

The Influence of Religion on the Dominant Party System in Turkey and Russia

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Abstract

This paper examines whether the phenomenon of religion can be a determining dynamic in the emergence of the dominant-party system. To explain this, I take hand Turkey and Russia, which have been governed by a dominant party for more than 20 years. Accordingly, I analyze the importance of religion from the standpoint of the electorate of these two countries since the dominant parties emerge based on voter preferences. The findings of this study reveal that religion can be very effective in creating a dominant party in non-secularised countries such as Turkey. However, when the case of Russia is considered, it demonstrates that religious phenomenon remains the emergence of the dominant-party system remains far from being a determinant and generalizable dynamic.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the political science literature, debates on the dominant-party system continue with increasing interest. However, the relationship between the dominant party system and democracy is at the center of these debates generally. Notwithstanding, the issue of the determining dynamics that lead to the emergence of a dominant-party or dominant-party system in countries has been neglected. In this context, we can say that the dynamics of the dominant-party system are a puzzle waiting to be solved.

On the other hand, we should also say that the dominant party system is a phenomenon that should be questioned by different disciplines. Insomuch, many researchers point out that almost all countries with this system have pathological cases that contradict liberal democracies, that the dominant party system exhibits a hybrid regime type between democracy

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and authoritarianism, and this is a disturbing abnormality for democracy (Schedler, 2002; Carothers, 2002: 5-21; Linz, 2000: 33-34; Collier & Levitsky, 1997: 430-451).

Considering the countries that have had or are experiencing the dominant party experience, these criticisms have some justification. However, at this point, it should be emphasized that all dominant parties come to power through elections and maintain their government through elections. Voters are the ones who have the final say in this context. Therefore, the dominant-party system is ultimately shaped by voter preferences. On the other hand, the phenomenon of religion is also one of the factors affecting voter preferences. As it is known, religion influences the political behaviors in many countries and even can become a determining factor in coming to power in some countries.

Therefore, based on all these motives, this study examines the impact of religion to the dominant-party system through voter preferences on the axis of the Turkey-Russia comparison. The selection of Turkey and Russia from the universe of dominant-party countries in the study is based on the following reasons: The dominant-party system in both countries emerged around the same time. The geographical locations of the two countries are close to each other. Both are neither entirely European nor Asian. In addition to all these, it is frequently mentioned in the literature that Orthodox Christianity in Russia and Islam in Turkey has a critical place in the political and social sphere.

The method used in the study is the comparative method, which has recently been frequently used in the field of political science as well as sociology. The comparative method, which also refers to a perspective and orientation, is a research method that aims to identify and explain the factors that are effective in the emergence and development of certain events.

Within this method, the data needed for the study were obtained through a literature review. The general framework of the study in terms of presentation is as follows: First of all, following the introduction, the conceptual framework of the dominant-party system is presented. Then, the relationship between the dominant-party system and religion is discussed. Then, the data that will enable us to analyze whether religion has influenced the dominant-party system in Turkey and Russia through voter tendencies were presented. In the conclusion section, the quantitative and qualitative qualified data presented in the study were discussed, and predictions were made based on them.

2. WHAT IS THE DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM?

There is a great diversity in the literature regarding the definition and characteristics of the dominant-party system. In a sense, this diversity can be considered the product of the intense efforts of political scientists to come up with an inclusive definition. However, it is also possible to say that the descriptions put forward by political scientists are not very different, or at least they do not differ from each other in fundamental points.

For example, according to Sartori (1990: 345-46), one of the leading researchers on party systems, the dominant-party system corresponds to a system in which one party has a solid majority of seats in parliament, governs the state for a long time and the level of competition is low. Duverger's (1986: 398-99) definition is similar to Sartori's. According to him, if there is a party in the political system that is larger than all other parties and has outlasted its rivals for a long time, and if the people, including those who do not vote for it, believe in the dominance of this party, this system is a dominant-party system. While Cox (1997: 238) defines the dominant-party system, just like Duverger, he acts from the concept of the dominant party and puts forward a definition like this: The dominant-party system is one in which one of the parties sits uninterruptedly in government for a long time, either alone or as a senior partner in a coalition. On the other hand, Ware (1996: 159) follows Sartori's criteria and defines the dominant-party system as follows: The dominant-party system is a system in which a party regularly wins enough parliamentary seats to control the government on its own. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition characterizing the dominant-party system in the literature is provided by O'Leary (1994: 4). According to him, a dominant-party system is a system in which a political party regularly wins more seats than its rivals in elections. In this system, the dominant party, thanks to its ideology and bargaining power, regularly stays in government or becomes a key actor and governs the state for more than a decade.

