

The Paradigm of Justice and Development of Governance and the Possibility of Transferring the Experience to Egypt

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Abstract

The research examines the context within which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) emerged into leadership in Turkey by going back to 1923 right after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Kamal Ataturk declared Turkey a republic. The research reviews the role of the military in the Turkish political system and how it interacted with, and was affected by, regional and international developments including Turkey's standing regionally and internationally. The research also examines the development of the Islamic political parties in Turkey, the challenges they faced, including the series of military coups the republic faced leading up to the establishment of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its coming to power in 2002.

On the other side, the study examines the experience of political Islam in Egypt since the founding of the Moslem Brotherhood in 1928 and through the establishment of the Freedom and Justice Party in 2011 which came to power in 2012. The study also reviews the role of the military establishment in the Egyptian political system and its increased influence throughout the change-over of the Egypt's leadership, culminating to its complete domination after the 2013 coup.

The research began with several assumptions: that it is possible for Egypt and particularly the Moslem Brotherhood to benefit from the Turkish experience pertaining to the rise to power of the Justice and Development Party, while keeping in mind the specificity of the Egyptian context; that benefitting from the Turkish experience which developed gradually, would require that the Moslem Brotherhood draw up a comprehensive plan for an alternative political system in the Egyptian context. This would require development of the Moslem Brotherhood's thought, program and internal organization that would be in line with the reality in Egypt, and take into account Egypt's standing regionally and internationally.

The main research question study addresses is whether it is possible to transfer the Turkish experience to Egypt by analyzing the similarities and differences between the two cases. By examining both cases, the research produced the following main outcomes: in light of the experience of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey and its ability to restore Turkey's power and its standing regionally and internationally by utilizing its Arab and Islamic strategic geographical depth, it is necessary for Egypt today to reformulate its strategic depth on the Arab, African and Islamic levels which would manifest its regional and international standing. This could be done by utilizing Egypt's sources of soft power and by establishing a civilian political system which would restore such a role and standing.

On the civil-military relations level, the main strategic objective which the Islamic and political parties should work towards is to reduce the dominance of the military in the political system to transform it to a political system controlled by civilians. Keeping in mind that achieving this objective could take years, it is necessary to begin preparing for such an outcome from today. While the Islamic movement in Turkey benefitted from a gradual process over decades which entailed changing its political name, agenda and goals, such a trajectory is not foreseeable within the current reality in Egypt. Consequently, such a transition is likely to be very difficult, and any alternative future for Egypt may have to remain a theoretical endeavor awaiting the opportune time to grasp the potential for its implementation with the least margin of error so as not to miss opportunities which may not occur again.