

The Stability of Party Power in Turkey after President Erdogan's Victory in the 2023 Elections

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Abstract

The present research aims to identify the impact of Erdogan's victory on the basic budgets in Turkey and its impact on the opposition parties and the strength of the opposition, as well as on the Turkish economy, as the economic factor played a significant and influential role in the results of the Turkish elections, which led to the rise of the Justice and Development Party with Erdogan's victory. This party has an effect on the political and democratic process in the country. Thus, the investigation includes two axes: the first, political parties in Turkey, and the second, the Turkish elections in 2023 AD.

Introduction

Turkey is one of the most important parliamentary countries with a multi-party scheme, which witnesses a strong presence of its political parties. This research aimed to study the stability of party power in Turkey. The research adopted the nature of political parties in Turkey, whether parliamentary parties or non-parliamentary parties. At the end of the research, the authenticity of the elections and the rise of the Justice and Development Party to power were reviewed, as well as how Erdogan faced the party opposition.

Investigation Problem

Will Erdogan's victory imitate the balance of party forces in Turkey?

Can the opposition party forces control Erdogan's success and his party's rise in the elections?

Research procedure

We adopted the descriptive method in the research in order to study, analyze and describe the case.

Research Postulate

Erdogan's victory in the 2023 elections will lead to various changes in the balance of party power in Turkey, which in turn will affect democracy on the one hand and the economy on the other hand.

Objectives

The research goals can be formulated as follows:

The influence of Erdogan's victory on political balance in Turkey

The impact of Erdogan's victory on opposition parties and opposition powers

The impact of Erdogan's success on the Turkish economy.

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The First Request: the Act of Political Parties in Turkey

The world began to observe a new phase of developments in various scientific fields at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and Turkey was one of those countries. At that time, the Turkish government was using Islam to familiarize leftist theses. Parties are essential in the policies of authoritarian governments and democracies, even though democracies have more political parties than authoritarian regimes, given that countries with authoritarian regimes have one party. A political party is described as (an expression of a specific social reality that includes men united in thought and action) . Regarding party life in Turkey, the number of parties in it is 122 political parties divided into parties characterized in the Turkish parliament and others not parliamentary. Accordingly, the Turkish parliament contains five major political parties, which are as follows:

First: Justice and Development Party

Second: Republican People's Party (center-left)

Third: Peoples' Democratic Party (center-left)

Fourth: Nationalist Movement Party

Fifth: Good Party (center-right)

As for the non-parliamentary parties, they are:

First: The Future Party

Second: The Democracy and Progress Party (Centre - Centre-Right)

Third: The Turkish Workers' Party (Left - Far Left)

First: The Justice and Development Party: It is supportive first to draw a brief picture of the current Islamic situation in Turkey and how it went through stages of development over the last decades until it reached its final form in the Justice and Development Party, the ruling party in Turkey today. Before the 2002 elections, this party was in the configuration of alliances between segments of the Turkish Islamic movement and its various formations and groups and segments of Turkish centrist parties that went through different stages of changes, transformations, and splits with different trends .

From a political and ideological standpoint, the Justice and Development Party does not identify itself as an Islamic party but distances itself from everything understood and interpreted as a party with an Islamic program. On the contrary, it emphasizes faithful secularism by educating the slogan of conservative democracy .

During the first election campaign of the Justice and Development Party, it functioned to achieve all the plans and programs it had set, and what it did not achieve, it worked to achieve in the second or third presidential term because the programs were not set just to be praised in front of the people, but rather to develop projects on the ground and become achievements that every Turkish citizen is proud of .

As for the political and economic circumstances that Turkey went through before establishing the Justice and Development Party, they helped improve its chances of winning the first parliamentary elections in 2002. It was able to change Turkey's face during its continuous journey in power due to its achievements in different political, economic, and social fields. On the external level, it also educated Turkey's regional standing and influenced global politics .

The debate has always turned around the identity of this party, which was able to reach power a year after its establishment and remain in power for fifteen years alone. The Justice and Development Party claimed

to adopt the new Turkey and were able to make many alterations in Turkish politics during the fifteen years. It seized many crises, including the 2007 presidential crisis, the electronic memorandum statement, and the attempted coup on July 15, 2016.

