



ANALYSIS OF THE FIGHT BETWEEN ISLAMISM AND SECULARISM IN THE TURKISH ELECTIONS: TWO DOMINANT CONFLICTING FORCES*

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Abstract

Turkey is the first Islamic country to officially adopt the principle of secularism, a significant change pioneered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The radical implementation of secularism separated religion from state affairs, triggering complex political and social dynamics between Pro-Islam and Pro-Secular groups. In recent decades, particularly under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has witnessed a resurgence of Islamic values in politics and public life. Erdoğan has succeeded in winning the hearts of the majority of the people through a narrative of Islamic-based national identity, economic development, and a populist approach, which has gradually shifted the dominance of secularism. This study aims to analyse the increasingly intense ideological struggle between Islamism and Secularism and to map contemporary political developments in Turkey. The method employed is library research, which involves examining various relevant academic and media sources. The results of this study offer a deeper understanding of the political and ideological dynamics in Turkey, as well as the impact of the conflict on domestic policies, Turkey's regional position, and the international community's response. Furthermore, this study also reveals how political contestation, mainly through elections, influences the national identity and social order of Turkish society today.

Keywords: Secularism; Islamism; Turkish Election; Islamic Revival

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A. INTRODUCTION

Turkey is one of the first Islamic countries that dares to adopt secularism. This is inseparable from the role of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the ratification of secularism. For Kemal, the interference of Islam in various public fields, including politics, has led to the decline of Islam.¹ Because Kemal compared it to the West, which dared to leave religion from the political field and carried out secularisation to give birth to a high civilisation, however, Islamism indeed cannot be separated from the lives of Turkish society.²

The forces of secularism and Islamism have shaped the history of modern Turkey. The relationship between these two forces was not always hostile, as there were periods of engagement and co-optation. It is therefore essential to understand the nature, origins, and evolution of these two powerful socio-political movements, with a focus on their historical context of emergence. Turkey, once regarded as one of the greatest Islamic dynasties in history, has experienced extraordinary ups and downs, as well as significant changes in its political policy, to this day.³

Looking at Turkey's history, elections have been an area of contention based on ideological tensions: Islamism and Secularism. Islamism refers to political movements that seek to implement Islamic values in a country's political and legal system. These movements are based on conservative or fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. Islamism has been a significant political force since the early 20th century.⁴ The Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is one example of a political party that adheres to Islamism in Turkey. Secularism refers to the separation of religion and state, where the state has no official religious affiliation and does not interfere in individual religious affairs. The principle of secularism in Turkey has been a source of conflict and political strife. Some Islamist groups consider secularism as a kind of threat to

¹ Dan Amin Husein Nasuti Muhammad Iqbal, "Pemikiran Politik Islam Dari Masa Klasik Hingga Indonesia Kontemporer," *Bandung: Kencana*, 2010.

² Adib Khairil Musthafa, "Sejarah Dan Tranformasi Politik Turki : Pergulatan Sekularisme Dan Islamisme" 10, no. 1 (2022).

³ Domo, Arrasyidin Akmal, A A Domo, (2018). *Sekularisme Attaturk, and Menuju Islamisme. "Revolusi Sosial Masyarakat Turki: Dari Sekularisme Attatur Menuju Islamisme Erdogan"* 15, no. 2 .

⁴ M Hakan Yavuz and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, "Southeast European and Black Sea Studies Turkish Secularism and Islam under the Reign of Erdoğan," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2019.1580828>.

Islamic identity and values, while most secular groups view it as an essential foundation for democracy and religious freedom.⁵

It is undeniable that, to date, the political tensions in Turkey are readily apparent.⁶ Recap: Tayyip Erdogan's defense in 2023 received the most votes in the presidential election.⁷ However, this election is not only about determining between secularism and political Islam. In this election, Erdogan faces Kemal Kilicdaroglu, an opponent who advocates for secularism and receives support from Western countries.⁸

