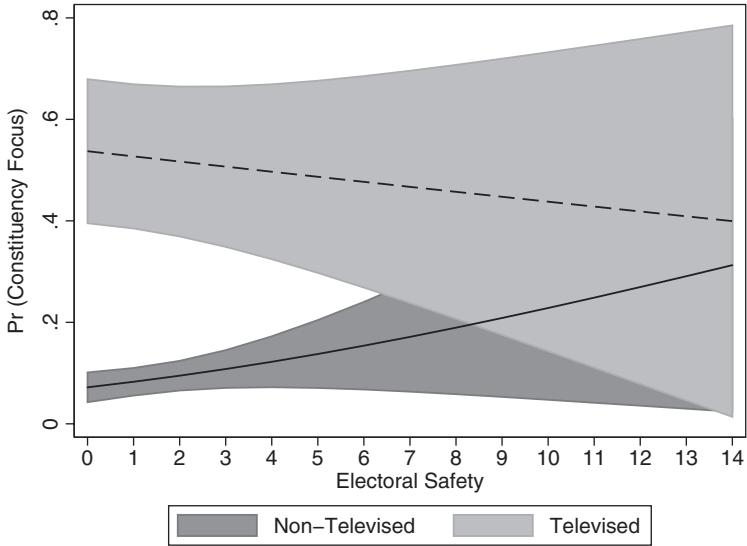
FIGURE 2  
The Effect of Electoral Safety and Seniority on Constituency-Oriented Behavior across Days of the Week (Prereform)



interest in constituency matters for representatives with well-established reputation and from safe districts is expected to be highly limited. In support of these hypotheses, the interaction terms in Model 4 indicate that electorally safe and senior MPs are less likely to bring constituency-related issues to the televised proceedings. Stated differently, the lower the safety and seniority are, the larger the effect of TV cameras on constituency-oriented behavior is. Additionally, the model shows that the variable parliamentary questions is positively associated with constituency focus and comes up statistically significant. Localness (born in constituency) is positively and district magnitude is negatively associated with constituency focus in the parliament, which is in line with the findings reported by past scholarship. More educated MPs are far less likely to focus on constituency matters, which is probably because the better educated MPs have an advantage over others in bringing more complex issues such as national defense, macroeconomy, and civil rights to the legislative proceedings.



FIGURE 3  
The Effect of Electoral Safety and Seniority on Constituency-Oriented Behavior (Postreform)



The interpretation of multiplicative interaction models that are designed to test conditional hypotheses is not always straightforward (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006); therefore, it is key to graphically illustrate the substantive and statistical significance of marginal changes in our explanatory variables. In addition to reporting the main results in Table 2, I present two graphs that illustrate how electoral safety and seniority interact with TWTs to alter the constituency-oriented behavior in the pre- and postreform periods. For clarity, significant differences in the predicted probability of constituency focus across the range of observed values of electoral safety and seniority between Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and other days of the week in the postreform period, but not the prereform period, will bring us to the conclusion that legislative television had significant impact on the strategic calculations of the MPs. Figure 2 shows that the constituency focus in the proceedings on TWTs and the other days of the week was not statistically different in the prereform period. On the contrary, it is evident from the upper part of Figure 3 (i.e., change in electoral safety) that confidence intervals of televised and nontelevised legislative proceedings do not overlap until about the value of 7 on the x-axis (electoral safety). The confidence intervals also show that there is heterogeneity across legislators. The statistical significance disappears after the middle of the x-axis, indicating that the constituency focus of electorally safer MPs does not differ between the televised and nontelevised proceedings. Stated differently, MPs who were placed at a safe rank in the party list found little to no strategic value in performing constituency-oriented activities in the televised proceedings. MPs with unsafe party ranks, on the other hand, were motivated to shift their constituency focus to the televised proceedings.

A similar trend is observed for the effect of seniority on constituency-oriented behavior in the postreform period. The bottom part of Figure 3 demonstrates that junior MPs focus their attention on constituency-related issues in the televised proceedings, a trend that starts to disappear as seniority increases. Similar to the constituency focus of electorally safe MPs, the constituency-oriented behavior among senior MPs was unaffected by the presence of TV cameras in the proceedings. Although the evidence of interaction is not very strong, it supports the idea that the motivation of “reputation-building” among MPs decreases with seniority, and this should have consequences for legislative behavior (Shomer 2009).