The Justice and Development Party have also functioned to support popular democratic movements in the Middle East and North African countries during the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011. The Justice and Development Party have confirmed its will to integrate with the region's countries and work to solve the Kurdish problem. It has also worked to direct a comprehensive, multi-layered, civilized discourse that merges the Ottoman past and the Republic's challenges in domestic and foreign policy.

In the post-2013 elections, the Justice and Development Party has worked to give urgency to the policy of struggle while working to demand the protection and deepening of the democratic reforms and gains it had previously achieved (Mansoor and Wijaksana, 2023). Thus, the Justice and Development Party supported that it would continue its struggle in every field against threats and attacks against Turkey due to global and regional changes and that it would work to make Turkey an important player in global politics.

Second: The Republican People's Party (center-left)

The Republican People's Party is one of the major opposition parties in Turkey. It heads the substantial municipalities in Turkey (Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir). The Republican People's Party has worked to strengthen its central position in Alevi politics.

The Republican People's Party is the oldest radical party in Turkey. It describes itself as a social democratic party and is devoted to the principles and values of the Turkish republican institution. With the transition of Turkey to the period of one-party regime, the party announced a new name for itself (the Republican People's Party). Then, it became the leading political organization in the country despite its confrontation with the opponent parties (the Progressive Republican Party and the Liberal Republican Party). The essential philosophies of the party are populism, republicanism, nationalism, and secularism. 1935, socialism and revolution were added, making the party's principles six .

After the emergence of the Justice and Development Party, the Republican People's Party began to occupy second position in the election results lists after it was the first party as the first ruling party in Turkey and took its turn moving during its career between power and opposition, as it lost the elections to the Democratic Party in 1950 and remained in the opposition until 1960 .

Despite the tension in the association between the Republican People's Party and the Justice and Development Party, it stood against the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016 and what is the Republican People's Party also had some of its representatives participate in the session held by the Turkish Parliament on the night of the coup challenge, while it was being bombed by the coup plotters' aircraft. The Republican People's Party's position was not restrained to condemning the coup attempt but instead considered the removal of officers and soldiers from the ranks of the Turkish army in the failed coup attempt to be a natural matter. It pointed out that seeking to alter the constitutional system and overthrow the government through a coup is a crime under Turkish law .

As for the strengths of the Republican Party, it occupies the second place on the list of Turkish parties, after the Justice and Development Party, and it has the devotion of many economic elites. However, it has maintained its electoral base, especially in the western areas and major cities. On the other hand, as for its weaknesses regarding its political and electoral development agenda, it has yet to convince citizens outside its ideological electoral base. What is taken from the party leadership is that it demands to be more convincing in updating its programs and visions and has yet to make an effort to convince citizens. This is in addition to the weakness of the services the party's governments provided during its duration in power, the increase in corruption cases, and the monopolization of service benefits by the upper classes .

The party has a semi-fixed popular base, and the party headship formed a political bloc with multiple intellectual trends that enabled it to overcome national isolation. On the other hand, the party undergoes

from ethnic classification that limits the expansion of its popular base, and its positions at the local and external levels do not match its size. The party's popularity has weakened due to its leadership's efforts to attract outcast groups from society and those with extremist ideas.

Third: The Peoples' Democratic Party

The People's Democratic Party was originated on October 15, 2012. The mainstream of the party's members are Turkish Kurds. It is a leftist party and is based on the belief that Turkish society is ethnically diverse. The party presents itself as a party for all sectors of Turkish society. It stresses that it does not denote a specific identity or ethnicity and denies that it is a Kurdish party.

The party represents primarily the oppressed and marginalized and all elements of Turkish society, regardless of their religious beliefs, cultural and political orientations, and also minorities. The party aims to struggle exploitation and discrimination and provide a decent life for society. The People's Democratic Party cooperated with the Peace Democratic Party in the 2014 Turkish municipal determinations. The Peace Democratic Party participated in the Kurdish-majority extents, while the People's Democratic Party participated in the rest of the country. After the elections, the two parties' ranks were controlled into a joint structure. The People's Democratic Party believes that the leading cause of the instability in the province is Turkey's intransigence in standing against the Syrian regime. This instability would not have happened if Turkey had worked in cooperation and diplomacy.