Kilicdaroglu and Turkey's main opposition party have vowed to end Erdogan's authoritarian rule and return the country to democracy. The second round of the presidential election is seen as a referendum on the future of Turkey, which is at the crossroads of Europe and Asia.⁹ For now, Erdogan, a pro-Islamist leader, and Kilicdaroglu, a pro-Secularist leader, have different perspectives. The struggle between Islamism and Secularism has influenced Turkey's identity, and the debate over whether Turkey should be an Islamic or secular state continues to this day.¹⁰ This dynamic has a significant impact on Turkey's relations with the West, particularly with the European Union. As some see Turkey as a figurehead for Islamic countries seeking to adopt democracy, others are concerned about Turkey's increasingly Islamic policies.¹¹

B. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method, utilizing a literature review approach and library research. This method was chosen because it is suitable for studying complex, contextual, and historical ideological issues and political dynamics, such as the struggle between Islamism and Secularism in Turkey's elections. A qualitative approach enables researchers to understand phenomena in depth, based on the meanings, symbols, and narratives that emerge in society.

⁵ antaranews, 2023

⁶ Musthafa, "Sejarah Dan Tranformasi Politik Turki: Pergulatan Sekularisme Dan Islamisme."

⁷ antaranews, 2023

⁸ republika, 2023

⁹ republika.id.

¹⁰ Prakasa, M F, R Susilowati, and M Y Abror. (2022). "Pengaruh Partai Akp Melalui Konsep Strategic Depth Terhadap Keberhasilan Politik Islam Pada Kebijakan Luar Negeri Turki".

¹¹ Probo Darono Yakti, (2016). "Dinamika Dan Hambatan-Hambatan Turki Dalam Puluhan Tahun Proses Integrasi Pada Uni Eropa."

Through literature studies, researchers collect data from various relevant written sources, including academic books, scientific journals, news articles, official government documents, and reports from research institutions. This approach enables researchers to trace the historical roots of the conflict between Islamist and secular forces, and to examine how this conflict affects the dynamics of elections and the broader political landscape in Turkey. Thus, this method provides a strong theoretical and analytical foundation in understanding the struggle between the two dominant forces. The use of a literature approach also provides flexibility in conducting a critical analysis of various existing perspectives, thereby making the research results more comprehensive, objective, and rich in intellectual insight.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. History of the Decline of the Ottoman Dynasty

Every kingdom established and developed in the Islamic world experienced a phase of growth and development, reached a period of glory, and then underwent a phase of decline, ultimately leading to a phase of destruction. Likewise, what was experienced in the Ottoman Empire, which Usman colonised, underwent development during the time of Sultan Mehmed II, reaching its peak of glory under Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. However, it subsequently experienced a period of decline and destruction.¹²

Historians argue that the decline of the Ottoman Empire began with the death of Sultan Selim II (1566); since then, the Ottoman Empire has not had a sultan who could be relied upon. It is proven that in 1571 there was a battle between the Ottoman fleet and the Ottoman Empire led by Sultan Salim II with the Spanish fleet led by Don Juan in the Lipanto Strait (Greece), in which in that battle, the Ottoman fleet troops were repelled, causing many Ottoman soldiers to be captured and the Ottoman fleet ships were destroyed. So that with this defeat was the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman Empire which was previously known as the strongest and most respected navy in the world.¹³

In 1683, when the Ottoman Turks, under the auspices of Prime Minister Mustafa, attempted to besiege Vienna, their army was easily repelled by the

¹² Asmal May, (2006). "Peradaban Islamdalam Lintasan Sejarah," *Citra Harta Prima*.

¹³ L A L HAKIM, (2020). *Sejarah Jaringan Sekularisme Dalam Tubuh Kekhilafahan Turki Utsmani Pada Masa Sultan Abdul Hamid II Pada Tahun 1876-1909* M. http://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/id/eprint/12935%0Ahttp://digilib.uinkhas.ac.id/12935/1/LUQMAN_AL_HAKIM_U20164014.pdf.

combined forces of Germany and Poland. The defeat further weakened the Ottoman Turks. This condition forced the Ottoman Turks to agree to an agreement which was later called the Karlowitz peace agreement. Because of this agreement, the Ottoman Turks had to relinquish several areas they had conquered, including Salonica, Karawati, and Ukraine.¹⁴ Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk initiated efforts to restructure the country. He adopted the principles of secularism as a key part of his vision of modernisation. In the early decades of the Republic, secular institutions were established, and religion was removed from the public sphere. However, since 2000, Islamist-based parties have begun to gain significant support in elections, reflecting a political shift in the country.¹⁵

