

Turkey 2014 Presidential Election

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The 2014 Turkish Presidential Election and the Rise of Erdoğan

The presidential elections were conducted on 10th August 2014. The elections were held to elect the 12th Turkish president (News, 2014). Whereby Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the incumbent prime minister, emerged as the winner with an absolute majority vote within the first round vote. Hence, this makes it unnecessary for the runoff to be scheduled on the 34th of August. Categorically, the election took place under the reforms done in the 2007 constitutional referendum. The constitution introduced a direct national vote instead of the previously used vote by the members of the parliament. Whereby approx. Fifty-five million voted both in Turkey and in the diaspora (Online, 2018).

To be precise, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's campaign involved a lot of pledges to the voters whereby he made grand promises unto them. He pledged to offer a new constitution presumably that would give executive powers to the presidency, hence to himself. However, this had to wait since he never had the majority in parliament as needed to enforce the so-called charter. Whoever, as a former prime minister, relied on a decade and, after that, wished to be the president over another decade would not enforce a new constitution to rule uncontested.

Henceforth, the constitution indicated that some legal experts had been given some adequate powers to do as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan wished. He arguably said that the Constitution does not limit the president's actions. Indeed, he wanted to be the main controller of everything, as he stated to the voters that the main difference is that the will acts accordingly, hence remaining a partisan leader. He actually pledged to forge prior a number of interesting developments, such as destroying Turkey's state and building the third Istanbul airport.

Electoral Rules, Campaign Timing, and the Role of the Supreme Electoral Council

As the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey is entitled to do, this institution declared that for the first round, the election campaign was to be conducted from 11th July to 9th August. It was during his campaign period that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan campaigned against two other candidates, which were all centered on the 2014 2013 December government corruption scandal, the Gezi Park Protest, the PKK rebel peace protest, and the Gaza conflict.

Additionally, it was on 1 July 2014 that the incumbent prime minister announced his presidential

candidacy in a speech that was 1 hour long. Although there was a lot of speculation that he could be the chosen candidate for APP, this was confirmed on that day as the log was also unveiled. The log brought about criticism in remembrance of the campaign logo used by Obama in the 2008 elections and even the Holiday Place logo. The logo was also claimed to have some features related to Arabic, as the print was said to be Prophet Muhammad's name, enlarging accusations over political and religious conflicts over the campaign. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan slogan stated that *Milli İrade, Milli Güç, Hedef 2023* (National determination, National Power, Objective 2023). Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (campaign had a slogan *Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Demokrasi, Refah, İtibar*) "Equality, Fortune and Reputation on the Path to a New-fangled Turkey."

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan campaign was dominated by electoral rallies, whereby during the start of Samsun around 5 July and the heading to Mimicking Mustafa Kemal, Ezrum Atatürk way, which was the first route during the Turkish independence war. Ideally, his speeches in all the rallies were subjected to the achievements he had made as the prime minister (Akkuş, 2018). He also attacked both the opposition and the Fethullah Gülen, the Hizmet movement leader who lived in Pennsylvania. In a rally he held at Hatary on 21 July, Erdoğan's speech blamed Israel for following Hitler's footsteps and blamed Gulen because he did not speak out presentably Gaza's Palestinians. At another rally at Kahramanmaraş on 1st August, he argued that the opposition had full support to the CHP on the experienced Gaza crisis.

Political Rallies, National Symbolism, and Campaign Controversy

In one of his rallies, in a car, Recep Erdoğan, his rival attacked him because he was purportedly mistaken the Independence March a national anthem of Turkey, for the composed poem regarding the Çanakkale fallen soldiers at the Gallipoli Campaign. During the rally he led on 1st August at Kahramanmaraş, he showed Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu video clip misleading the March independence.

However, in addition to the rallies he held, the AKP activist also engaged in a door-to-door campaign operation to look for support as he distributed clothing, food, and other necessities for the families. His campaigns had planned *iftar* tents during the Ramdhan period and delivered women's scarves and toys during the campaign rallies. His initiatives also made the government start massive distribution of free coal from 15 July 2015 to families living in Izmir. During the end of the campaign period (9th August), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that he had received donations of approx. 1,350,796 which added up to ₺55,260,798 i.e. approx. US\$25,560,037. However, this was seen to be a huge margin of donation in comparison to the other two candidates, hence resulting in fraud allegations and malpractices, as the opposition stated (Akkuş, 2018).

Generally, Politically, Recep Erdoğan was an ideal man who utilized opportunistic tactical claims against his opponents, hence winning the voters. As an incumbent, he used the mobilizations by using the powers and resources he had to win the voters. From his methodologies, one can be able to

recognize the technical support that he took advantage of the citizens at Izmir. He gave out help in food and other necessities in expectation in return regarding votes. Also, as a sitting prime minister, he had access to donations contributed by both national and international organizations and individuals with an expectation of interconnecting them with governmental affairs. Therefore, the Recep Erdoğan campaign shows an energetic move that was strategized to outdo the other two with massive differences over the type of offers he gave on the rallies plus the incitements he made. His motives engaged on the basic level that the common man would understand, hence creating a sympathetic platform of votes as the voters widely relied on what Recep Erdoğan as the fact, thus considering him as their only rescuer. More so, he said to make differences as a newly elected president so the citizens could see a closer president unto them.

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