Fourth: The Nationalist Movement Party

It is a right-wing nationalist political party that denotes the nationalist idea in Turkey. It is an extension of the nationalist movement led by Alp Arslan Turkish. It was founded in 1969. The Party opposed some constitutional modifications, including granting cultural rights to the Kurds. It worked to oppose lifting the death penalty and presenting to the European Union. On the other hand, it began working to maintain the Justice and Development Party in the constitutional amendments referendum in 2017. It declared its support for Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the presidential elections.

Throughout its history, the Party has stayed committed to its political positions related to Turkish identity, national pride, and its policy of opposing its country's accession to the European Union. On the external level, the Party has conveyed its satisfaction with its country's military intervention in neighboring countries (Iraq and Syria) in order to fight separatist factions. The Nationalist Movement Party has a position declining the presence of Syrian refugees in Turkey, and the Party has stressed that the presence of Syrian refugees in Turkey has dramatically harmed Turkey and its security and people .

The Party has a semi-fixed popular base that assigns its identity and political orientations, which constitutes one of the most prominent strengths of the Party. On the other hand, it has demonstrated its ability to maintain its electoral bloc and works to overcome the repercussions of the split its founder, the Good Party, was exposed to. On the other hand, the Party realized its alliance with the governing Justice and Development Party to survive, maintain its widespread presence, and work to preserve the interests of its members .

The first weakness of the Party was considered by the old age of its president and his adherence to leadership. In addition to the differences in political places and the nature of the relationship with the ruling Justice and Development Party, and in addition to the dominance of national discourse at the expense of the national discourse, which in turn negatively affects the equal citizenship rights of the rest of the components of the Turkish people, and in general, before the formation of the People's Alliance in February 2018, the Nationalist Movement Party was among the opposition parties. However, it was the Party closest to the Justice and Development Party despite its assessment of the ruling Party .

Fifth: The Good Party

It is a new earthy nationalist party founded in 2017 after most members were from the Nationalist Movement Party. The Party assumed a hardline position on the presence of Syrian refugees in Turkey and the political system. So, little information and background enable us to generalize its size and identify its most prominent figures because the Party is newly formed. The Republican People's Party bloc cooperated a role in forming the Good Party to enable it to participate in the elections despite the recent formation of the Party. The Party's future depends on the party leader's ability to allocate with her team and her relationship with other parties .

As for the non-parliamentary parties, they are:

1- The Future Party

The Future Party is a new party founded in 2021 by previous Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. It is an opposition party and an applicant to play a role in opposition alliances. The Future Party refuses to allocate with the issue of the presence of Syrians in a racist manner and is the most sensitive party to this issue .

The positions adopted by the Future Party as an opposition party can perform an influential role within a potential opposition alliance in which the party is present. However, it is impossible to risk on this role's size and effectiveness without a clear popular base until 2022, as the Republican People's Party and the Good Party are the most prominent opposition parties in this potential alliance. They approve on the need to talk or negotiate with the Syrian regime .

Second: The Democracy and Progress Party (Centre-Right)

It is a new party founded in 2020. The party mainly agrees with the Future Party in terms of the necessity of dealing with Syrians in Turkey in a humane manner, far from discrimination and racism. However, it varies from the issue of talking to the Syrian regime. The party stressed the need of strengthening integration in the places where Syrians and Turks live and working to stay away from racist campaigns. The party's founder, President Bayajan, considers that a political solution alone can contribute to Syrians' voluntary and safe return to their country .

Third: The Turkish Workers' Party

It is a new party founded in 2020. The party largely agrees with the Future Party in terms of the need of dealing with Syrians in Turkey in a humane manner, far from discrimination and racism. However, it differs from the issue of conversation to the Syrian regime. The party emphasized on the necessity of strengthening integration in the places where Syrians and Turks live and working to stay away from racist campaigns. The party's founder, President Bayajan, considers that a political solution alone can contribute to Syrians' voluntary and safe return to their country.

