Volume 22 Issue 33
Originally issued as F5

Global Journal of human-social science: F
Political Science
Volume 22 Issue 5 Version 1.0 Year 2022
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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GJHSS-F Classification: DDC Code: 827.52 LCC Code: AC4



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The Unity of the Six Opposition Parties in Turkey, the Analysis of their Consensus, and it's Meaning in Terms of Democracy

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Abstract- Mainly since 2010, to prevent the erosion of Turkish democracy, six opposition parties allied and started joint work. This alliance has importance for the history of democracy in Turkey. In their second meeting, the leaders of the "Nation Alliance" parties, which published a consensus text in their first meeting, published the features they would look for in the candidate they wanted to nominate in 2023. The opposition alliance, known to have issues on which they disagree, and problems they agree, do not cover all opposition parties. The People's Democracy Party (HDP), the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP), and the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) are looking for another alliance that unites socialist ideas. However, the socialist coalition also stated they could support the candidate against the ruling party in 2023.

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I. Introduction

Turkey has transitioned from democracy to anocracy (Tuncer 2022, DOI: 10.21275/SR22205223430). Six opposition parties came together and allied to correct the trend and protect democracy in the upcoming 2023 Presidential and Parliamentary elections to prevent this change. The ruling party, Justice and Development Party AKP and Nationalist Movement Party MHP, allied, called the People's Alliance, and passed every law they wanted through the parliament.

Among the agenda topics of the "Six-Party Table" were the proposal to amend the Election Law, the roadmap of the Strengthened Parliamentary System, the restriction of presidential powers after the transition to the parliamentary system, the determination of basic principles in the areas of possible cooperation, the principles and values regarding a possible alliance.

II. Brief History of Democracy in Turkey

The first step in modern Turkey was taken by establishing the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on April 23, 1920. Then the Republic was established on October 29, 1923, by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

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In the following periods, a single-party period was experienced until 1946, when multi-party elections were held for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic (but open vote closed count). The first genuinely democratic election (closed voting, available count) occurred in 1950 (Çimen 2019).

The first of the military initiatives that caused a break in democracy was on May 27, 1960. Then, on September 12, 1980, a military coup was carried out. Apart from these coups, the army intervened in politics on 12 March 1971, 27 December 1979, 28 February 1997, and 27 April 2007. There were also failed military coup attempts on October 21, 1961, February 22, 1962, May 20, 1969, March 9, 1971, and July 15, 2016. The Jacobin secular vision of social and political order was the most crucial reason for military interventions (Heper 2016, Heper 2008).

Turkey's political system was based on separating the powers, legislature, executive, and judiciary.

But It is difficult to talk about real democracy except for the first periods of the Democratic Party until 1954, the first periods of Turgut Özal (between 1984-1989) and the first years when the 1960 Constitution was implemented, and finally, the 2002-2010 period of Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Justice and Development Party (AKP) has ruled Turkey since 2002. After some reforms, the AKP government showed growing contempt for political rights and civil liberties. Its authoritarian nature was fully consolidated following a 2016 coup attempt that triggered a dramatic crackdown on perceived leadership opponents. Constitutional changes adopted in 2017 concentrated power in the hands of the President.

As a result of the negativities experienced and the changes in the system, according to the 2021 Freedom House report, Turkey's new category is "not freedom."

The depoliticized way of regulating money, micro, and macroeconomic management was studied in parallel with introducing dependent financialization as the predominant capital accumulation regime until 2013. Since 2013, the governments have struggled with the combination crisis of authority and the state, leading to two changes: the mode of regulation has been re-

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politicized, and the struggle within the power bloc has intensified. As a result, AKP implemented more ambitious survival strategies and deepened authoritarianism by changing the political regime from a parliamentary to a presidential system in 2017 and further authoritarian and consolidation efforts in 2019 (Akçay 2020).

The 15 July 2016 attempt has been a significant trauma for the country. The state of emergency declared after the coup attempt of 15 July was legalized after 2017 and converted to standard applications, weakening many elements such as the freedom to speak of a democratic regime and the right to protest and criticize.

The reforms, among other measures, abolished the position of Prime Minister and designated the President as both heads of state and government, effectively transforming Turkey from a parliamentary regime into a presidential one.