2. Turkish Secularism and Islamism: Definitions and Context

Turkey is a country that has a long history of secularism and Islamism. Secularism is a belief that separates worldly affairs from religion. Terminologically, Holyoke defines the word secularism as a belief that separates religion from all aspects of life, which in itself gives rise to separation.¹⁶ In the Turkish context, secularism was first introduced in 1928 through the constitutional amendment of 1924, which removed the provision stating that “the state religion is Islam.” and was later restored by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who regulated all administrative and political requirements for the creation of a modern, democratic, secular state in line with that which Kemal Atatürk had established.¹⁷ The principle of Turkish secularism emphasises the separation of state and religion, and Atatürk, as the President of Turkey, sought to establish secularism as a fundamental principle. The modernisation of the country, along with progressive ideas, not only encompasses political and governmental life, but also impacts the social and cultural environment of society, which is still dominated by superstition, dogma, and ignorance.¹⁸ Islamism is a political ideology that believes that Islam must be applied in social, political, and economic life. Islamism emphasises the importance of implementing Islamic law,

¹⁴ Domo, Arrasyidin Akmal, A A Domo, (2018). *Sekularisme Attaturk, and Menuju Islamisme*. “Revolusi Sosial Masyarakat Turki: Dari Sekularisme Attatur Menuju Islamisme Erdogan” 15, no. 2.

¹⁵ Yavuz, M Hakan, and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk. (2019). “Sekularisme Turki Dan Islam Di Bawah Pemerintahan Erdogan” 3857. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2019.1580828>.

¹⁶ B A B Ii, “903100109-Syafaat Arifulhuda-2013 Post-Islamisme, Turki Dan Sekularisme,” 2013, 26–66.

¹⁷ bülent Daver, “Secularism In Turkey,” 2019.

¹⁸ CNN, “Mengenal Turki Dan Sekularisme Uniknya,” 2021.

political unity, comprehensive Islamism, and the selective elimination of non-Islamic influences from the Muslim world, primarily political, social, and economic systems and Western culture in particular that are considered incompatible with Islamic values.¹⁹ Islamism in Türkiye emerged in the 1970s with the rise of the Milli Görüş Hareketi (MGH) movement. In the Turkish context, Islamism covers the issues of Islam, democracy, and also stands in its context and reality.²⁰

3. Elections as a Battlefield

The election in Turkey is an ideological battle involving political parties with different ideologies. One of the Islamist parties, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, won the election with 46.7% of the vote in 2018. Erdogan himself was re-elected as president of Türkiye in 2023 with 52.14% of the vote in the last round of the election.²¹ Türkiye has implemented a closed-list variant of the proportional representation (PR) election system with a 10% threshold.²² The victory of the AKP Party in Türkiye, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has a significant impact on Turkish society. Here are some of the effects of the victory of the Islamist Party in Türkiye:

1. Ideological change. The victory of the AKP Party in Turkish elections has sparked significant concerns among supporters of secularism, who fear that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership signals a shift away from the country's long-standing secular foundations toward a more Islamic-oriented ideology. Erdoğan's policies and political rhetoric are often viewed as efforts to Islamize public institutions and social norms gradually. However, from a different perspective, the AKP's success is also seen as a democratic acknowledgment of the political aspirations and identity of the Islamist segments of society. It reflects the growing

¹⁹ Daniel Atzori, "Understanding Islamism," *Islamism and Globalisation in Jordan*, no. March (2018): 37–53, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315743592-3>.

²⁰ Hareketi Mgh and Muhammad Khalis Ibrahim, (2002). "[Turkish Islamism At a Crossroads : An Analysis of the History and Development of Milli Görüş Hareketi (Mgh) (1970-2002)] Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Milli Görüş," 104–20.

²¹ KumparanNews, "Mengapa Erdogan Selalu Menang Dalam Pemilu Turki?," 2023, <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/mengapa-erdogan-selalu-menang-dalam-pemilu-turki-20VI5Tuk8Xu?ref=login>.