Section Two

Turkish Elections 2023

Primarily, elections are an administrative, political process organized by rules that allow citizens to run for public office and hold public jobs. The electoral system can be expressed as a set of mechanisms used to convert voters' votes into corresponding seats in elected bodies through specific rules influenced by the social, political, and economic reality in which the country lives .

The electoral system is a necessity for democratic alteration and is the basis for the process of reform and change. Turkey has witnessed several electoral schemes that contributed to the process of transformation in the political system. In the fifties of the last century, the proportional electoral system altered the council

system with the rule of one party and the proportional electoral system by adopting the Hondt method, which led to weak coalition governments.

In general, the choice of the electoral system must be made consciously because it is directly or indirectly reflected in the decisions of political actors in controlling the form of the electoral system followed.

In elections in Turkey, the president was chosen through parliament before the constitutional amendments of 2007. It was through straightforward vote that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan became the first directly elected president according to this amendment in 2014. Since the modifications of 2017 and the transformation of the system into a presidential system, the president has had broader powers than he had previously, as the people directly elected him.

The general elections were understood on June 24, 2018, and represented a transition for the country from a parliamentary system to a presidential system. The elections ensued in the victory of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. At the same time, the ruling Justice and Development Party evaded the absolute majority, forcing it to rely on its ally, the Nationalist Movement Party.

The 2018 parliamentary and presidential elections are essential for two reasons: the first is to legitimize the new system through the victory of the Justice and Development Party and its ally, the Nationalist Movement Party, and the second is due to Erdogan's desire to gain popular support in his favor in order to pursue his project and shift to the presidential system. These elections reflected many styles, the most important of which is the political polarization in society compared to the 2002 Parliament, composed of the Justice and Development Party, and the 2018 Parliament, which consists of 5 parties. The second trend is the weakening in the votes of the Justice and Development Party voters compared to what was previously in the 2011 elections. The Justice and Development Party moved to its peak in votes by obtaining 21 million votes, at a rate of 49.8%, until it obtained 42% of the votes in the 2018 elections. The third trend is the advent of the Nationalist Movement Party after the Justice and Development Party relied on it in the 2017 referendum, hoping to pass the constitutional amendments and ensure a parliamentary majority and Erdogan's victory. In the presidency in 2018, this provided the Nationalist Movement Party a degree of political influence much more significant than its representation in parliament because its cadres easily conformed to the deeply rooted authoritarian traditions of the bureaucracy .

On the other hand, the 2019 municipal elections presented how the new system influenced the development of new electoral dynamics. In these elections, the opposition worked to merge its efforts to win the significant municipalities by agreeing to vote for the CHP candidates and to work to overthrow Erdogan's efforts to exploit the mass mobilization in favor of his party and preparation for the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2023 .

The parties began to function on forming party blocs, the leaders of each of which would work on participating in the elections. The first of these alliances was the People's Party alliance, which contained the Justice and Development Party and the Nationalist Movement Party, which had maintained its stability since the previous elections. The alliance of these parties began to acquire into close, multi-faceted relations and understandings that suggested an alliance and continuity even after the elections. The second alliance was not as clear in terms of its political prospect or organizational structure, and it included six opposition parties (the Republican People's Party, the main opposition party, the Good Party, the Democratic Party, and the Future Party). These six parties worked to hold regular monthly meetings, but the problem with these parties was that they needed to explain who would take over the government if they won the elections. They also disagreed on the policies their electoral agenda would carry, and they needed to carry a detailed vision for working towards the transition to a parliamentary system .

The third alliance is the Labor and Freedom Alliance, declared in late September 2022 and consists of six Kurdish and leftist parties (the People's Democratic Party, the Turkish Workers' Party, the Labor Party, the Social Freedom Party, and the Labor Movement). This alliance, no matter how many parties it has, will not be an essential influence in determining the nature of the political role of the Peoples' Democratic Party,

and this, in turn, determines the future position of the Peoples' Democratic Party and also its ability to continue and influence the country's political orientations .

The map of the distribution of polls for political parties suggests that the People's Alliance enjoys a clear parliamentary majority and may lose this majority and that the Justice and Development Party's share of the votes began to observe a tangible improvement in the last three months before the elections. There is no dispute that Erdogan and his party's fortunes is hostage to Turkey's economic condition, especially after the Turkish lira lost about 40% of its value from mid-2021 to mid-2022. Despite Turkey's achievement in avoiding economic recession, the Turkish economy was still standing on fragile ground at the time. President Erdogan was employing tremendous pressure on the Turkish Central Bank to reduce interest rates .