It is possible to summarize the features that characterize the dominant party and the dominant-party system either in the light of these definitions or line with the opinions of other political scientists, as follows: (Boucek, 1998: 103-107; Cox, 1997: 238; Arian & Barnes, 1974: 613; Blondel, 1968: 196; Bogaards, 2004: 175; Greene, 2010: 809-11; Pempel, 2018: 352-53):

- Dominant parties come to power through elections.
- Opposition forces are allowed to form political parties within the system. All political parties in the system are legal and legitimate.

- The dominant party is the party that has more influence than other parties in the system. Not only voters of the power party but also the opposition voters believe in its dominance.
- All parties struggle in real terms to seize the government. However, the competitiveness of other political parties is relatively low in the face of the dominant party.
- Elections hold legitimately. The parties participating in the race have more or less a chance of accession to power. Despite this, the dominant party maintains its dominance regularly for a long time (at least three electoral periods) by gaining the upper hand in the elections.
- The dominant parties obtain the parliamentary majority to form the government.
- The tendency of dominant parties is high to protect their reputation in the eye of the voters and not fall from the government. Therefore, it is possible to observe that the dominant party sometimes makes legal arrangements to guarantee elections.

Even from a bird's eye view, it is clear that these characteristics of the dominant-party system make it a phenomenon that needs to be questioned and discussed in detail. However, it is not only its defining features that make the dominant-party system worthy of discussion. The main reason is the plethora of pathological cases encountered in dominant-party countries that poke a hole in the heart of liberal democracies. In this context, many researchers note that dominant parties consolidate their dominance through undemocratic means, distorting the partisan playing field in their favor, gaining advantages that render elections grossly unfair, and resorting to electoral manipulation, and this is how they maintain their dominance. (see. Boucek, 1998: 4; Greene, 2010: 807; Schedler, 2002: 36; Bogaards, 2004: 178; Diamond, 2002: 24).

But does religion have any role or influence in the emergence of the dominant-party system, which is submitted to have poked a hole in the heart of liberal democracies? To what scope should the relationship between religion and the dominant-party system be addressed? What conditions are necessary for religion to influence the emergence of the dominant-party system? These questions and similar ones are discussed in the following section.

3. ABOUT DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM – RELIGION RELATIONSHIP

As mentioned earlier, the dominant-party system is a system that incarnates within the multi-party system and in which the opposition has a chance to come to power. Therefore, the emergence of this system and its continuation basis on voter preference. For this reason, it seems considerably rational to consider the relationship between the dominant-party system and religion within the scope of the effect of religion on voter preferences. However, at this point, it should be noted that voters in countries where elections are held for a show, the opposition is only for show, or religion is heavily institutionalized in state administration should not be taken as a sample. Because in such states, it is more logical to talk about the hegemonic party system rather than a dominant-party system.

After this brief reminder and information, it would be truthful to seek an answer to the following two crucial questions on behalf of to return to the essence of the subject: Religious phenomenon, which is one of the significant socio-psychological factors in forming voter preferences, can lead to the emergence of the dominant-party system? In this context, what minimum conditions need for religion to be an effective dynamic?

When we look at the countries in the world that have experienced dominant parties, at first glance, it is possible to think that religion cannot be very influential in the emergence of the dominant-party. Because when we examine the universe of countries with dominant parties, we come across wars of national independence, severe economic and political crises, critical changes and transformations in the social structure, apartheid regime, establishment of a new state, and social turmoil as the fundamental dynamics, and that brought the dominant party to power. However, this should not mean that religion cannot have no influence. In the Republic of South Africa, for example, the ANC's (African National Congress) rule since 1994 has been based on ethnic and religious polarization. On the other hand, in some countries where Catholicism is powerful and influential, it is claimed that religion is decisive in shaping voter preferences. Similarly, it is mentioned that religion plays an important role in the political preferences of the voters who brought Christian democratic parties to power in Europe. In short, the phenomenon of religion, which continues to influence politics and the power process regardless of developed or underdeveloped countries, has the potential to influence the emergence of a dominant-party system based on voter preference.

