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THE 2023 ELECTIONS AND MIGRATION DEBATE IN TURKEY

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Introduction

The 2023 elections in Turkey witnessed how the issue of migration became the country's most heated topic of discussion. Although Turkey has been hosting a large number of Syrians since 2011, these migrants became a more noticeable focus of attention in the electoral campaigns in the last two years, and *the* issue in the 2023 elections, due to the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment in the country. In our first report on the *Political Party Representation of Anti-Immigration Attitudes*, we already argued that the rise in anti-immigration sentiment is a result of Turkey's current economic crisis, which has turned immigrants into scapegoats and competitors in an increasingly shrinking labor market, where their presence is now perceived as a redundant burden on the welfare state. The February 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake added fuel to the anti-migrant sentiments, where resources have been scarce, and government capacity has been limited (see Sert et al. (2023) for a detailed discussion).

Being in power since 2002, the 2023 elections were the first time that the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*-AKP) government was explicitly criticized by the opposition for its open-door policy toward refugees, as well as its malleable migration policies. Not coincidentally, the 2023 elections were also the first time that a genuinely anti-immigrant political party, the Victory Party (*Zafer Partisi*-ZP), stood for election. Established in 2021, the ZP, with a select focus on immigration – and *only* on immigration – emerged as the Turkish version of Europe's anti-immigrant radical right parties. We already demonstrated in our previous report that from 2011 to 2021, migration was seldom an issue in political party group meetings. Thus, in a political context where migration has been a non-issue, the ZP almost effortlessly converted the electorate's rising negative sentiments into a political concern. The mainstream political parties quickly followed suit, inserting political solutions for the immigration issue into their rhetoric and political programs, usually lumping everything into a single large package without distinguishing different categories of international protection, temporary protection, and regular and/or irregular migrants. In all, the presence of the Syrians dominated the debate, their return to their homeland becoming a preferred, or instead desired, policy option. The main opposition candidate for the presidency, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, built his electoral campaign for the second round around the solution of return.

In our initial report, we already covered the period from 2011 to 2021, in which we characterized the anti-immigration debate along two dimensions, issue salience and the tone of the rhetoric, thereby providing the background for this follow-up analysis of the 2023 elections. In this report, we extend our analysis until the 2023 elections, focusing on the effects of the emergence of the ZP. The report comprises five concise sections. *First*, we present the political landscape during the 2023 Turkish elections. *Second*, we highlight the migration debate, focusing on the opposition and its anti-migration agenda, as well as the politicization of migration. *Third*, we provide a brief explanation of our data collection and methodology. The *fourth* section is the analysis and findings of the content analysis, followed by the mapping of political parties referring to their 2018 and 2023 election manifestos. Finally, the *fifth* section briefly concludes the report.

The 2023 Turkish Elections: The Political Landscape

The 2023 Turkish elections were highly significant and fiercely contested, marking a pivotal moment in the country's history. The ruling AKP faced considerable obstacles in securing the majority of votes, primarily due to the erosion of its electoral base. Factors such as the government's

inadequate response to two major earthquakes, concerns over land amnesties, and the escalating cost of living contributed to public dissatisfaction and complicated the AKP's prospects for re-election.