²² amalia Salabi, (2017). "Belajar Dari Sistem Pemilu Dan Efektivitas Pemerintahan Turki," <https://perludem.org/2017/02/03/belajar-dari-sistem-pemilu-dan-efektivitas-pemerintahan-turki/>.

influence and legitimacy of religiously conservative groups who have long felt marginalised in Türkiye's political landscape.²³

2. Conflict with minority groups. One of the minority groups that often becomes the center of attention in Turkish politics is the Kurdish community. The Kurds are an ethnic group with a distinct language, culture, and identity, primarily residing in southeastern Turkey. However, their political status has long been a subject of debate and controversy. Historically, the Turkish state has denied the recognition of Kurdish identity, language, and cultural rights, leading to tensions and prolonged conflict. Although the Kurds are technically Turkish citizens, many feel excluded from full participation in national life due to discriminatory policies. Their struggle for recognition, autonomy, and equality continues to shape domestic and regional political dynamics.²⁴
3. Changes in the government system. The victory of the AKP Party in the 2002 general elections marked the beginning of significant changes in Turkey's political landscape. Under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the government gradually shifted from a parliamentary system to a presidential system. This transformation, officially implemented following a constitutional referendum in 2017, granted the president broader executive powers, including authority over the judiciary and the ability to issue decrees. These changes sparked debates about democratic backsliding and the centralisation of power.²⁵
4. Changes in International Relations. The victory of the AKP Party marked a turning point in Türkiye's international relations. Under Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership, the country began to shift its foreign policy orientation by strengthening diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with various Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and beyond. In addition, Türkiye also displayed a growing tendency to foster closer relations with Russia, especially in areas such as defense cooperation,

²³ Domo, Arrasyidin Akmal, A A Domo, (2018). *Sekularisme Attaturk, and Menuju Islamisme*. "Revolusi Sosial Masyarakat Turki: Dari Sekularisme Attatur Menuju Islamisme Erdogan" 15, no. 2 .

²⁴ Indonesia CNN, "Siapakah Bangsa Kurdi Yang Tak Punya Negara Dan Ditolak Sana-Sini?," 2022, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20220926114706-120-852681/siapakah-bangsa-kurdi-yang-tak-punya-negara-dan-ditolak-sana-sini>.

²⁵ Yavuz, M Hakan, and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk. (2019). "Sekularisme Turki Dan Islam Di Bawah Pemerintahan Erdogan" 3857. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2019.1580828>.

energy, and regional diplomacy, signaling a diversification of its global partnerships beyond traditional Western allies.²⁶

Secular groups in Türkiye have varied reactions to the Islamic Party's victory in Türkiye, one of which is feeling threatened, which gives rise to concerns about the erosion of secularism in Türkiye.²⁷ They believe that the AKP Party and Erdogan are trying to turn Türkiye into an Islamic-based country and eliminate the principles of secularism adhered to by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Secularists in Türkiye often hold protests and demonstrations to express their dissatisfaction with the AKP Party government and demand protection of the values of secularism and freedom of speech.²⁸ The AKP's victory also led to increased polarisation among groups in Türkiye. Secular and Islamist groups are increasingly polarised and at odds with each other in political and social views.²⁹

4. Impact on Identity and Foreign Relations

In recent years, Turkey's identity has undergone many changes, especially under the AKP government. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government has moved Turkey's foreign policy towards Islamism and nationalism. As a country spanning two continents—Europe and Asia—Turkey faced numerous challenges when it joined the European Union. Additionally, the country's political system has evolved, with multiple regimes influencing the governance patterns. Turkey has used the "Made in Türkiye" label for its exports to standardise its brand and business identity in the international arena. Under Erdogan's leadership, national identity has played an important role in Turkey's foreign policy, especially about Turkey's relations with the Kurdish community.

Following the end of the Turkish War of Independence in 1923, ideas about Turkish national identity began to evolve, influenced by Western secularism. Since the founding of the Republic of Turkey, secularism has been

²⁶ Mgh and Ibrahim, "[Turkish Islamism At a Crossroads : An Analysis of the History and Development of Milli Görüş Hareketi (Mgh) (1970-2002)] Sejarah Dan Perkembangan Milli Görüş."

²⁷ Yuniarti, Desi, Syamzan Syukur, and Susmihara Susmihara. (2023). "Lahirnya Negara Islam Sekuler Turki Dan Ide Pembaharuan Mustafa Kemal." JURNAL ILMIAH FALSAFAH: Jurnal Kajian Filsafat, Teologi Dan Humaniora 9, no. 1 : 11–21. <https://doi.org/10.37567/jif.v9i1.1599>

²⁸ Savran Billahi, (2023). "Pemilu Turki, Pemilihan Muda, Dan Persoalan Yang Belum Selesai," <https://mediaindonesia.com/opini/582595/pemilu-turki-pemilih-muda-dan-persoalan-yang-belum-selesai>.