Of course, the level of influence of religion may vary from country to country and from society to society. In this context, it seems illogical to think that religion can influence the formation of the dominant party in a highly secularized society. On the other hand, if the degree of secularization of the majority of the population is low, the religious factor can play a very influential role in the emergence and maintenance of the dominant-party system. Similarly, if the majority of the population has a strong connection with religion, the religion factor may influence the emergence of the dominant-party system. If the majority of the population is close to the idea that the government may be ruled with religious references, the religious factor can be an influential dynamic in the emergence of a dominant-party system. In addition, the presence of a powerful political party that aspires to the votes of the majority of the electorate and prioritizes religious references can also make the religion factor very effective. However, there should not be strict constitutional and institutional obstacles to the political activities of such a party. Otherwise, it should not be ignored that religion cannot have much influence on the emergence of the dominant-party system and the continuation of the dominance.

Within the framework outlined so far on the relationship between the dominant-party system and religion, Turkey and Russia are discussed below. However, due to the essence of the study, an in-depth analysis of the religion-state-politics relationship in both countries was naturally not attempted. Instead, the data that will enable us to see that the power of religion in creating a dominant party in both countries has been revealed by focusing more on voters and voter preferences. Because as stated before, just as the voters have the final say in two-party and multi-party systems, the voters have the final say in the dominant-party system.

4. DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM-RELIGION RELATIONSHIP IN TURKEY

Religion has been critical in Turkey's political and social life for centuries. Especially in the Ottoman Empire, religion regulated beliefs and worship in social life but also influenced all the state mechanisms and the administrative mentality up to the private law relations. On the other hand, the religious phenomenon, which penetrated as far as the capillaries of society, gained a political tool and an ideological identity in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. In this sense, Sultans II. Abdulhamit's practices and the İslamism Movement are the best examples of this.

Subject to at the same time, the fact that it gained a political tool and ideological identity has made religious phenomenon and its advocates one

of the biggest obstacles to Ottoman modernization. This situation has not changed much also in the period of the Republic of Turkey too. Because the Republic of Turkey, which came out from inside the Ottoman, has taken over many heritages from it in the political, social, and cultural spheres (Ortaylı, 2003: 114-16). However, the most significant inheritance to Turkey from the Ottoman has been the *center-periphery* duality and tense relationship between the two, which shaped the Turkish political culture and political structure (Mardin, 1973: 169-90).

In this context, republicans, secularists, and supporters of the official ideology formed the center, while the religious-conservative population with high religious sensitivities and their political representatives formed the periphery. In the tense relationship between these two sides shaped around the themes of secularism and reaction, the center maintained its dominance over the periphery consisting of traditionalist, conservative and Islamic segments until 1950. However, the center's dominance started to become indistinct from the 1950s.

For this reason, when we look at the general elections held in Turkey since 1950, we see the overwhelming superiority of the total votes of the parties representing the periphery over the center in almost all of them. We may say due to this superiority, political parties representing the periphery have always governed Turkey with a few exceptions. However, on the other hand it is possible to say that the penetration of the center on the state bureaucracy continued until the AKP power.

Of course, at this point, it is necessary to underline the following: Among the parties that came to power as the representatives of the periphery, the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) and the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) have a different position from other periphery parties. This is because the parties other than these two are parties with religious references, compatible with the fabric of the periphery but not in conflict with the official ideology. However, it is impossible to say the same for AKP and RP. In short, it is not wrong to say that AKP and RP in Turkey have always conflicted with the republic values.