TABLE 3  
The Effect of Reform in Legislative TV on Constituency-Oriented Behavior

	Combined Sample		Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun		Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun		Tue, Wed, Thu		Tue, Wed, Thu	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 9	Model 10	Model 9	Model 10
Postreform Period	-0.294 (0.182)	-0.155 (0.234)	-0.599** (0.268)	-0.539* (0.311)	0.0318 (0.203)	0.306 (0.277)				
Seniority		0.00498 (0.0144)		0.0244 (0.0214)		-0.0145 (0.0159)				
Electoral Safety		0.0198 (0.0561)		-0.0264 (0.0766)		0.105* (0.0555)				
AKP		0.152 (0.412)		0.523 (0.495)		-0.596 (0.511)				
MHP		-0.142 (0.241)		-0.201 (0.304)		-0.0642 (0.279)				
Born in Constituency		0.0661 (0.247)		0.141 (0.333)		-0.0300 (0.296)				
District Magnitude		-0.0436** (0.0214)		-0.0113 (0.0283)		-0.0832*** (0.0261)				
Education		-0.295** (0.145)		-0.252 (0.166)		-0.475*** (0.165)				
Female		0.197 (0.589)		0.653 (0.578)		-0.304 (0.585)				
Hard Issues	-1.142*** (0.144)	-1.063*** (0.151)	-1.131*** (0.219)	-1.052*** (0.235)	-1.096*** (0.214)	-1.044*** (0.220)				
Parl. Questions	1.016*** (0.183)	1.029*** (0.221)	1.237*** (0.275)	1.228*** (0.316)	0.856*** (0.209)	0.878*** (0.255)				

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3  
(continued)

	Combined Sample		Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun		Mon, Fri, Sat, Sun		Tue, Wed, Thu		Tue, Wed, Thu	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 9	Model 10	Model 9	Model 10
Constant	-1.169*** (0.152)	-0.0165 (0.995)	-1.113*** (0.193)	-1.473 (1.271)	-1.335*** (0.169)	1.827 (1.127)	-1.335*** (0.169)	1.827 (1.127)	-1.335*** (0.169)	1.827 (1.127)
Pseudo $R^2$	0.0877	0.0931	0.1046	0.0978	0.0726	0.1141	0.0726	0.1141	0.0726	0.1141
Log Likelihood	-845.34	-747.99	-454.61	-408.7	-388.11	-328.72	-388.11	-328.72	-388.11	-328.72
Observations	1,860	1,634	1,040	925	820	709	820	709	820	709

Note. Robust standard errors (clustered by MPs) in parentheses.

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

The empirical analyses so far explored the effect of legislative television on individual MPs' constituency focus but did not address how the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week affected the total amount of constituency work undertaken by representatives, which is normatively important for geographical representation in the parliament. For instance, the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week in 2011 may have minimized MPs' motivation to do constituency work during the proceedings without TV cameras. If this is the case, three possibilities arise: First, we may observe reductions in the total amount of constituency work after the reform. Second, compared with the proceedings that were held on TWTs in the prereform period, constituency focus during the TWT proceedings in the postreform period may be more likely. Finally, compared with the proceedings that were held on Mondays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays in the prereform period, constituency focus during the proceedings that were held on these days after the reform may be less likely, as the TV cameras were removed from those days after the reform. Using both the pre- and postreform samples, I estimated new models to explore these possibilities. However, it is important to proceed with caution in interpreting the results obtained from these models, as there may be various unobserved factors that could explain the over-time variance in the total amount of constituency focus. Still, a comparison of the pre- and postreform periods may advance our understanding of the normative implications that come from the restriction of TV cameras in legislatures.

The results based on a series of logistic regression models are reported in Table 3. While the first two models utilize the combined sample, Models 7 through 10 predict the effect of reform on constituency focus in the proceedings that were held on particular days (e.g., TWTs in the prereform period vs. TWTs in the postreform period), and therefore make use of split samples. The variable *postreform period* carries a negative sign, and it is not statistically significant at any conventional significance level in the first two models, although it is very close to achieving statistical significance at  $p < 0.10$  in Model 5. Models 7 and 8 compare the constituency focus on the days other than TWTs in the pre- and postreform periods and reveal that constituency-oriented behavior was significantly less likely in the proceedings held on Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in the postreform period ( $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.10$ ), compared with the same days of the prereform period. That is, there is somewhat strong correlation

between the reduction in constituency work on Monday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and the removal of the TV cameras from these days. Comparing the differences in constituency focus between the TWTs of the pre- and postreform periods, the final set of models shows that constituency-oriented behavior was more likely on the TWTs of the postreform period, although this association does not achieve statistical significance at any conventional level. A cautious interpretation of these results suggests that while the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week did not lead to significant changes in the total amount of constituency work after the reform, the constituency focus on non-TWTs in the postreform period was significantly lower, compared with the same days of the prereform period. However, explaining the over-time variation in constituency work requires a more comprehensive attempt, which goes beyond the scope of this study.

Taken together, empirical analyses presented here show that the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week led to varying levels of constituency focus across the days of the week and encouraged particular MPs to express interest in constituency matters more frequently during the proceedings with TV cameras. In particular, the results revealed that electorally safe MPs and senior MPs had much lower motivation than other MPs to engage in constituency matters during the televised proceedings. These results lend strong support to my hypotheses and demonstrate how the restriction of legislative television to particular proceedings alters the parliamentary behavior of representatives in significant ways.