The new system, which was accepted with a referendum in 2017, brought difficulties to real democracy, weakened the parliament, and took a serious step toward the one-person system. According to the Freedom House report 2021, Turkey is a "not free" country (https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2021). According to this report, prosecutions and campaigns of harassment against opposition politicians, prominent members of civil society, independent journalists, and critics of Turkey's increasingly aggressive foreign policy continued throughout the year. In December, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) called for the immediate release of Selahattin Demirtaş, leader of the Kurdish-oriented People's Democratic Party (HDP), who had been imprisoned since 2016 politically motivated charges; European Court of Human Rights decision was ignored. New arrests of HDP members and leaders were carried out during the year, adding to the thousands who have been detained since 2016. Thousands of people were arrested without evidence on terrorist charges (Tuncer 2022, DOI: 10.21275/SR22205223430).

It would not be right to talk about an Islamic party until the (Justice and Development Party) AKP government. Parties established in the history of democracy in Turkey Virtue Party (FP), Welfare Party (RP), National Order Party (MNP), Islamic Democratic Party (İDP), Democratic Party (DP), Motherland Party (ANAP), Justice Party (AP) and Felicity Party (SP) were established by people who adhere to Islamic values. However, they were not parties aiming to change the administrative system in Turkey. Most of these parties are forced closed and not alive now.

III. The Partnership of Opposition Parties, "Nation Alliance"

The Republican People's Party (CHP), Democracy and Leap Party (DEVA), Democrat Party (DP), Future Party, IYI Party, and Felicity Party (SP) came together to ally to return to Democracy and re-strengthen weakened democratic institutions. Against the "Alliance of the People" created by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), six-party unity named the alliance they started as the "National Alliance":

Within the framework of the Nation Alliance, the six-party leaders have met three times in the last two months, apart from the Technical meetings of the relevant people in their parties. In the first, the consensus text studied was explained. In the second and third, they discussed the details of the issues they agreed on. It was concerned for the last time what the characteristics of the person to be nominated in the presidential election to be held in June 2023 would be. The qualifications to be sought in the candidate focus on merit, democracy, and understanding of the law.

The course of the Orban regime in Hungary shows similarities with the Erdogan regime in Turkey. The opposition's mistakes in Hungary led to the start of the second Orban period (https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/08/democracy-digest-aftermath-of-hungary-election/). Again, the errors of the left-wing parties in the French presidential election forced the French people to choose between two people they did not want, Macron and LePen (Tuncer 2022 DOI; DOI: 10.21275/SR22425180331). The components of the Nation Alliance must act by taking lessons from the examples of Hungary and France and be aware of their grave responsibilities.

IV. Critical Analysis of the Consensus Text

On February 28, 2022, the Republican People's Party (CHP), Democracy and Atılım Party (DEVA), Democrat Party (DP), Future Party (GP), IYI Party, and Felicity Party (SP) presented the "Reinforced Parliamentary System" report to the society.

There is a word. "If the king is good, there is no need for law; if the king is bad, the law has no effect." There is no need for constant new changes with qualified managers. The implementation will be wrong no matter how good you make laws with evil rulers.

Briefly, the titles of the critical analysis of the six parties' consensus text could be summarized below;

1. Even though the Strengthened Parliamentary System advocates the separation of powers, it undertakes tasks that prevent the power of the parliament from being as it should be. In particular, on six subjects give the Councils of Judges and

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Prosecutors powers that should not be, by being actively involved in Justice and Law, which should be precisely above politics, in the appointment of the members of the Constitutional Court, the Council of State and the Supreme Court and the determination of the members of the Court of Accounts. There is a need to re-evaluate the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) for the legal system and control mechanisms that should be kept above politics.

2. It is a contradiction in this text why the election threshold is 3%, and the treasury aid is foreseen for the parties that receive 1% of the votes. If there is a dam, it should be 600/1 (according to the Turkish Constitution, the number of deputies in the Parliament is 600). In other words, every party that gets enough votes to get one deputy should be in the parliament.
3. It is a severe mistake to create overseas constituencies to elect people who work abroad and have citizenship from different countries. Anyone who wants to take a seat in the parliament can return to his country and become a candidate.
4. Since the bag law application is misused, wrong results may occur. However, sometimes it is vital to save time in mandatory situations. Suggestions that will disrupt the system in criticism will not be correct.
5. It is said that the head of the final account commission will be from the main opposition party; however, the vote rates of the parties are taken as a basis for forming the ethics commission on a different page of the same report. This is a contradiction.
6. A simple majority is required to form a government, a constituent vote of no confidence, and an absolute majority are needed to overthrow the government. This is also a contradiction and will create meaningless troubles. The goodwill of future governments is only goodwill.
7. Recourse to the judges who have signed the decisions that sentence the state to compensation is a big mistake and will prevent fair choices. Lawyers will act with the instinct to protect each other. For wrong decisions and payments, a system that reflects the performance should be put instead of financial costs.
8. There is no civil initiative in the text. However, with the signatures of a certain number of citizens, laws and motions of no confidence should be given.
9. It is not stated that media owners cannot enter public tenders or engage in other professions.
10. Major mistakes were made in academic recommendations. This section has been written by people who do not know and have no experience with the top management and system at the university (Tuncer 2021)…