It must be noticed that Erdogan's success in the elections is due to using economic factors as significant and influential factors in the results of the Turkish elections. In light of Turkey's complex modern background, we can see the significant inspiration of the economic situation. Most big cities suffer economically and support for the Justice and Development Party's competitors. In contrast, those outside the big cities elected for Erdogan, believing he had a role in strengthening the economy . Another aspect that contributed to strengthening Erdogan's victory is the concern of fragmentation. This issue enabled Erdogan to exploit this fragmentation to keep a gap between the city and the countryside. This fragmentation makes both parties work to begin hostile relations that go beyond the complexities of Turkish fragmentation, the dispute between Islamists and secularists, or, on the other hand, the dispute between city dwellers and rural residents .

On the other hand, it is necessary to point out the character of the opposition political parties. With the establishment of the latest opposition political parties, which were expected to influence these parties on the percentage of votes that the Justice and Development Party and the forces allied with it would obtain, there were serious attempts by the opposition political parties to work on forming an electoral alliance or at least working on unifying the opposition's positions in order to win voters in Turkey, as the six opposition parties from the right-wing and left-wing forces worked to unify their political discourse in order to pressure the public alliance (the Republican People's Party, the Good Party, the Future Party, the Justice and Development Party, the Democracy Party, the Felicity Party and the Democratic Party. The rapprochement of these parties was named the six-party opposition.

The summits of the heads of the opposition were ongoing to prepare a joint working paper between the heads of the six political parties to choose a joint candidate for the President of the Republic for the elections. Despite the rapprochement between these opposition parties, they faced various criticisms due to the differences in the parties' ideologies among themselves.

The opposition political parties in Turkey used several approaches. To reach power, it worked to hold large demonstrations to attract Turkish citizens to it on the one hand and, on the other hand, to weaken and coup the Justice and Development Party and its candidate in the elections. On the other hand, the opposition parties started to highlight Turkey's economic crisis and the Turkish lira's decline. The opposition parties displayed that the main reason behind this is the ruling party's poor management of the country's affairs. On the other hand, the opposition political parties used the matter of refugees, mainly Syrians and Afghans, whose numbers exceeded one million refugees. This led to the emergence of economic and social difficulties within Turkish society. Despite all these approaches and tactics used by the opposition parties to weaken the role of the Justice and Development Party, it was able to win public opinion, succeed in the elections, and ascend to power.

Conclusion and Inferences

As it is recognized that Turkey is one of the countries with multi-party parliamentary systems, it is evident that these political parties have an impact on the political and democratic process in the country. Erdogan's victory and his party's growth to power worked to strengthen his influence in the executive and legislative authorities. Erdogan's victory in the elections was evidence of popular assistance for his party. Despite the

victory of the Justice and Development Party, the influence of the opposition forces continues and has a character in the political arena. This likely means oversight and criticism to maintain balance and improve the political system. From an economic point of view, Erdogan's victory in the elections may lead to strength in the markets and the economic situation and increase confidence in the private sector.

In conclusion, the future of President Erdogan after endearing the 2023 elections depends on how he deals with the increasing challenges and confrontation by the opposition forces and, on the other hand, on Erdogan's ability and ability to meet the requirements of the Turkish people and his ability to solve issues related to the country, the economy, and society. The main conclusions are:

1- Strengthening the dominant party's power: Erdogan's victory in the elections will strengthen his party's power and political position, affecting the balance of power between other political parties in the country.

2- Reducing political opportunities for the opposition: Erdogan's victory has decreased political opportunities for opposition parties, affecting the balance of party power and reducing political competitiveness in the country.

3- Impact on the economy and international associations: Erdogan's victory affects the Turkish economy and international relations.

4- Change in political dynamics: Erdogan's victory may produce a change in political dynamics in Turkey, which in turn affects the balance of party power on the one hand and, on the other hand, opens the door to new scenarios for alliances and political orientations.

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