## Discussion

Legislative television has become widespread across a broad range of countries in the past few decades. However, the impact of legislative television on representatives' strategic behavior in legislatures has received scant academic attention. Capitalizing on a unique characteristic of the legislative television in Turkey, where TV cameras in the parliament were restricted to 3 days per week in 2011 after the continuous 7-day operation for almost 2 decades, this study constitutes a significant improvement over a research design that compares parliamentary behavior before and after the introduction of legislative television.

Past scholarship has focused extensively on advanced democracies and candidate-centered systems, where the link between

regional constituencies and representatives is arguably stronger, and candidates are encouraged to develop personal vote-earning attributes. Consequently, Turkey constitutes a least likely case to test the effect of legislative television on constituency-oriented behavior, where the closed-list PR system leaves little room for individualized parliamentary activities. Yet, the present study finds evidence that MPs capitalized on the varying presence of TV cameras in the parliament and altered their parliamentary behavior strategically, shifting their constituency-related activities to the televised proceedings. Moreover, this study shows that the effect of TV cameras on constituency-oriented behavior is conditional on electoral safety and seniority, as the removal of TV cameras from some legislative proceedings does not mean much for those who are well-accomplished and who have relatively little career ambition.

It is worth pausing at this point to ask the “so what” question in regards to the role of legislative cameras in parliament. Has the introduction of legislative television improved the work of legislators? What are the normative implications of the restriction of TV cameras to 3 days per week? When asked about the importance of legislative television at a conference organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Broadcasting Union, and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments in 2006, the representatives of legislative televisions from both nascent and advanced democracies underscored the importance of legislative transparency and reached a consensus over the benefits of broadcasting legislative debates. Still, many argued that there are some adverse effects associated with the televised legislative debates. For instance, as an answer to the question as to whether the introduction of legislative television has improved the quality of legislative debates, Terry Murphy of C-SPAN said that it is very likely to see grandstanders in legislatures whenever there is a television camera (Interparlamentaria Union 2006). The findings presented in this research do not imply that the introduction of TV cameras had an adverse effect on the quality of legislative debates in Turkey or elsewhere. However, they imply that partially televised proceedings may be less desirable than proceedings that are fully televised or not televised at all, as legislators seem to alter their behavior based on the varying presence of TV cameras in the parliament.

The varying presence of TV cameras in legislatures has other implications as well. For one thing, from the agenda-setting perspective, too much attention to constituency matters may prevent some important issues from entering the political agenda on the days with TV cameras. One consequence of such a scenario would be the concentration of macro-level political discussions (e.g., health care, foreign policy, education reform, etc.) in the proceedings without TV cameras. Therefore, the varying presence of TV cameras in the parliament may alter the political agenda artificially by discouraging the discussions of national political issues in the proceedings with TV cameras. In turn, this may harm the efforts to drag uninterested citizens to macro politics, as representatives will be less inclined to focus on national issues in the televised proceedings.

The findings presented in this study also have implications for the study of electoral systems and intraparty politics. An increasing number of studies indicate that personalized parliamentary activities are not of little importance in systems where the careers of legislators are determined by leaders and executive members of political parties (Fernandes, Leston-Bandeira, and Schwemmer 2017; Louwse and Otjes 2016; Yildirim, Kocapinar, and Ecevit 2017), and such initiatives as the restriction of TV cameras in legislative proceedings may further complicate the link between parliamentary performance and electoral success in these systems. Ciftci and Yildirim's (2017) analysis of Turkish parliamentarians points out that MPs choose to engage in different types of constituency-oriented activities (e.g., lobbying for local investment, asking constituency-oriented parliamentary questions) based on their visibility to the party and to the constituency. Therefore, changing institutional incentives such as the change in legislative TV allowance may alter the way MPs perceive constituency roles and responsiveness to the party leadership in list PR systems.

The empirical findings derived from the analysis of the Turkish parliament, which is arguably a least likely case for testing the effect of legislative television on constituency-oriented behavior, imply that this is hardly unique to Turkey. Further investigation of the factors that may potentially play an intervening role will prove useful in exploring the politics of representation in different contexts.



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## NOTES

1. Both oral and written questions are asked orally in the parliament, although written questions must be answered with written statements.
2. More information about the codebook can be found at [www.comparativeagendas.net](http://www.comparativeagendas.net).
3. One may argue that MP seniority and electoral safety are closely related. The pairwise correlation between these two variables shows that there is no significant association between seniority and electoral safety.

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### **Supporting Information**

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's website:

Table A1. Descriptive Statistics (Postreform Only)

Table A2. Descriptive Statistics (Prereform Only)

Table A3. Descriptive Statistics (Combined Sample)