

DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE AT ARENAS OF ELECTION

An Analysis on the Leader's Speeches and Key Texts for the Presidential Election of June, 24

PROF. DR. ÜLKÜ DOĞANAY

- The snap parliamentary election and presidential election held on June 24, 2018 are particularly important because they were the final steps towards abolition of the parliamentary system in Turkey which had been in practice since 1908. The referendum dated April 16, 2017 amended 18 different articles of the Constitution and introduced significant constitutional regulations establishing "the Turkish type of presidential system" as it is named by the government.
- While the opponent parties considered elections as an opportunity of revitalizing the "NO block" after the lost referendum and a mean for re-construction of parliamentary system; the AKP and MHP joined under the "People's Alliance" saw the election as the final step of transition to the "strong government" which has been strongly desired by the right-wing political tradition of Turkey for 45 years throughout the eras of Erbakan, Türkeş and Özal. Both sides argued that if they won the elections, democracy of Turkey would get stronger.
- his research showed that, both the ways in which the leaders use the concept of democracy and the basic values, principles, rights and freedoms they associate with this concept, were shaped through specific promises in a framework closely related with the electoral agenda. In that context, it has been identified that Erdoğan, in order to consolidate his supporters and persuade indecisive voters, aimed at producing a sense of "us" associated with historical, religious bounds and common national values and categorizing his rivals in a sense of "them" defined as enemies and pushed out of political arena, throughout his whole campaign. It has also been observed that Erdoğan's antagonistic discourse had a determinative effect on speeches of other candidates, mainly on Muharrem İnce's



Contents

Introduction.	3
Research Questions:	4
Sample:	4
The Methodology of the Research:	5
I. THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF JUNE 24	6
The Amendments in the Electoral Law	8
Equality of opportunity and fairness of elections.	9
II. DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE OF THE LEADERS	15
A. The Language of Arenas of Election	16
Words determining agenda of election	16
Strategies of Addressing Voters: Antagonism of “us” and “them”	17
Antagonism as a campaign strategy in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speeches	19
Conspiracy theories and security discourse in Doğu Perinçek’s election speeches	23
Anti-Erdoğanism and personalization of antagonism in Muharrem İnce’s speeches	25
The Antagonism of Statesperson and Politician in Meral Akşener’s election speeches	28
“Cause fraternity” and “us” discourse in Temel Karamollaoğlu’s speeches	30
We vs ‘one man’ in Selahattin Demirtaş’s speeches	31
B. Democracy Agenda of the Leaders	33
1. The concept of democracy in speeches and texts of the leaders	33
The concept of democracy in Demirtaş’s speeches and texts	34
The concept of democracy in Erdoğan’s speeches and texts	35
The concept of democracy in Muharrem İnce’s speeches and texts	37
The concept of democracy in Temel Karamollaoğlu’s speeches and texts	38
The concept of democracy in Meral Akşener’s speeches and texts.	39
The concept of democracy in Doğu Perinçek’s speeches and texts.	40
2. Principles and values related to democracy in election speeches	40
Demand for justice	41
Social peace	41
The character of the regime	42
3. Basic rights and freedoms in election speeches	43
Socio-economic rights	43
Political rights	47
Cultural rights	52
Minority rights	53
Women’s rights	55
Rights related to persons or groups requiring special protection	57
Right to environment	58
Freedom of religion and conscience	59
Freedom of expression and press	60
Civil rights	60
Restriction of rights and freedoms	60
Conclusion	62
References.	64
About the author	112
Imprint	112



Introduction

In countries like Turkey in where competitive democracy -that reduces democracy to existence of rival political parties and possibility of changing governments through elections- constitutes the hegemonic paradigm and democratic means and opportunities of political participation are limited, voters' and public opinions' interest in elections is much higher than the Western democracies with a long tradition of democracy. It is also possible to say that hegemony of right-populist ideologies imposing the idea that election box is the single mean to realize nation's will since 1950's plays a role in the high interest in elections. Reducing democracy to election box might seem to be functional for right-populist politicians who are in power; however this functionality might also be useful for opponent parties (for example the Republican People's Party /CHP) which mainly limits their roles in fight for democracy with participation in regularly held elections. Nevertheless, following announcement of results of the June, 24 elections, Muharrem İnce said "Democracy is something like that" and he accepted the defeat; İnce's attitude shows that a similar perspective is also shared by the main opposition party that promises democracy in its election campaign.¹

However, an approach defining democracy as a way of governance and a method of determination of rulers by public, underestimates the fight for democracy continuing for centuries and its gains. When we follow Schumpeter and consider democracy as a technique through which leaders freely compete with each other in order to win support of voters likewise the functioning of the free market; we end up with elections to be held in each 4-5 years as the single mechanism of supervision against all actions of the elected government. For sure, it is against the core of the democracy and it pushes basic rights and democratic principles -which are prerequisites of a real and functioning democracy- in jeopardy. Considering that leaders see elections as the main mean of realization of democracy maybe because of the nature of their work; it is important to analyse what leaders think about the normative elements of the democracy and what they promise to the voters in that regards.