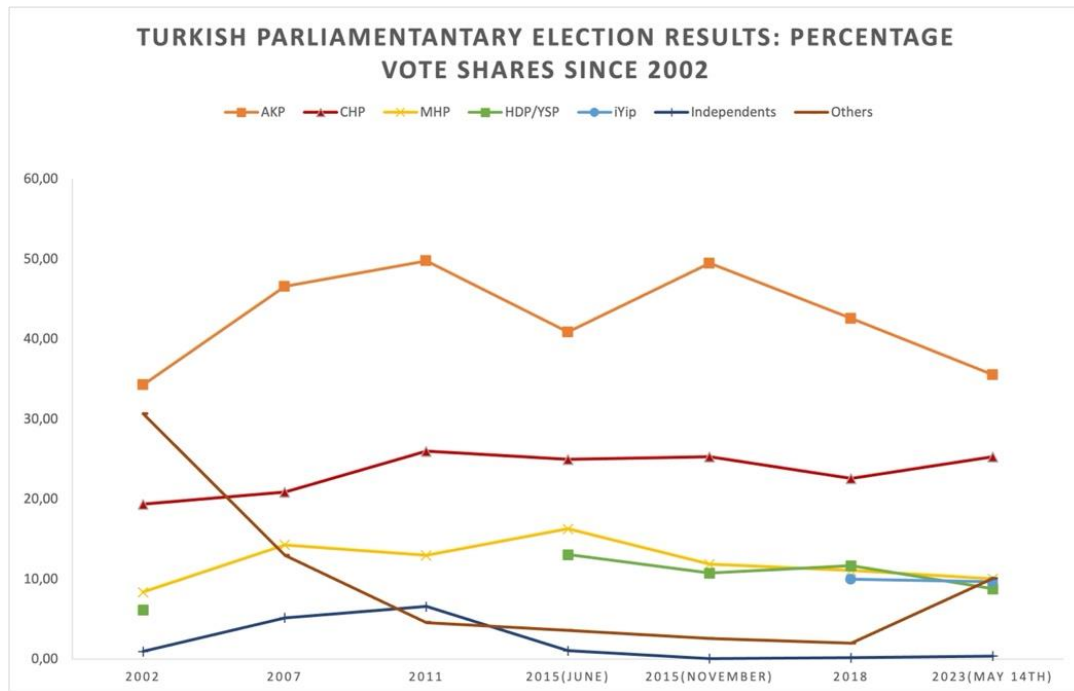
Incumbent President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, representing the AKP, sought re-election as the joint candidate of the People's Alliance (*Cumhur İttifakı*), a coalition that included the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*-MHP) and three other smaller parties. On the opposition front, the Nation Alliance (*Millet İttifakı*), comprising six opposition parties, nominated Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the main opposition, Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*-CHP) as their presidential candidate. While not officially part of the alliance, the pro-Kurdish Party of Greens and the Left Future (*Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi*- YSGP) and the Labor and Freedom Alliance (*Emek ve Özgürlük İttifakı*), which includes the YSGP and Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*-HDP), endorsed Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy. Additionally, two minor candidates, Muharrem İnce, leader of the National Party (*Memleket Partisi*-MP), and Sinan Oğan, an ultranationalist nominee from the Ancestral Alliance (*Ata İttifakı*), also qualified to run by obtaining the required 100,000 signatures. However, İnce withdrew from the election three days before voting, although his name still appeared on the ballots.

In the first round of voting, Erdoğan secured 49.5% of the valid votes, while Kılıçdaroğlu achieved a significant share of 44.9%. Surpassing expectations, Sinan Oğan received 5.2% of the vote. As Erdoğan fell just short of an outright victory by a mere 0.5%, a runoff vote took place on May 28th between him and Kılıçdaroğlu. Notably, Oğan endorsed Erdoğan, leading to a split with the Ancestral Alliance, while Ümit Özdağ, the leader of the alliance's largest party, the ZP, endorsed Kılıçdaroğlu. Ultimately, Erdoğan emerged as the winner in the second round, securing 52.18% of the valid votes, while Kılıçdaroğlu obtained 47.82%.

In the parliamentary elections, the People's Alliance successfully maintained its majority in parliament with 322 MPs. However, the ruling AKP experienced its worst result since 2002, securing only 36% of the vote. The MHP, the second-largest party within the alliance, achieved 10.1% of the votes. While the alliance fell just short of the 50% mark in the total vote share, it still managed to secure the majority of seats in parliament. On the other side, the opposition coalition garnered 34% of the vote, resulting in 213 MPs. The Labor and Freedom Alliance witnessed a decline in their vote share, receiving slightly over 10% of the vote and claiming 66 seats. Despite failing to pass the 7% electoral threshold, the ZP gained 2.23% of the valid votes, a notable success for a niche party only established in August 2021.

To sum up, the 2023 elections marked a significant milestone in Turkish politics as many small parties entered parliament through coalitions. While there had been a notable increase in voting percentages for the other parties, the AKP experienced a significant decline (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Turkish Parliamentary Election Results Since 2002



The 2023 Elections and Migration

Three key aspects have shaped the 2023 electoral landscape: coalition building, nationalism, and migration. Turkey's transition to a super-presidential system has altered the political dynamics, encouraging coalition-building between parties and providing opportunities for smaller parties to have a significant influence. The rise of nationalism and the Kurdish issue have also become important factors. Additionally, migration and its impact on Turkey's socio-political climate have become relevant issues in the run-up to the elections.