²⁹ Domo, Arrasyidin Akmal, A A Domo, (2018). Sekularisme Attaturk, and Menuju Islamisme. "Revolusi Sosial Masyarakat Turki : Dari Sekularisme Attatur Menuju Islamisme Erdogan" 15, no. 2 .

the country's central ideology. Those in power in the secular government supported Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principles as an established dogma, making the ideology the dominant national identity in Turkey at that time. One of the primary reasons was to implement an approach that would enhance the economy, society, and security of Turkey as a newly established nation. Many of the elites in the Kemal Atatürk era were educated in Europe during the late Ottoman Empire because the Ottoman government believed that the best and easiest way to solve the problems of a new nation that wanted to break away from the image of the Ottoman Empire was to study the secularisation and modernisation of European society.³⁰

Therefore, Turkey began to isolate itself from the Islamic world. Atatürk's government believed that by imitating the West, Turkey's economy and society could develop in a similar manner to those of the West. If necessary, Turkey would have greater power to fend off other Western powers, such as the Soviet Union. Therefore, Atatürk's government framed Turkey's national interests within the European model, which he viewed as the most progressive and effective means of achieving modernity and enhancing the country's national power and prestige. As a result, as Turkish national identity became more dominant, the West was more interested in portraying Turkish national identity as a "Kemalist" identity. However, Atatürk carried out identity changes that were akin to a "cultural lobotomy," and it is not surprising that these changes faced resistance at home due to the authoritarian nature of Atatürk's regime. Only the urban centers were affected by these identity reforms, while the countryside was largely unaffected.

One of the defining characteristics of the Kemalist identity is its strong emphasis on Turkish nationalism, which is closely intertwined with a strict interpretation of secularism. These two pillars were seen as essential foundations for advancing modernisation and shaping a new national identity in the early years of the Turkish Republic. Secularism, however, was not limited to the simple separation of religion and state; instead, it extended to the active suppression of religious influence in public life. Religious schools, institutions, and authorities—such as the ulama—were systematically dismantled or placed under state control to weaken their role in society. Kemalist reformers believed that Islamic traditions and institutions represented a backward and outdated framework for addressing Turkey's social, political, and economic challenges. Consequently, the abolition of the Islamic Caliphate in 1924 became a key symbol of this transformation. Under Kemalism, religious scholars were stripped of their

³⁰ Fajar Agus Riyadi, (2019). "The Dinamic National Identity in Turki".

political and social influence and reduced to mere spiritual figures, marking a dramatic shift in the role of religion in Turkish public life.³¹

Since 1924, Turkey has gradually become a secular state with a Kemalist identity. Since then, the dynamics of the country's identity have been shaped by both its pros and cons. Muslims opposed the Kemalist ideology because it was considered to limit religious freedom. This had numerous consequences, including the emergence of political Islam in the 1970s with the Milli Görüş Movement (National Outlook), the formation of the first National Order Party (MNP) by Necmettin Erbakan, and the establishment of the Independent Members of Parliament for the city of Konya. The Constitutional Court immediately dissolved the MNP because the party was not secular. The Milli Sellamet Partisi (MSP) party, founded in 1973, was disbanded following a military coup in 1980 and replaced by the Refah Partisi (RP). The Refah Party received support from those who felt left behind by Turkey's economic changes in the 1980s and 1990s.³²

Since the state has full religious authority, the ideology of Kemalist secularism continues to dominate Turkey. The state supervises religious education, religious practices, and mosque finances. The state also includes Imams in the list of people who must be paid by the state, and regulates the way of dressing in schools and workplaces, especially for women. According to the author, this Assertive secularism model is problematic because this Identity tries to control and manipulate the role of Islam in public policy and politics in the name of secularism while denying citizens who take Islam as an elemental force in their lives and their rights and opportunities to live by their beliefs. Furthermore, this model is paradoxical because it cannot fully control religion or religious institutions without violating the human rights of citizens. In other words, this model undermines constitutionalism and human rights by attempting to uphold its principles.