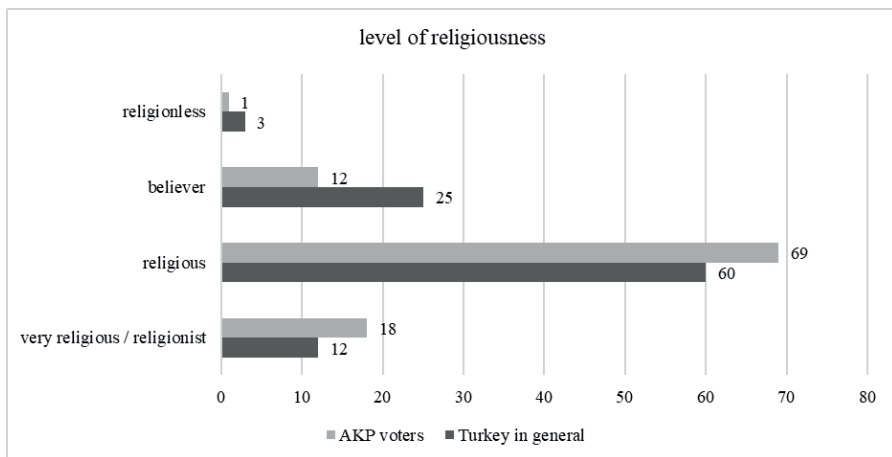
Of these parties, the RP received the most votes in 1996 and formed the government. It has its roots in the National Order Party (*Millî Nizam Partisi*, MNP) and the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selamet Partisi*, MSP), the representatives of the Islamic Movement and the National Outlook (*Millî Görüş*) Movement in Turkey. All three of these parties were closed down by the constitutional court (Yavuz, 1997: 63-66). The Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), the successor to the RP, was also closed down. The AKP was

founded by a group of deputies who left the party during the process of FP's closure by the court (Mecham, 2004: 344-45).

The AKP, which emerged from the FP, looks like a party at odds with the republic, like its predecessors. With its words and actions, it shows that it nurture enmity towards the values of the republic at every opportunity. Leaving aside the issue of why it was not or could not be closed by the Constitutional Court, which is a separate topic of discussion, this political party has been governing the Republic of Turkey uninterruptedly since 2002.

Well, to what extent has the religious factor affected the 20-year government of the AKP, which emerged based on voter preference, and the emergence of the dominant-party system? To what extent does the political parties' prioritization of religious references find a response to the electorate in Turkey? The data in Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5 below sufficiently clues to make inferences regarding these questions.

Figure 1. Level of religiousness in Turkey in general and AKP voters (2017)



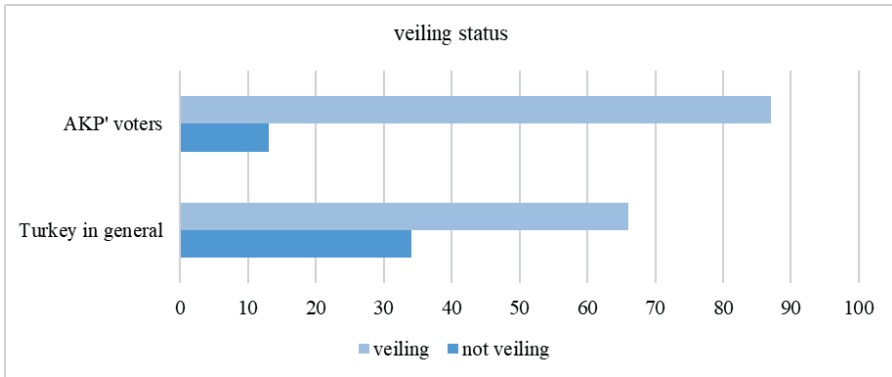
**The data in the figure are compiled from the findings of the research titled "Voter Clusters - Ak Parti, May'18" conducted by KONDA public opinion research company in 2017. Available online: <https://konda.com.tr/uploads/konda-secmenkumeleri-akparti-secmenleri-mayis2018->*

According to 2017 averages, 69% of AKP voters consider themselves *religious*, and 18% are *very religious/religionists*. In this sense, the percentage of those who describe them as *religious* and *very religious* is around 87% in total. In Turkey as a whole, the rate of *religious* is %60, and *very religious* is

12%. Therefore, both in Turkey and among AKP voters, those who describe themselves as *religious* or *very religious* seem to be high. In addition, the rate of AKP voters in the *religious* and *very religious* categories is above the Turkey average.