With Turkey's transition to a super-presidential system in 2018, the consequential implications have been notable as the new system embraces a majoritarian logic, resulting in a preference for coalition-building. In addition, Turkish electoral law was modified in 2018 to make it possible for political parties to participate in elections by formally establishing pre-election coalitions. Even though these electoral changes were designed to strengthen Erdoğan's rule and the executive branch, they came with significant unintended consequences. The transition to majoritarian politics and modifications to the electoral system spurred opposing players from across the political spectrum to unite as a single bloc, proving that not only the incumbents but also others could create coalitions to win elections. By enhancing the possibilities for smaller parties to influence the result, the new system also fostered the emergence and persistence of parties representing diverse societal cleavages. These parties were then able to accommodate themselves inside the oppositional alliance, significantly raising the salience of issues such as migration.

The 2023 Elections and Nationalist Cleavage

The National Alliance was unable to secure a majority and needed the pro-Kurdish HDP's support to win the presidential elections and guarantee a parliamentary majority. With roughly 10% of the vote share and led by the pro-Kurdish HDP, the Labor and Freedom Alliance declared their

support for Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. However, this significant electoral backing required the National Alliance to strike a tough balance as this collaboration risked alienating nationalist voters who are disproportionately represented among the record-high undecided voters. The fact that the nationalist-leaning Good Party (*Iyi Parti-IYI*) was in the National Alliance was not enough to satisfy the voters who demanded more hawkish policies on subjects such as immigration and the Kurdish issue.

Knowing this, the incumbent government used the nationalist card and anti-HDP sentiments to sway undecided voters away from the opposition, drive a wedge between them and voters who identify as nationalists, and increase its support among those who value “state security.” The government’s narrative centered on framing the opposition as an alliance of “traitors and terrorists” and the pro-Kurdish HDP as a covert affiliate of the PKK with a seat at the National Alliance table. The National Alliance, commonly known as the Table of Six, was renamed by the government to the Table of Seven, implying that HDP is a formal partner rather than merely giving electoral support.

The two other candidates running for president, Muharrem İnce and Sinan Oğan, made both nationalism and migration more salient issues during the electoral period. The majority of İnce voters and voters who support Oğan were also more inclined towards nationalism, with strong anti-immigrant feelings. As such, they were the most susceptible to the government’s framing of the National Alliance as the Table of Seven. These small parties became critical in shaping both the electoral agenda and voters’ preferences.

In summary, Erdoğan strategically utilized nationalist rhetoric to discredit the opposition coalition’s collaboration with the pro-Kurdish political party, framing them as accomplices to terrorism. He emphasized the need for strong leadership to ensure national unity and stability, appealing to the electorate’s desire for Turkey’s status and power. Drawing on the symbolism of the Ottoman sultans, who visited Hagia Sophia before significant battles, Erdoğan deepened the emotional connection with his supporters by praying with them at Hagia Sophia on the eve of the election. Concurrently, the opposition responded to Erdoğan’s conservative nationalism by focusing on anti-immigration sentiments and reframing nationalism in the context of migration. Consequently, the Turkish elections witnessed the emergence of two contrasting versions of nationalism and nativism—one championed by the government bloc and the other by the opposition bloc.

Nativism and Anti-Migration Agenda in the 2023 Elections

The Nation Alliance, during the 2023 elections, capitalized on public concerns about migration, leveraging anti-migration rhetoric to appeal to voters. They argued that the large number of migrants and refugees in the country has had adverse effects on various aspects of society, including the economy, public services, and national security. The Nation Alliance proposed stricter immigration policies, emphasizing the need to control and limit the entry of migrants and refugees into the country. They advocated for increased border security, stricter screening processes, and a more selective approach to accepting migrants and granting asylum. More specifically, one of the most important campaign messages of the Nation Alliance was the return of Syrians to their homeland.

