

# Political stability, economic stability and democracy

TÜSİAD has concentrated its research effort on the legal and institutional framework of a market economy during 1990s. Its publications dealing with electoral systems and medium-term stabilization policies reveal, the desire for political and economic stability. The impotent and shaky coalition governments made clear that the quest for political and economic stability should be reconsidered in a new frame of reference. A liberal economic system needs genuine democratic rules to strengthen its legal and institutional infrastructure.

## Political stability

The political stability ought to be the result of an election system that reflects the consensus of the politicians and public opinion. In the multiparty era the history of election systems started with the simple majority rule in 1946 which was replaced by proportional representation in 1960. After 1983, ever-changing types of proportional d'Hont systems with regional and national barriers ushered in an era of weak governments. The half-life of election systems has been shortened in the last decade in such a way that no two successive elections were held with the same rules. Turkey was unable to devise a consensus for an appropriate election system.

A TÜSİAD report commissioned to two respected academicians presented a general theory of election systems. The "Majoritarian Compromise" has the power to simulate all the election system varieties by referring to "second choices" of the voters. A more complete analysis of two-round election system was also published by TÜSİAD. But the truth of the matter is that no election system could ever create a stable government in a country, if that country lacks consensus over major

political choices. However, recent political surveys demonstrated that, "second choices" are surprisingly stable when the nature of the political regime is at stake.

Indeed, today the Turkish political system has no predominant political party. Parallel to the economic and social imbalances, Turkey has strong multi-cultural cleavages along different lines: secular/non secular, west/east, and the traditional right/left. Consequently, the political infrastructure for a multi-party, multi-voice pluralistic political system is fully present in Turkish society. On the other hand, the actual election system helped the islamist RP to be the dominant partner in a coalition government with DYP.

The conclusion is that the deepening of the Turkish democracy by the liberalization of the political system is a necessity. The promotion of individual and collective freedoms, the respect for human rights will nurture the building of a national consensus and appear to be the preconditions of political stability.

## Economic stability

For 6 years, TÜSİAD has advocated a medium-term stabilization program to establish economic stability. Several quarterly and annual TÜSİAD reports indicated that the day-to-day management of the economy should always closely monitor macro-economic imbalances to avoid further painful adjustment processes that seriously deteriorate the distribution of national income.

During the 1990-96 period, the strong cyclical fluctuations of the national income with high levels of budget deficits, kept the inflation rate at 60 percent with sporadic peaks at 90-120 percent in the last 3 years related to overproduction and foreign exchange crises.

The Governments should be able to adjust variables such as domestic and foreign debt stocks, instead of relying on their expansion to overcome short-term economic difficulties. The structural reform of the tax system, social security and privatization programs need to be supported by long-term efforts. Clearly, the economic stability depends heavily on the political stability.

### Democracy

TÜSİAD, in its 25 years of history has contributed to the promotion of a liberal economic system in a democratic society. Although, all the democratic institutions are in place and elections take place regularly, the relations among the legislative, executive and judiciary powers are not properly defined and the individual and collective freedoms are not fully guaranteed under the existing 1982 Constitution. The power of the state and

the central authority overrule the rights and freedoms of the ordinary citizen, put important limits on the respect of human rights, question the independence of the judiciary and finally endanger the secular structure of the state. The unresolved Kurdish issue,- with the exception of its terrorist dimension-, attests to the deficiencies of the Turkish democracy. The objective of joining the EU also calls for further progress in the issue of democratization. The new TÜSİAD initiative comes in this new context. A new report on “Democratization Perspectives in Turkey” undertakes a detailed analysis of the constitution to review the areas of possible improvements and to develop concrete proposals. To build a consensus and a spirit of dialogue in the country with the participation of all the non-governmental organizations appear to be the only way of making progress for a stable Turkish Democracy.

#### FIRST DEGREE FIRST CHOICES

The first choices of the voters, if the elections are being held now

	Welfare Party (RP)	Motherland Party (ANAP)	True Path Party (DYP)	Democratic Left P. (DSP)	Republican People P. (CHP)	Nationalist Mov. P. (MHP)	People's Democ. P. (HADEP)	Other	Total
FIRST CHOICES (%)	29.1	19.9	16.4	16.3	6.8	6.7	3.0	1.8	100.0

#### SECOND DEGREE SECOND CHOICES

The second choices of the voters with respect to their first choices, if the elections are being held now.

##### FIRST CHOICES

	Welfare Party (RP)	Motherland Party (ANAP)	True Path Party (DYP)	Democratic Left P. (DSP)	Republican People's P. (CHP)	Nationalist Mov. P. (MHP)	People's Democ. P. (HADEP)	Other	Total
SECOND CHOICES (%)									
Welfare Party (RP)	-	13.0	7.9	7.9	1.6	12.1	19.6	6.3	6.8
Motherland Party (ANAP)	21.6	-	37.0	18.8	7.1	21.0	3.6	6.3	17.5
True Path Party (DYP)	8.5	33.0	-	15.5	10.2	14.5	-	3.1	13.3
Democratic Left P. (DSP)	6.6	14.9	10.2	-	40.9	8.9	3.6	6.3	10.2
Republican People's P. (CHP)	1.3	3.5	3.6	13.5	-	2.4	14.3	18.8	4.8
Nationalist Movement P. (MHP)	6.1	7.6	4.9	3.0	0.8	-	-	9.4	4.8
People's Democratic P. (HADEP)	1.1	0.3	-	-	3.9	-	-	9.4	0.8
Other	8.7	1.6	1.0	0.7	3.1	5.6	5.4	-	3.9
None	27.5	9.5	15.1	26.0	18.9	25.8	44.6	18.8	213.0
Indecisive	16.8	15.9	15.7	12.8	11.0	6.5	5.4	12.5	14.3
No response	1.8	0.8	4.6	2.0	2.4	3.2	3.6	9.4	2.4
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
NUMBER OF OBSERVATION	542	370	305	304	127	124	56	32	1860

As the second choice; the RP gets 13% of ANAP voters, 7.9% of DYP voters, 7.9% of DSP voters, 1.6% of CHP voters, 12.1% of MHP voters, 19.6% of HADEP voters, and 6.3 % of the other parties voters. The RP takes the 6.8% of the total second choice votes. Consequently, the second choice ratio of RP is  $6.8/29.1=0.23$ , the lowest ratio of all the parties.

Source: TÜSES Report on The Characteristics, Identities and Tendencies of the Voters of Turkish Political Parties (1996), p. 166.