Figure 2 below presents data on the veiling rates among AKP voters and in Turkey. Veiling is a behavior that religious people see as a religious requirement. As seen, the rate of people who cover themselves in Turkey is 67% as of 2018. This rate rises even more among AKP voters and reaches 87%. Figure 2 below presents data on the veiling rates among AKP voters and in Turkey.

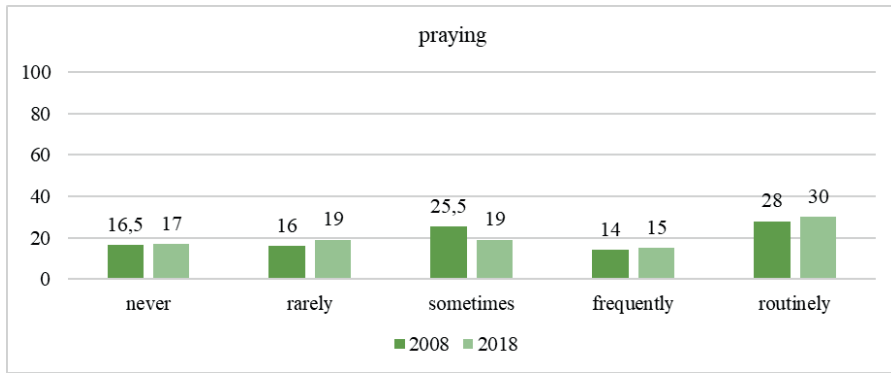
Figure 2. The veiling situation among AKP voters and throughout Turkey (2017)



**The data in the figure are compiled from the findings of the research titled "Voter Clusters - Ak Parti, May'18" conducted by KONDA public opinion research company in 2017. Available online : <http://konda.com.tr/tr/rapor/gundelik-yasamda-din-laiklik-ve-turban-arastirmasi/>*

One of the behaviors that religious people in Turkey consider most important and feel obliged to perform is praying. In many scientific studies, prayer is a criterion used to measure religiosity in Muslim countries. Figure 3 below shows the prayer habits of men in Turkey. Looking at 2008 and 2018 data, it seems that the majority of Turkish men pray with varying frequency.

Figure 3. The habit of praying in Turkish people

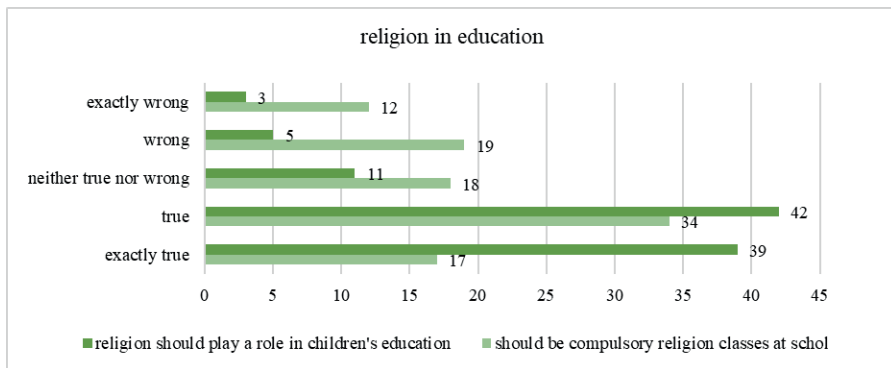


**The data in the figure are compiled from the data in the “2018 Research On Social Gender Report And Life Styles*

In Turkey” report of KONDA public opinion research company. Available online: <https://konda.com.tr/raporlar/1>

Figure 4 below shows the importance that the voters in Turkey attach to religious education. According to this, 51% of the people in Turkey find the compulsory religion course in schools right, while 31% find it wrong. On the other hand, 81% of the people think that religion should play a role in a child’s education, while only 8% think that is wrong.