Their anti-migration agenda resonated with segments of the population who perceive the presence of migrants and refugees as a burden and a threat to national identity, culture, and resources. This anti-migration rhetoric increased when the opposition coalition, which did not win a majority in the legislature, was behind President Erdoğan by 4.5 points going into the second round. In the second round, Kılıçdaroğlu made a notable shift in his campaign approach by aligning with nationalist sentiments. Notably, the Nation Alliance garnered support from the anti-immigrant ZP, emphasizing their stance against migration. Kılıçdaroğlu successfully formed a coalition with Ümit Özdağ, the leader of the ZP, purportedly offering him the position of Minister of Interior.

In summary, the 2023 Turkish elections were influenced by coalition-building, nationalism, and migration. The transition to a super-presidential system created opportunities for smaller parties, who capitalized on issues like migration and fostered the emergence of diverse political alliances. While Erdoğan opposed sending Syrian refugees back to their homeland during the election campaign, the opposition embraced an anti-migration agenda to appeal to voters. The anti-Kurdish and anti-migration political sentiments shaped the political landscape, significantly influencing the electoral dynamics in Turkey.

Politicization of Migration

Our study responds to a pertinent question: What implications do established political parties face when a prominent anti-immigrant party enters the political landscape? While immigration was not a significant issue in Turkey prior to the 2019 local elections (Elçi, 2022; Fisunoğlu & Sert, 2019), the growing economic challenges and the ZP's emphasis on the politicization of migration since August 2021 were anticipated to influence party stances (as discussed in our previous report, Balta et al., 2023). Consequently, we hypothesized that the emergence of the ZP would prompt political parties to adopt a more anti-immigrant position.

To shed light on the political impact of the ZP, we draw upon Rydgren and Van der Meiden's (2019) study conducted in Sweden. According to the authors, the issue of migration tends to be politicized, influencing voting behavior, especially when a political party takes ownership of the migration issue. In Sweden, despite the growing number of immigrants, the salience of migration increased, and attitudes toward migrants even moved in a positive direction. Furthermore, initially, mainstream parties refrained from politicizing the migration issue, with only a few exceptions. Nonetheless, as the number of immigrants increased and a specific political party, the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna* -SD), mobilized around the issue, the salience of migration rose once again, particularly after the SD gained representation in parliament, which, in turn, radicalized the views of the mainstream parties on migration.

The media plays a crucial role in amplifying the significance of migration. As financially challenged anti-immigrant parties gain visibility on media platforms, their presence, legitimacy, prestige, and recognition increase, even though the news coverage about them tends to have negative undertones. In Sweden, for example, the media coverage of the SD surpassed that of mainstream parties such as the Left Party and the Christian Democrats, particularly during the 2000s. Due to the simplistic solutions anti-immigrant parties offer for the migration issue and their ability to address more popular topics, the media also tended to exploit their presence for increased attention.

In summary, we anticipated a heightened focus on migration in Turkey during 2022 and 2023, compared to previous periods, as an anti-immigrant political party emerged and elevated the salience of the migration issue. Moreover, we expected an increase in adopting an anti-immigrant discourse, aiming to capture nativist votes in the 2023 elections. These assumptions are thoroughly examined and evaluated in the forthcoming sections.

Data Collection and Methodology

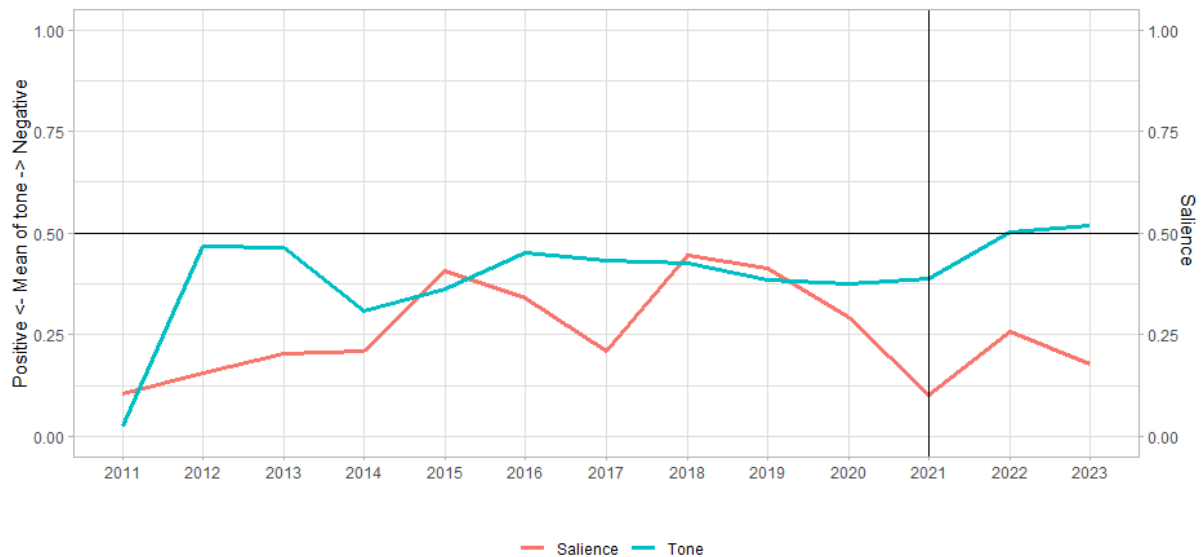
Our data collection and analysis are twofold. First, we used the same data collection and methodology as the previous report for the content analysis section. To this end, we scrapped the parliamentary group speeches of Turkey's five major parties represented in the parliament: AKP, CHP, HDP, MHP, and İYİ ($N = 1089$). We analyzed speeches using the holistic grading method with four pre-trained human coders. We first focused on the changes in anti-immigration over time, and next, we