In Turkish politics, the dynamics of Turkish national identity have shown a significant shift, or can be described as a clash between secularism and Islamic fundamentalism. Adherents of change and democracy come from various backgrounds and ideologies. Everyone, including Islamic politicians, liberals, and conservatives, is united in pushing for greater freedom. The National Security Council (MGK) has long considered the possibility of the fall of the Turkish government to those who might implement Sharia as the greatest

³¹ Hakan M Yavuz, (2003). *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford University Press).

³² Ahmet Davutoglu, (2008). "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey* Vol. 10, no. No. 1.

threat to the integrity of the country. Therefore, the MGK feels entitled to limit constitutional rights, particularly the right to freedom of religion.³³

The AKP government significantly influenced Turkey's international policy. This is because Turkey's national identity has shifted from a Kemalist to a Neo-Ottoman identity since the Presidency of Ozal. However, this identity increased during the AKP period for several reasons, including the boredom of the majority of the Turkish people, who felt that the Kemalist government imposed state legitimacy without considering the fundamental rights of its people. Additionally, Turkey's entry into the European Union was seen as a means to maintain its independence. Since the AKP is officially a secular party operating within a secular state system that demonstrates a genuine commitment to constitutionalism, the AKP's victory represents a promising compromise between Islam and politics in Turkey. However, the party's stance in favor of Islam is evident. It allows it to utilize religious beliefs to garner support for its public policy positions as a guiding principle for its political actions.³⁴

D. CONCLUSION

The forces of secularism and Islamism have shaped the history of modern Turkey. The relationship between these two forces has not always been hostile, as there have been periods of engagement and co-optation. Looking at Turkish history, elections have been an area of contention based on ideological tensions: Islamism and Secularism. Islamism refers to political movements that aim to implement Islamic values within a country's political and legal systems. This movement is based on a conservative or fundamentalist interpretation of the Islamic religion. The Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is one example of a political party that adheres to Islamism in Turkey. Secularism refers to the separation of religion and state, where the state has no official religious affiliation and refrains from interfering in the spiritual affairs of individuals. The principle of secularism in Turkey has been a source of conflict and political strife, as exemplified by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who was Erdogan's rival in the 2023 Turkish Election.

Following the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) victory in Turkey, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, there have been significant and far-reaching impacts on Turkish society, politics, and international standing. The rise of this

³³ Gokhan Bacik, (2009), "Turkish-Israeli Relations after Davos: A View from Turkey," *Insight Turkey* 11.

³⁴ Davutoglu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007."

Islamist-oriented party marked a shift away from the strict secularism that had long dominated Turkish governance since the country's founding as a republic. One of the most notable effects is the ideological transformation within the state, where Islamic values began to play a more significant role in public life and policymaking. This ideological shift has also led to conflicts with minority groups, including secularists, religious minorities, and ethnic groups, who may feel marginalized or threatened by the growing influence of political Islam. Furthermore, the AKP's rule has brought about changes in the governmental system, including the transition from a parliamentary system to a presidential system, which has significantly expanded Erdoğan's powers. On the global stage, Turkey's foreign policy has undergone a shift, affecting its relations with Western countries, NATO, and its neighboring nations. These developments illustrate how the AKP's victory has reshaped not only domestic structures but also Turkey's role in the international community.

Under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's foreign policy has shifted significantly, reflecting a blend of Islamist ideology and rising nationalism. This transformation has influenced how Turkey positions itself on the global stage, particularly as a nation that uniquely bridges Europe and Asia. Erdogan's government has adopted a more assertive and independent foreign policy stance, often diverging from traditional Western alliances. One of the ongoing challenges in this context is Turkey's long-standing and complex relationship with the European Union, which has been hindered by political, cultural, and human rights issues. Domestically, the evolution of Turkey's political system, influenced by a series of regime changes, has centralized power and reshaped governance structures. Economically, the introduction of the "Made in Türkiye" branding signifies an effort to strengthen national pride and elevate Turkey's global economic identity. Furthermore, national identity has become a cornerstone of Erdogan's foreign policy, especially in relation to sensitive issues such as the Kurdish question, where domestic and cross-border security concerns intersect with ethnic and political tensions.

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