Figure 4. Voters’ perception of the relationship between education and religion (2018)

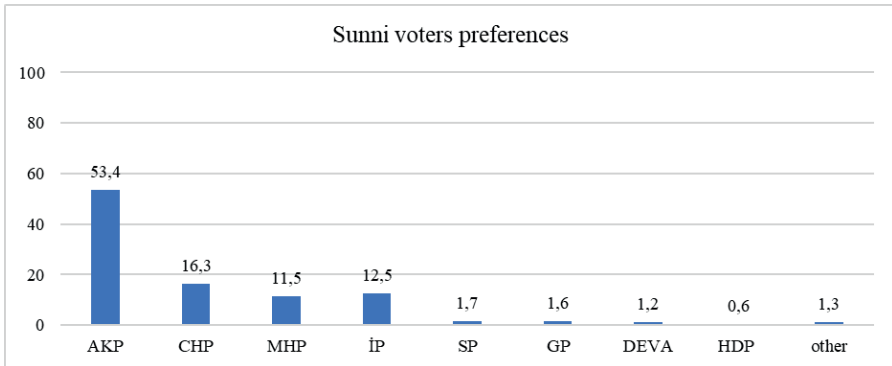


*Available online: <https://konda.com.tr/raporlar/1>
(*gündelik-yaşamda-din-laiklik-ve-türban-araştırması*)*

Based on the data presented so far, it is possible to predict that Turkish voters can tend to support political parties that prioritize religious references.

AKP is a party that has powerful Islamic discourses. In this context, it is also observed that the AKP frequently exploits religious sentiments. Therefore, the Sunni-religious voters could continue to be engaged in this party unless emerging extreme negativities in other factors affecting voter preferences can be said. In Figure 5 below, the findings obtained by the Social Research Center (TEAM) confirm it.

Figure 5. Political party preferences of Sunni religious voters (2021)



Source: http://www.teamrastirma.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/TEAMDindarSecmenler_Rapor.pdf

Among the political parties in Figure 5, CHP is on the left of the ideological spectrum. As can be seen, only 16% of Sunni religious people vote for this party, while the remaining votes are shared among right-wing parties, but the AKP gets the lion's share of this high support given to right-wing parties.

5. DOMINANT PARTY SYSTEM-RELIGION RELATIONSHIP IN RUSSIA

It is stated in the literature that religion has had an important place in Russia's political and social life from the Tsarist period to the present. (Grishin & Stepuro, 2016: 113; Slobozhnikova, 2016: 19-20). The traditional religious belief is Orthodox Christianity, which was accepted by Kyiv Kniaz Vladimir in 988 and supported as the state religion during the Tsarist period (Şahin, 2016: 27; Onay, 2002: 16). Although it preserves its importance in the belief system of the society, the support of Orthodox Christianity by the state was interrupted significantly during the Soviet Union period after Tsarist Russia (Upadhyay, 2018: 196). After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Russian society began to feel freer to express their religious identities,

which they had kept silent about during the Soviet period. In this free environment that emerged at the point of expression of religious identities, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who define themselves as believers (Frezee, 2017: 2; Tomka, 2010: 2-4).

When we look at today's Russia, it is seen the dominant religious belief is Orthodox Christianity. In addition to Orthodoxy, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam are also recognized as official religions. Apart from these, it is possible to come across unofficial religions (Bernstein, 2011: 623; Upadhyay, 2018: 207). In this context, Table 1 below shows the data on religion and belief groups in Russia for some years.

Table 1. Religion and belief groups in Russia

	1991	1998	2008	2022
Atheists / no religion	61	33	18	19
Catholicism	0	< 1	< 1	1
Protestantism	0	< 1	< 1	1
Orthodoxy	31	53	72	71
Islam	< 1	2	5	5
Buddhism	0	< 1	< 1	1
Other	< 1	< 1	< 1	1

The data in the figure are compiled. Available online: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2014/02/10/russians-return-to-religion-but-not-to-church/>; <https://www.levada.ru/en/2022/05/18/religiosity/>

The proportion of atheists was approximately 61% in 1991. This rate is quite high. It can be said that this is due to the influence of the Soviet regime and the uncertainties of the period. As can be seen, this rate decreased to 33% in 1998 and to 18% in 2008. In contrast, the proportion of Orthodox Christians increased significantly, reaching over 70 percent in 2008 and 2022.