tested the impact of anti-immigrant ZP's effect on the political parties' positions (see our previous report on methodology in detail, Balta et al., 2023).

Content Analysis: Change After the Establishment of the ZP

Our findings illustrate that, in line with our expectations, the overall tone of migration moved toward the negative from 2021 and passed the midpoint on the scale (0.5). While the saliency of migration also increased in 2022, it relatively decreased in 2023. Put differently, while political parties moved to a more anti-immigrant position, contrary to our expectations, the saliency of migration did not increase after the establishment of the ZP.

Figure 2: Overall tone and saliency of the Syrian refugee issue in speeches



Note: The horizontal black line indicates the midpoint of the scale. The vertical black line shows the establishment of the ZP.

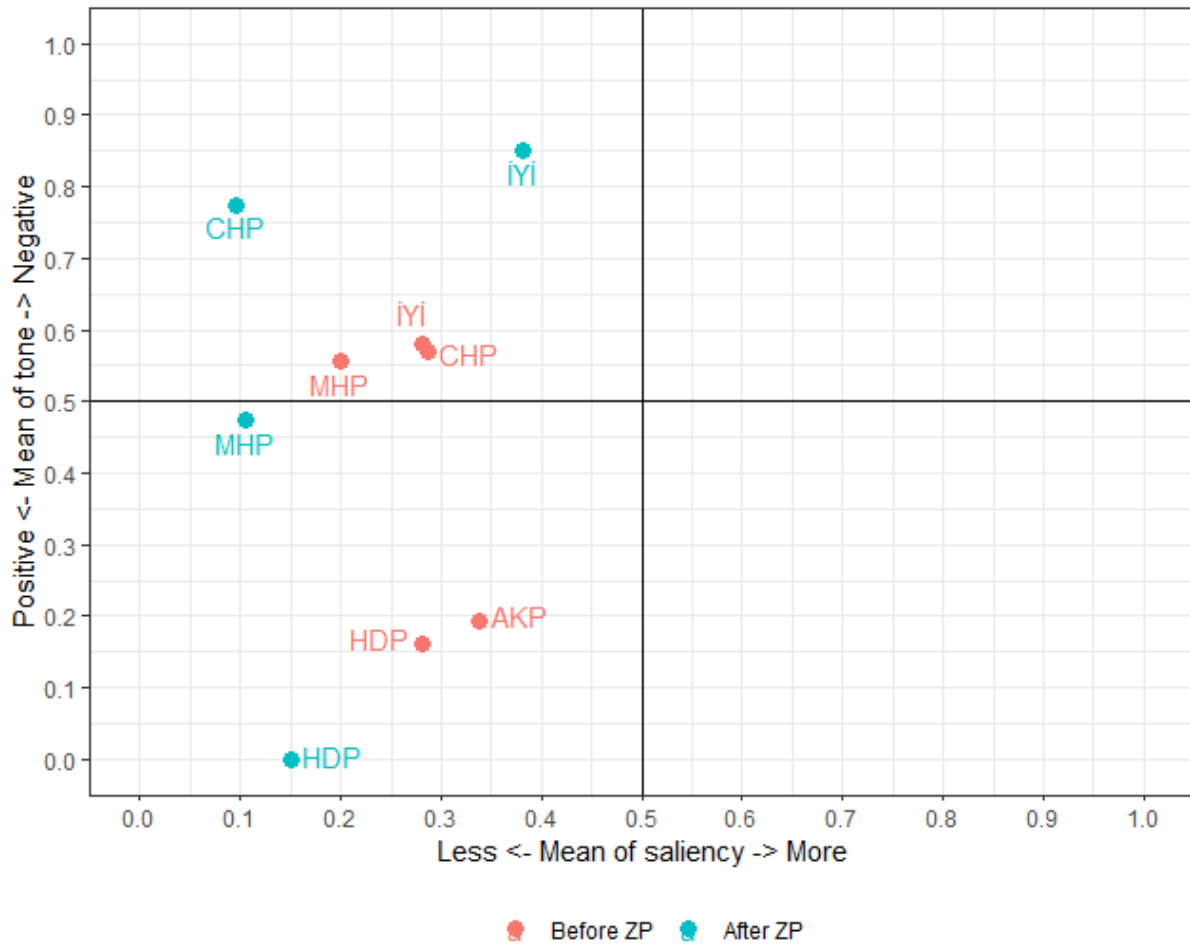
Subsequently, we analyzed party positions both before and after the emergence of the ZP. The emergence of this new contender in the political arena notably impacted the CHP and İYİ, which occupied a similar policy space with the ZP, albeit with varying degrees of emphasis on Turkish nationalism. Akşener, the leader of İYİ, shifted towards a more anti-immigrant stance, placing a greater emphasis on the refugee issue following the ZP's establishment. Similarly, the CHP also adopted a more anti-immigrant position despite a decline in the saliency of the refugee issue in their speeches. In short, the CHP incorporated more anti-immigrant themes in a relatively smaller proportion of their speeches.

