

The Study and Analysis of the Grand National Assembly Elections of Turkey 2002 – 2011

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

As a Muslim state with a democratically elected national parliament and a political process having admitted and internalized special scope of differences of opinions, Turkey is a suitable place for the assessment of spatial dynamics and convergence of aforementioned relations through electoral geography research. In 2002, untimely elections of Turkish parliament were held in the wake of protest against the senility of the prime minister of the time that led to the resignation of over the half of the MPs. In these elections, the newly founded AKP party became victorious. After the soft coup of Turkish army against Islamist government of Necmettin Erbakan in 28 February 1998 and his resignation known as postmodern coup, AKP party under Receb Tayyip Erdogan which is a branch of Welfare and Virtue Party could get the command of power in Turkey in 2002.

2. Theoretical Framework

"Analysis of overt manifestations of elections and political strategies amongst dynamics of the world of economy" is one of the ways to study electoral elections. By this definition, electoral geography studies the patterns of political elections applied in the structural limits of local knowledge and experience of global forces. Electoral geographers attempt to explain how national and global processes in regional and local spatial location intervene to identify "special regional districts of elections" and analyze "the geography of political responses". Geographers collectively maintain that the voters are simultaneously influenced by the thorough scope of materialist, social and religious experiences, and study the manners in which the reasons converge in different ways and in different places with different historical backgrounds. Moreover, they consider this as important to analyze the

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patterns of political elections which are in turn the determinant of such issues as the combination of national, regional, and local assemblies.

3. Research Method

From the perspective of methodology, the current study is descriptive-analytic and the method of obtaining data and information is based on the study of available books, articles, and publications in Persian, English, and Turkish. Also, the statistics regarding the elections are obtained by referring to Turkey's Supreme Election Headquarters portal.

4. Findings and Discussions

Politically, the government in Turkey is parliamentary republic and ideologically, it is secular. There are several types of elections such as parliamentary elections, presidential elections, and municipal elections. Parliamentary elections are held every four years to elect 550 members of the parliament by direct votings of people. According to the current electoral system in Turkey, a party should obtain 10 percent of the national votes to win the required seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. An untimely election in Turkey in 2002 which is interpreted as the political quake or so-called as "Public Coup by Ballot Boxes" was the onset of the formation of a one-party authoritarian system after 42 years. In this election, AKP quite recently could establish the state with the majority of votes. Lack of trust of voters in coalition government and fluctuation of the parties away from their responsibilities were among the factors affecting the results of the elections in favor of AKP in that run. In this run of elections, AKP achieved the majority of votes from 53 provinces from central and Northern provinces and some parts of the southern provinces. The election of 2007 was held in precocious time due to the dissolution of the cabinet by Erdogan. The reason for that was the annulment of the votes for the representative of the ruling party by the court constitution to run for the 11th Presidential Election. In this election, AKP was victorious and it could achieve the controlling command of the government, parliament and presidency. The election of 2011 was indicative of the decisive triumph of AKP and the development of secularism. This party could delimit the power of bueacracy which was the ruling power for half a century. Moderative policy of AKP, reconstructing Islamic Identity, domestic reforms, successful foreign policy, economic performance, strengthening of new non-state actors in Turkish political arena, the decline of Kamalist ideology and raising identity crisis in Turkey, and finally the non-corrupt personel of APK party were all the reasons affecting the continuity of its ruling power until 2011.

5. Conclusion

The formation of three regional blocs and the reduction of parties in Turkish Parliament makes one decide that the elections between the years 2002-2011 could be ascribed as "Critical Elections". The three regional blocs specified in the Electoral Geography of Turkey refer to the probable gaps in the Turkish politics. The first

probable gap is the issue of religion. The inhabitants of the coastal provinces voted for CHP just because they thought religions should be kept and practiced as personal. The people living in the central inland provinces voted for AKP just because they thought they should support religion as a factor playing role in people's social life. The second probable gap might be the gap between the Kurd and the Turk peoples. This is more prevalent in the south-eastern provinces within which Kurdish parties were far successful. The third probable gap is between the regions supporting long-lasting parties in office and regions supporting the new parties or the ones with the slightest opportunities. This is more salient especially where the differences between coastal and inland regions matter. The investigation of above-mentioned parliamentary elections indicates that AKP could establish a one-party government without coalition with other parties. In the three runs, AKP could gain the majority of votes in central Anatolia and regions neighboring the Black Sea. CHP could win the majority votes of the western regions of Marmara, Aegean Sea, and Mediterranean Sea which are mainly industrial places. Kurdish parties also could attain more supporters in the eastern and south-eastern regions.

Keywords: Turkey, Parliamentary elections, the barrage of 10 percent, Regional gap, AKP.

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