As can see in these data, Orthodox Christianity continues to dominate the belief system of the people to a great extent. For this reason, there are scholarly studies in the literature that claim that Putin has maintained his ties with the Orthodox Church and has made significant political gains as a result (Blitt 2011, p. 457; Sotnichenko 2009, p. 266-67; Ascher 2020, p. 323-24). Also, the data in Table 1 show that Putin is likely to benefit politically from religion. However, while this view is partly true, it is often

argued that religious influence on voter preferences in Russia is uncertain or minimal (Grishin & Stepuro 2016, p. 113; White & McAllister 2003).

Therefore, different data are needed to understand which view is more rational. In this context, it is also necessary to analyze the anatomy of Russian political parties, the faith groups from which they draw their votes, and Russian political culture. However, the data in Table 2, Table 3, and Figure 6 provide sufficient evidence to determine which of the two views expressed in the literature is more rational.

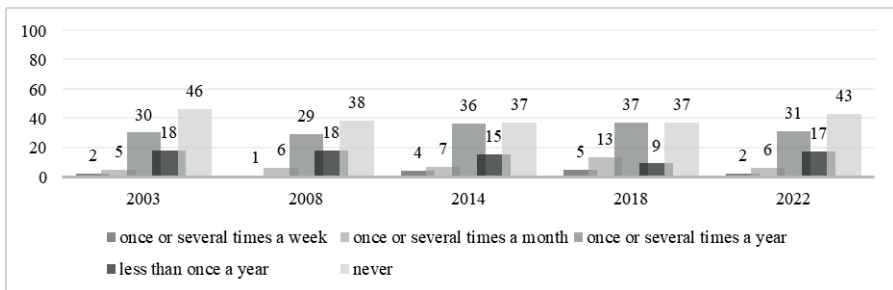
Table 2. Level of religiousness in Russian people

	2008	2014	2018	2022
Very religious	5	4	7	9
Religious to some extent	19	31	43	44
Not too religious	56	37	28	30
Completely non-religious	16	26	17	16
Can't say	2	3	3	1

Source is available online: <https://www.levada.ru/en/2022/05/18/religiosity/>; (Russian Public Opinion – 2018).

When the average of the years is taken, the ratio of those who are *very religious* and *somewhat religious* is approximately 40%. On the other hand, the total ratio of *not very religious* and *not religious at all* is about 57%. These rates roughly coincide with the levels of participation in religious services in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Participation in religious services of Russian people



Available online: <https://www.levada.ru/en/2022/05/18/religiosity/>

The data in Table 3 below regarding the role of religion in the life of the Russian people are similar to the data in Figure 6 and Table 2. When

averaged over the years, 35% of respondents say that religion plays a more or less important role in their lives. On the other hand, the rate of those who say that religion is not very important or not important in their lives is around 62%.

Table 3. What role does religion play in your life?

	2005	2007	2012	2016	2020
A very important one	11	6	6	6	12
A fairly important one	27	26	24	28	28
Not a very important one	39	41	45	40	35
No role at all	20	24	20	22	24
It is difficult to say	2	3	5	4	2

Available online: <https://www.levada.ru/en/2020/03/19/attitudes-to-religion/>

In light of all these data, it is possible to say the following: The view expressed in the literature on Russia that the influence of religion on voter preferences is uncertain or limited seems to be more rational. Therefore, it would be appropriate to think that the religious factor was not influential in the emergence of the dominant-party system in Russia and the continuation of its dominance or that this influence remained at a minimum level. Other parameters that reinforce this view are mentioned in the conclusion section below.

6. CONCLUSION

Religion appears as an effective and powerful dynamic in the formation of the dominant party system in Turkey. It can be said that it derives its power from the tense relationship between the center and the periphery inherited from the Ottoman Empire and the overwhelming superiority of the *religious-conservative* mass constituting the periphery over the *reformist-modernist* center. For this reason, many political parties with religious-conservative discourses have been established in Turkey since the transition to a multi-party period. However, among these parties, those that highly emphasized religious references and clashed with secularism and official ideology were closed either by military intervention or by the decision of the Constitutional Court.

The only party that has not been closed despite its conflict with the official ideology is the Justice and Development Party, which has been in power since 2002. It alone shows that religion has the potential to create a dominant party in Turkey if parties that emphasize religious references and

conflict with the official ideology are not closed. While the data in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 show the importance of religion in Turkey and among AKP voters, the data in Figure 5 reveals the extent of the influence of religion in creating a dominant-party system.