Our previous report revealed that while the MHP was the most anti-immigrant party before entering the People's Alliance with the AKP, their anti-immigrant stance moderated after this alliance. Interestingly, the ZP's entry into politics influenced the MHP to adopt a more pro-immigrant position. The saliency of the refugee issue also decreased in Bahçeli's speeches after the ZP's emergence. It is important to note that both the İYİ and ZP parties originated from the MHP, and all three parties endorse Turkish nationalism to varying degrees. Consequently, the rise of the ZP primarily impacted its former allies.

Lastly, the HDP and the AKP, parties that do not occupy the same policy space as the ZP, maintained their pro-immigrant positions. However, their responses to the rise of the ZP varied. While the HDP embraced a more pro-immigrant stance, the AKP and Erdoğan strategically chose to ignore the refugee issue by avoiding any mention of it in their parliamentary group speeches. Both parties

adhered to their previous positions on the refugee issue, refraining from sending mixed signals to their respective constituencies.

Figure 3: Overall tone and saliency of the Syrian refugee issue before and after the establishment of the ZP



Note: Vertical and horizontal black lines indicate the midpoint of scales.

Party Manifestos: Change Between 2018 and 2023 Elections

In the second section, we tabulated the election manifestos of the five parties previously analyzed. To this end, we compared the most salient aspects of these manifestos concerning the refugee issue. These two election periods hold particular significance as they afford us the opportunity to perform another before-and-after analysis, given that the ZP was established subsequent to the 2018 elections.

The AKP, a right-wing party, exhibited a notable shift in its migration policy focus. In 2018, the party emphasized encouraging Syrians under temporary protection to return to their home countries, harnessing the potential of qualified immigrants, and combating immigrant smuggling. However, by 2023, the AKP shifted its focus towards stabilizing Syria, facilitating the return of asylum seekers, reducing immigrant population ratios, combating racism linked to immigration, and implementing circular migration management. This change represents a broader and more comprehensive approach to migration policy, focusing on peace in Syria and adherence to legislation.

The right-wing MHP continued to maintain a pro-immigrant stance throughout the period. In both 2018 and 2023, the party expressed a commitment to addressing the root causes of mass migration, resettling refugees close to the border areas of their home countries, and facilitating the safe return of Syrians to their homeland. This consistent position underscores the party's focus on safe and voluntary return for immigrants.

