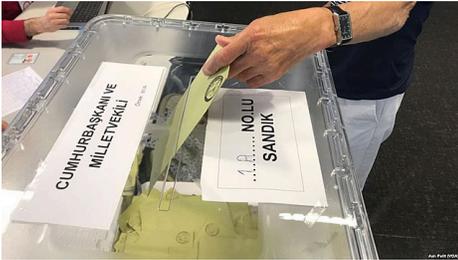


The pivotal elections in Turkey

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Voting in the 2018 Turkish Elections

Carilyn Pointer – Turkish citizens are going to the polls this month to determine the new president and parliament. This election is significant because it could determine if Turkey continues to move toward authoritarianism or becomes more democratic. The close election is between the current President Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu who represents the “Table of Six” party. By understanding the concept of ideological power, we can see how Erdogan has remained in power since 2014 and why he remains such a formidable candidate in this election.

Traditionally, Turkey’s government was parliamentary system until 2017, when Erdogan passed a referendum that expanded the President’s powers and abolished the role of a prime minister. This political move was important for expanding his own political motives and moving the nation towards a more authoritarian rule. Since that time, he has increasingly regulated social media and the press. These moves have been subtle and over enough time, that he has been able to convince the people to follow his political goals simply because that is “what is done.” This ability to have people readily accept your agenda without considering other options, is **ideological power**. Furthermore, those that do not accept the political goals are labeled as “radical” or “unrealistic.” The thousands of people a year that get investigated by the government for “insulting” the President or spreading misinformation are a perfect example of this. As a result, there is much fear and anxiety in standing out because people want to avoid being a social outcast or receiving jail time.

Though ideological power is critical to a leader’s success, material power can be another effective means to gain support. **Material power** looks at tangible things to define

power. Strong military, economy or education system are examples of common forms of material power. In the context of Erdogan’s campaign, he has used the resources from his position of power to incentivize his supporters. In a sense he is “buying” their support through economic appeasements such as tax relief and energy subsidies. Both types of power are important and using them in conjunction makes a leader very strong and an intimidating candidate to contend with.

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