These data also shed light on the level of secularization in Turkey. In this context, the fact that religion has such an extensive place in the social sphere, parties with strong religious references appear in the political arena, and these parties receive significant support from the voters indicating the low level of secularization in Turkey. Considering that religion may have a high impact on political preferences in societies that have not yet completed the secularization process, it would be reasonable to assume that it may have a high impact on the emergence of the dominant party system in Turkey.

Regarding Turkey, the following can be said in the context of the conclusion: The phenomenon of religion is an influential factor in the political preferences of voters. Therefore religion is one of the actors that will play a role in a party that prioritizes religious references to come to power as the dominant party. In this sense, it has a high potential. However, although it is effective in the process of formation and consolidation of dominance, it is debatable whether it is a decisive factor. Because the dynamics that bring a party to power are different from the dynamics that ensure the long-term dominance of that party. For example, in recent studies on this issue, researchers draw attention to the especially economic performance factor for the long-term power. (See. Feldman, 1982: 446-66; Kramer, 1983:238; Becher & Donnelly, 2013: 974; Harrington, 1993: 39; Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000: 183-219). Therefore, religion is in a somewhat controversial position in this context. But as in Turkey, it may have the power to cover up the government's economic failures until they become intolerable.

At this point connected with this subject, I would like to draw attention to the following issue: For several years, Turkey has been in an intolerable economic bottleneck based on inflation that has deeply affected people's lives. Inflation in Turkey is around 40%, according to official figures, and over 100%, according to unofficial. When I did this study, there were about two months before the elections in Turkey. In this context, the results of the parliamentary and presidential elections on 14 May 2023 will tell us to what extent religion is influencing the continuation of the dominant-party system in Turkey and whether its strength will be enough to mask intolerable economic problems.

Regarding the influence of religion on the dominant-party system, we can say the following about Russia: As seen in Table 1, Orthodox Christianity dominates the belief system of the people in Russia, but the data in Table

3 shows that, religion is not significant in social life of Russian people. In addition, as shown in Table 2 and Figure 6, the level of religious affiliation among Orthodox Christians is not as high as in Turkey. Therefore, considering that religion may have a lower impact on voter preferences the lower the level of commitment, it seems impossible that religion has a remarkable effect on voters' political preferences in Russia. Moreover, the *religious-very religious* crowd in Russia does not correspond to the population's majority, unlike in Turkey. In addition to this, there is no extreme polarization in society on the axis of religion and secularism.

Apart from that, an analysis of political parties in Russia and their anatomy shows that there do not seem to be any powerful parties that put religious references in the foreground. One can attribute this situation to the strong will to protect the secular system in Russia and to the fact that voters do not prefer parties based on religious sectarianism. In the context of all these motives, it seems far from rational to assume that religion could be an influential factor in the emergence and continuation of the dominant-party system in Russia.

Therefore, in the context of the general conclusion of the study, in which I address the role of religion in the emergence of the dominant-party system on the axis of Turkey-Russia comparison, it is possible to say the following: As seen in the examples of Turkey and Russia, religion can be an influential dynamic in the shaping of the party system and especially the dominant-party system in some countries, but not in others. It may be due to different levels of secularization in countries, political cultures, and the strength of constitutional-institutional barriers to religious parties. Therefore, it does not seem possible to consider the phenomenon of religion as a generalizable dynamic in theorizing the dynamics that lead to the emergence of the dominant-party system and ensure its long-term dominance of power. In short, the determinant dynamics of the dominant-party system and long-term government dominance should be sought in other areas.

In this context, ideology-partisanship, ethno-political polarisation, and leader and government performance, which are among the factors affecting voter preferences, can be examined. In addition to this, the electoral system and legal legislation should also be considered institutional factors. Opposition parties and conditions for opposing should not be neglected as one of the areas to be analyzed. On the other hand, since prolonged periods of power may present the dominant parties with the opportunity to establish a hegemonic structure at the state and its institutions, this area should also be examined. Apart from these, the factor of political culture, which I think may be the fundamental dynamic, should never be ignored.

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