The CHP displayed a shift towards stricter migration policies between 2018 and 2023. In 2018, the party emphasized avoiding the use of immigration as a bargaining tool, ensuring proper registration and compliance of Syrians with labor laws, and supporting the gradual and safe return of Syrians. In contrast, the 2023 manifesto revealed a focus on implementing Readmission Agreements, strengthening border security, and terminating citizenship gained in exchange for real estate or investment. The party also emphasized preventing the concentration of refugees and supporting UN political solution efforts in Syria. This shift indicates a more cautious and security-oriented approach to immigration. In short, the consistently anti-immigrant CHP maintained its stance on the refugee issue across the two election periods.

While the HDP maintained its pro-immigrant stance throughout 2018 and 2023, emphasizing equal and free lives for asylum seekers and refugees, the İYİ party exhibited a significant shift in this period. Consistent with our findings in the content analysis section, it becomes evident that only İYİ transitioned towards a more anti-immigrant position. In 2018, İYİ emphasized international cooperation, facilitating the return of Syrian guests, and creating safe areas in countries of origin. However, by 2023, the party adopted the "Border is honor!" principle, implemented stringent border security measures, and enforced a "push back" policy for detected migration movements. They also advocated for the refusal of citizenship to refugees and the gradual return or deportation of illegal immigrants. This shift indicates a more security-oriented and restrictive approach to immigration.

In conclusion, a noteworthy trend emerges from the analysis of Turkish political party positions on migration policies between 2018 and 2023. With the exception of the HDP, which steadfastly maintained a pro-immigrant stance, all major parties underwent a notable shift, albeit in diverging degrees, towards more anti-immigrant positions during this period. All party manifestos, in one form or another, addressed the issue of Syrians' return, whether emphasizing voluntary return or implementing repatriation measures. The emphasis on return underscores the enduring significance of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkish politics and the complex interplay between electoral politics and anti-immigration attitudes.

Table 1: Comparison of Party Manifestos Between 2018 and 2023 Elections

Party	Position	2018 Election Manifesto	2023 Election Manifesto	Migration policy focus	Change
AKP	Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on encouraging temporary protection immigrants to return to their home countries. Efforts to harness the potential of qualified immigrants to create value for the host country. Establishment of units to combat immigrant smuggling and human trafficking in regions with high irregular migration incidents and the completion of repatriation centers by 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on stabilizing Syria to achieve peace and prevent foreign intervention. Facilitation of the return of asylum seekers with temporary protection status in Turkey. Emphasis on reducing the immigrant population ratio, combating racism linked to immigration, and implementing circular migration management to ensure compliance with legislation and purposeful migration. 	Combating irregular migration and the safe and voluntary repatriation of Syrians under Temporary Protection Status	No: Already pro-immigrant
CHP ¹	Center-left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid using immigration as a bargaining tool in Turkey's EU relations. Ensure that Syrians do not work without proper registration and compliance with labor laws. Support the gradual and safe return of Syrians under temporary protection once a peaceful solution is achieved in Syria while maintaining transparent and auditable aid processes and preventing unfair competition by enforcing tax and legal obligations on Syrian immigrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Readmission Agreements with source countries to manage irregular migration. Strengthening border security with various measures to prevent illegal crossings. Termination of citizenship in exchange for real estate or investment and a focus on preventing the concentration of refugees, closing unlicensed foreign-owned businesses, and ensuring safe return for Syrians under Temporary Protection, as well as reviewing existing agreements, sharing the responsibility for refugee return with other countries, and supporting UN political solution efforts in Syria. 	Repatriating Syrians under Temporary Protection Status, preventing the employment of illegal immigrants, cooperating with third countries on migration	No: Already anti-immigrant
HDP	Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal and free lives for asylum seekers and refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To defend the human rights of everyone living in the country 	Human rights approach	No: Already pro-immigrant

