



**Conservative Globalism at the
Crossroads: The Justice and
Development Party and the Thorny
Path to Democratic Consolidation in
Turkey**

by Ziya Öniş

Outline

- Democratic consolidation and democratic deficits
- Conservative Globalism
- The continuous electoral success of the AKP from 2002-2011; explanations and problems
- Recent developments (opinion polls, elections)

Democratic consolidation and democratic deficits – the debate

- Turkey as a role model for consolidation between Islam and democracy? (Islamization vs. democratization or both or..?)
- How does the AKP manage to integrate Islam in society and what consequences does it have for the secularist system in Turkey?
- Is it undemocratic that the ruling party is (so) explicit in their religious orientation?
- Is (genuine) secularism a necessity for democracy?
- What constitutes a “true” democracy and in what ways do Turkey (allegedly) differ?
- Religiously? Politically? Constitutionally? Institutional –wise with the army for instance?

AKP on democratization

From AKP’s website as an integrated party of their official party programme:

“Taking as a basis the principles pertaining to the democratization of the Copenhagen Criteria which constitute the minimum standards to which members of the European Union must conform, amendments which must be made in our national judicial system shall be carried out in the shortest possible time”
<http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme>

Democratic consolidation and democratic deficits

According to Öniş:

- Turkey as most successful example of democratic consolidation
- Turkish democracy fundamentally transformed over past decade – largely due to its Europeanization process
- AKP’s “conservative globalism” as a fruitful synthesis of the global and the local
- AKP’s post 2002-experience is perhaps the closest case so far to “liberal Islam”
- However, still mane challenges and need for reform

Conservative Globalism

- Increasingly inadequate to divide Turkish political parties between left/right or centre/periphery – rather:

Conservative Globalists/Defensive Nationalists

Conservative Globalism:

- “...a favorable attitude towards engagement with global markets, democratization reforms and progress towards EU membership...” (p. 22)*
- “...a defense of traditional values and appeals to the conservative instincts of large segments of voters, cutting across traditional class divisions in society...” (p. 22)*

The continuous success of the AKP

Party	Votes	%	Seats
Justice and Development Party (AKP)	21,399,082	49.8 (46,6) (34,3)	327 (341) (360)
Republican People's Party (CHP)	11,155,972	26.0 (20,9) (19,4)	135 (99) (190)
Nationalist Action Party (MHP)	5,585,513	13.0 (14,3) (8,4)	53 (70) (0)
Independents	2,819,917	6.6 (5,2)	35 (26) (15)
Felicity Party (SP)	543,454	1.3	0
Others	1,437,825	3.3	0

Source: <http://electionresources.org/tr/>

Seats in Parliament

Party name	1999 elections	2002 elections	2007 elections	2011 elections
AKP - Justice and Development Party	59	360	341	327
CHP - Peoples Republican Party	3	190	89 (there were 112, but 13 members passed to DHP)	135
MHP - National Movement Party	104	0	50	53
DP - Democratic Left Party	58	0	13 (there were none, but 13 members left CHP and passed to DHP)	0
ANAP - Motherland Party	71	0	0 (quit before elections)	0
BBP - True Path Party	81	0	0 (entered as DP)	0
DTP - Democratic Society Party (pro-Kurdish)	n/a	n/a	21 (there were none, but 21 independents passed to this party)	0
BSP - Grand Unity Party (far right)	n/a	n/a	1 (a deputy changed into this party after elections)	0
ODP - Freedom and Support Party	n/a	n/a	1 (a deputy changed into this party after elections)	0
TP - Turkey Party	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
YTP - New Turkey Party	58	0	n/a	0
SP - Felicity Party	46	0	n/a	0
Independents	10	15	36 (many passed to DTP at the beginning)	35

(Source: <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/parti.htm>)

The continuous success of the AKP

- Underlying dynamics

- Economic growth
- Increased social justice through redistribution
- Large electoral appeal due to "wide" representation as a reformist party (traditional values no obstacle)
- No effective opposition (opposition as politics of fear)
- Resurgence of nationalism from 2005-2007 (esp. against top-down interventions) → punish nationalist parties both left/right
- Positive engagement with the Kurdish problem → Kurdish support
- AKP's adaptability and pragmatism (leadership delegation)

The continuous success of the AKP, *Problems?*

- Decline in reformist orientation
- Further polarization of Turkish society
- Islamization of society? Headscarf ban etc.
→ Closure case against AKP problematic!
- Democratic deficit with regards to the
 - one-dimensional democracy with absence of European-style social democratic party
 - focus on regime stabilization rather than democratization
 - Continuous influential role of military

The headscarf issue

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement 'wearing a headscarf (Turban in Turkish language) at universities should be banned'?

Agree strongly	15 %
Agree somewhat	7 %
Disagree somewhat	14 %
Disagree strongly	58 %
Don't know/Refusal	6 %
Total agree	22 %
Total disagree	72 %

Recent developments

Article by Joshua W. Walker and Emiliano Alessandri in GMF October 10th - referring to the Arab Spring:

"In a country where democratization (with all its persistent shortcomings) has been led by Islamic elites for a decade, Turkey's leaders have recently prioritized Muslim solidarity and kinship over democratic solidarity when developing ties with local actors." (p. 2)

"The Turkish model is still very much in the making. Plans to reform the Turkish Constitution, which dates back to the 1980s when the country was under military rule, will be a test for the consolidation of this model. Likewise will be progress in media freedom, gender equality, protection of minorities, and more broadly the rule of law. When debating Turkey, therefore, Western countries should focus on domestic developments more than foreign policy." (p. 3)

http://www.gmf.us.org/galleries/et_publication_attachments/Alessandri_Walker_MEStakeholder_Oct11.pdf

Transatlantic Trends 2011: http://www.gmf.us.org/publications_TT/TTS2011_Toplines.pdf

Transatlantic Trends 2010: <http://www.flad.nl/documents/1316529937R9qZ4br5Y94JO1.pdf> (p. 23)

Opinion Polls on EU membership

Q: Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the European Union – Turkish answer:

Very favorable	8 %
Somewhat favorable	31 %
Somewhat unfavorable	21 %
Very unfavorable	32 %
Don't know/Refusal	8 %
Total favorable	39 %
Total unfavorable	53 %

Opinion Polls on EU membership

Q: Can you tell me if the relations between Turkey and the EU are good, bad, or mixed that is, good in some respects and bad in others?

Good	25 %
Bad	35 %
Mixed	32 %
Don't know/Refusal	8 %

Opinion Polls on EU membership

From "Transatlantic Trends 2010":

The decline in support for the country's European Union membership is even more dramatic. In 2004, 73% of the Turkish public said membership would be a good thing, but the support dropped to 38% by 2010. This lack of enthusiasm toward membership is matched by those already in the European Union. The French (49%) and Germans (44%) were the most likely to say that Turkey's EU membership would be a bad thing.
<http://www.fiad.pt/documentos/1316529937R9olZ4bz5Yr94JO1.pdf>

Conclusion

- Turkey's post 2002 AKP experience perhaps closest representation of "liberal Islam"
- Democratic consolidation mainly due to Europeanization process
- AKP as "Conservative Globalist" party able to balance between the global and local
- Several different explanations for AKP's continuous success →
Yet polarization, instability and anti-democratic tendencies
- Constitutional reform highly desirable (Önis) to safeguard democratic rights and responsibilities – on the way perhaps?
- Recent developments (Arab Spring, EU-relations etc.) might affect Turkey's international and domestic politics – in a democratic direction?