A) University autonomy is scientific/academic autonomy. There can be no administrative and financial autonomy.
B) The Interuniversity Council is like a council of more than 400 people and cannot function as Higher Education Council (YÖK).
C) Private universities' problems and eliminating education inequalities are not included. Most Foundation Universities are holding universities, not real Foundation Universities.
D) It is a big mistake that the academic staff chooses the rector only. If there is to be an election, all components of the university must vote.
E) Dean's election is a big mistake. Deanship is an academic, not an administrative duty. Seniority and performance are essential. Especially the fact that the candidates have specializations suitable for the faculty to be appointed must be miswritten. It may be meant to mean license, not expertise. How to choose someone who specializes in Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, or Statistics for the Faculty of Science? For example, a Medical Doctor should be appointed to the Faculty of Medicine, but this is a license. Specialization in the fields such as pediatrics, anatomy, physiology, and obstetrics, which discipline is suitable for the Faculty of Medicine? The purpose of eligibility must be licensing eligibility or compliance with designation criteria. We are a country that has experienced the dismissal of a urologist as the dean of the Faculty of Law.

11. It is an ethical problem because the parliament member can work in self-employed and individual businesses and earn money. This is Indefensible.

V. Conclusion

It is known that the government's unjust and unlawful interventions in the elections in the local elections held in 2019 and the previous general elections in Turkey (Kıran 2019). Such illegal and unfair intervention tendencies can be seen in weakening democracies. The Hungarian election wasn't also a fair fight (https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-election-level-playing-field-fair-observer/).

The government's intervention in forming ballot box committees in the election law that has been in effect since 1950 is already casting a shadow on the 2023 elections (Official Newspaper-Resmi Gazette). One of the two critical issues in the new law is to organize the ballot box commissions as the AKP wants, and the second is to reduce the 10% dam, formerly 10%, to 7% to save the MHP, which was a severe loss of votes. Another significant change is the article that changes the conditions for parties to participate in the elections (Resmi Gazette). This article aims to prevent some opposition parties from griming in the polls. The

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previous general elections in 2018 tried to prevent the newly established IYI Party from entering the polls. Still, the government's attempt was blocked when ten deputies from the CHP switched to the IYI Party and formed a group in the Parliament.

One of the judges who gave the verdict of the "Gezi Events" at the Istanbul Heavy Penal Court on April 25, 2022, is a parliamentary candidate from the AKP is the best indication that the days to come will be difficult in terms of democracy and law. This court tried Osman Kavala, who has been in detention for 4.5 years, according to Articles 309 and 328 of the Turkish Penal Code (www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-Turkiye-54468461). He was sentenced to aggravated life imprisonment for the case he was acquitted of before, according to Article 309, and was exonerated under Article 328, for which he is still in detention (Gazette Duvar). These events are essential indicators that the upcoming elections will never be fair. Opposition parties are responsible for preserving and reconstructing democracy and the rule of law.

However, despite the remarkable tolerance of the opposition parties CHP and IYI Party, there are different opinions from SP, DP, DEVA, and GP. Finally, after the tension between the DP and the GP about the presidential candidate, meaningless statements came that there is still no alliance in DEVA; instead, there is an exchange of information. The People's Democracy Party (HDP), the Workers' Party of Turkey (TIP), and the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) formed the third coalition of socialists continue. The DEVA Party is also working on a new alliance for a fourth right-wing coalition, which is not overtly.

The DEVA Party has hesitations about whether there is still an alliance. The weakest link in the chain seems to be Ali Babacan, the leader of DEVA.

The eyes, hopes, and attention of the voters, who are crushed under the economic and social problems, are on the opposition parties, undertaking a difficult task until the 2023 elections.

If these mistakes continue, it can be expected that the same thing that happened in Hungary and France will happen in Turkey in the 2023 elections.

The 2023 elections seem to draw vital lessons for the history of world politics.

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