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure equal and coexistent living by combating racism against refugees and immigrants 		
IYI ²	Center-right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of a new Syria policy to facilitate the return of Syrian guests to their country. Emphasis on international cooperation to address migration and refugee issues. Creation of safe areas in countries of origin, development of policies to deter migration, involvement of third countries in readmission agreements, and promoting cost-sharing by countries contributing to migration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of the "Border is honor!" principle and abandonment of the open door policy. Implementation of stringent measures to enhance border security and prevent mass migration to Turkey. Enforcement of a "push back" policy for all detected migration movements at the border, refusal of citizenship to refugees, cancellation of refugee privileges, and gradual return or deportation of illegal immigrants through repatriation centers. 	"Repatriation of Syrians" (2018) and "Pushback" (2023) policy	Yes: to stricter policies
MHP	Right	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued commitment to addressing the root causes of mass migration. Resettling refugees close to the border areas of their home countries. Ongoing efforts to register, distribute, and provide essential resources for refugees while facilitating their safe return to their home countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syrians will be ensured to return to their homeland voluntarily, safely, and with dignity. 	Safe and voluntary return of Syrians	No: Already pro-immigrant

¹ CHP did not issue an election manifesto in the 2023 elections. We used the text from the "Common Policies Memorandum of Understanding" between the Table of Six.

² As a member of the Table of Six, IYI issued a separate election manifesto along with the "Common Policies Memorandum of Understanding."

Conclusion

The 2023 elections in Turkey witnessed a heightened political competition over the issue of migration. As economic challenges and concerns over the foreign population grew, political parties found themselves vying for public support by adopting distinct stances on immigration. This competition was particularly evident in the shift towards more anti-immigrant positions by several major parties, except for the HDP, which consistently maintained a pro-immigrant stance. The emergence of the anti-immigrant ZP party further intensified the discourse. In this electoral environment, migration policies, especially those related to Syrian refugees, became a central theme in campaign rhetoric. Parties competed not only in offering solutions to the complex challenges posed by immigration but also in framing the issue to appeal to different segments of the electorate. The 2023 elections thus underscored how migration has become a critical and contentious battleground in Turkish politics, reflecting growing nationalist and nativist sentiments among the electorate.

As we also stated in our initial report, Turkey hosts many foreigners under different legal statuses, either as regular migrants with residence permits granted for different reasons, as asylum seekers pursuing international protection, mostly to be resettled in third countries in the event they are granted refugee status, i.e., conditional refugees; as irregular migrants whose numbers are only recorded if they are apprehended – there are many more who are not; and Syrians under a temporary protection regime, who, due to their large numbers, practically monopolize the discourse on immigration in the country. The 2023 elections demonstrated how even those political actors supposed to develop diverse policies for this wide-ranging population are unaware of the variety of immigration to Turkey. The debate on immigration evolved around Syrians, where the unattainable solution of return to Syria dominated the debate. The elections also showed the need for more transparency, public discussion, and dialogue at all levels. During the electoral campaign, there was no consensus even on the number of foreigners in Turkey.

The 2023 elections have highlighted Turkey's evolving political landscape, shedding light on the fact that the country is no longer an anomaly. In this context, our initial policy recommendations remain as pertinent as ever: the government must prioritize data transparency to foster informed and constructive public discourse. Failing to do so, as evidenced by the 2023 elections, can lead to the unchecked proliferation of misinformation on social media, perpetuating false narratives. It is imperative that the public is well-informed about the various statuses of immigrants and the range of policy options available. Turkey's political parties should also commit to data-driven and evidence-based analyses, eschewing the dissemination of inaccurate information. While the current political discourse, centered on the return of refugees to address demographic concerns, may offer short-term political gains, it is essential to emphasize that not all refugees will or can return. Political parties must grasp that nurturing unrealistic public expectations will only contribute to more significant societal challenges in the long run. The analysis presented in this report underscores the need for major political parties to engage in introspection and set their own agendas rather than merely following the lead of anti-system parties like the ZP.

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Appendix

Table 2: Distribution of speeches

	AKP	CHP	HDP	IYI	MHP	Total
2011	5	5			9	19
2012	22	20			28	70
2013	27	20			32	79
2014	14	18	19		25	76
2015	17	12	11		14	54
2016	15	33	14		32	94
2017	18	31	26		21	96
2018	25	30	26	11	18	110
2019	10	25	23	21	6	85
2020	10	25	17	22	15	89
2021	14	31	28	27	28	128
2022	11	38	31	32	32	144
2023	6	8	10	11	10	45
Total	194	296	205	124	270	1089