The generally accepted main principles of liberal democracy provides a pretty large spectrum of rights and free-

doms because democracy is not a simple technique to determine rulers by regular elections as Schumpeter argues. Following Clause Offe, we can argue that state-ness (the relation between state and its power), rule of law, political competition and accountability (2001: 451) are the criteria to be applied in identification of whether a regime is truly democratic or not and in that sense democracy promise of a leader is genuine to the extent he/she refers to these principles.

The first principle of a liberal democracy, the relation between state and its power, indeed aims at identifying citizens' territory of movement in the political system. Because in a liberal system, if the state goes beyond its limits and turns into a tyranny; citizens might not enjoy many of their basic rights and freedoms. That is the reason why participation in liberal democracy should not be perceived as a procedure required to elect the government but as the control mechanisms of citizens over government's goals and policies. The most important principle securing personal autonomy against pressures of a majority or the state traces back to the idea that citizens have particular rights and freedoms. In time, protection of basic rights and freedoms against a majority and/or the state evolved into a basic and distinctive prerequisite of the democracy. So that, protection of human rights became a specific demand for survival of liberal democracies and human rights turned into a value that should be protected by several international documents. In that sense, if leaders articulate their promises to voters in a "democracy discourse" that does not mention about basic rights and freedoms and measures to protect them, it is possible to say that, the ideal of democracy is abandoned and once again democracy is described as a mean.²

This research focuses on democracy discourse of the presidential candidates in their election speeches and social media messages. The presidential election of June, 24 has been identified as the subject of the research because it constituted a milestone after which the constitutional amendments adopted by the referendum dated April, 16 2017 have been totally put into effect; these

¹ <http://www.posta.com.tr/muharrem-ince-secim-sonuclari-memlekete-hayirli-olsun-2020954>

² Nevertheless, in our analysis on election speeches of political party leaders before the 2015 parliamentary and presidential elections, we have brought what kind of obstacles to consolidation of democracy in Turkey might be set by the leaders drawing an extremely limited framework in relation to democracy up to discussion (see: Doğanay, Karaaslan Şanlı and Özdemir Taştan 2017).



amendments were so important that they might not only lead to a system change but also to a regime change as Professor Ibrahim Kaboglu notes³.

Although political speech has mediatized because of the media-mediated structure of the politics and it is a well-known fact that majority of speeches of the political leaders is written by consultants or experts; “the arenas of election” -in where leaders can directly meet and interact with their voters- are significant elements of election campaigns. Considering the fact that media is controlled by pro-government groups in Turkey, the arenas of election and social media gain more importance since they allow leaders to directly communicate their messages to voters. Therefore, instead of limiting ourselves with the speeches communicated through media, an analysis of direct election speeches that focuses on the democracy understanding of leaders and “what kind of a democracy” they promise is of significant importance.

In that regards, an analysis on the formation of democracy discourse in speeches of leaders and to what extent this discourse associates with basic rights and freedoms can play a guiding role in understanding the problems that democracy faces in Turkey.

Research Questions:

In the context of the framework provided above, this research aims to seek answers to the questions listed below.

- How political leaders define the sphere of democratic relations in their election speeches?
- What kind of a vision of social relations and politics is constructed by the language used by the political leaders in election speeches?
- In which context the concept of democracy is used in speeches and key texts of the leaders?
- How and to what extent principles and values that can be associated with the concept of democracy are covered in the leaders’ speeches?
- How and to what extent the leaders address themes related to basic rights and freedoms in their election speeches?
- How limits of basic rights and freedoms are defined in election speeches of the leaders?

3 <http://t24.com.tr/haber/prof-kaboglu-teklif-sistem-ve-rejim-degisikligi-parlamentarizm-kalkiyor-ama-baskanlik-gelmiyor,378566>

Sample:

The research covers election speeches and social media messages of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (candidate of the People’s Alliance formed by the Justice and Development Party-AKP and Nationalist Movement Party-MHP), Muharrem İnce (candidate of the Republican People’s Party-CHP), Meral Akşener (candidate of the Good Party-İYİP), Selahattin Demirtaş (candidate of the Peoples’ Democratic Party-HDP), Temel Karamollaoğlu (candidate of the Felicity Party-SP) and Doğu Perinçek (candidate of the Patriotic Party-VP)⁴. In order to identify the sample, first of all, a list of speeches given by candidates since initiation of their electoral campaigns (April, 28) was provided. From this list, 4 big meetings with mass participation that can represent geographical regions of Turkey for each candidate were selected⁵ as follows: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: April, 28 – İzmir / June, 3 – Diyarbakır / June, 9 – Ankara / June, 17 – İstanbul. Muharrem İnce: June, 11 – Diyarbakır / June, 21 – İzmir / June, 22 – Ankara / June, 23 – İstanbul. Meral Akşener: May, 25 – Kayseri / June, 10 – İzmir / June, 20 – Erzurum / June, 21 – İstanbul⁶. Temel Karamollaoğlu: May, 29 – İzmir / June, 4 – Ankara / June, 6 – Diyarbakır / June, 19 – İstanbul (3 of them were in-door meetings in form of e-meeting). Doğu Perinçek: June, 21 – İstanbul / June, 22 – İzmir / June, 23 – Eskisehir (he held only 3 meetings in total). Video records of these speeches were obtained from the web site designed by Mehmet Safak Sari called “The Map of Presidential Race”⁷ and decoded. In addition to these speeches, election manifestos and candidacy speeches of the leaders were also included in the analysis. Records of candidates broadcasted on TRT and the full texts of these speeches were obtained through the

4 I would like to thank to Selin Öztürk and Tahsin Başkavak for gathering the leaders’ campaign materials and decoding the video records of their speeches.

5 Because of limitations of this study, one speech from Central Anatolia, Western Anatolia, East/South-eastern Anatolia and Aegean regions for each candidate has been included in the sample.

6 Meral Aksener preferred to have small-sized gatherings and iftar dinners rather than big meetings in many cities. Hence, instead of her Ankara-Altindag gathering, Kayseri meeting which had broader participation was included in the sample. Besides, since she did not hold a meeting in Diyarbakır, Erzurum meeting -one of the meetings in which she had addressed to greatest number of voters- was included.

7 <https://msafaksari.com/2018/05/15/2018-cumhurbaskanligi-yarisi-haritasi/>



web-sites of the parties and decoded.⁸

Presidential candidate of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtaş could not hold meetings because of his arrest; however he used TRT propaganda speeches and all possible channels to communicate his messages to voters⁹. He announced his candidacy by the letter he wrote in prison dated May, 4; he declared his election manifesto and he held a meeting through live broadcasting of his weekly phone call with his wife (June, 6 2018). Besides, he held 2 e-meetings and 1 e-conversation in which he responded voters' questions via twitter. Demirtaş used twitter effectively through his lawyers and family; he tweeted 294 times in between May, 4 – June, 23. Demirtaş also addressed voters through a song he composed. Since one of the candidates had to run his campaign from prison, besides speeches, tweets of Demirtaş have also been included in the sample. Similarly, tweets of other candidates onwards announcement of candidacy or initiation of campaign have also been included in the analysis. In this scope 245 tweets of Muharrem İnce, 118 tweets of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 608 tweets of Meral Akşener, 197 tweets of Doğu Perinçek and 218 tweets of Temel Karamollaoğlu were analysed.

The Methodology of the Research:

Using critical discourse analysis method, this research analyses political discourses of presidential candidates. Teun A. Van Dijk, in his study titled "What Is Political Discourse Analysis", notes that as a part of the dialogical textual traditions, political discourses aim to persuade to the communicated party to specific actions and attitudes (1997: 23). In that context, an analysis of political

8 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Muharrem İnce and Meral Akşener did not use their right to make propaganda speeches at TRT. Main electoral texts of the leaders ("election manifests" of Erdoğan and Akşener, "election declarations" of Karamollaoğlu, Demirtaş and Perinçek and "future declaration" of İnce) are the most comprehensive and publicly announced electoral texts of the presidential candidates which provide promises of the leaders and their parties as well. That is the reason why election manifests/declarations of the leaders were also included in the research in addition to election speeches. Besides the candidacy speeches of İnce and Karamollaoğlu in which they announced their candidacy were also included. Since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Muharrem İnce and Meral Akşener did not use their right to make propaganda speeches at TRT; TRT propaganda speeches of Selahattin Demirtaş, Temel Karamollaoğlu and Dogu Perinçek were covered by the research.

9 TRT speech of Demirtaş dated June, 17 was broadcasted alive during İstanbul meeting of HDP; so that voice of the leader was echoed at the arenas of election.

discourse includes selection of topics, rhetorical figures, management of speech-acts, interactions and some particular strategies and structures. As Doğanay, Karaaslan Şanlı and Özdemir Taştan stated in their study of 2015 elections (2017: 63-35):

...Political speeches, in general, focuses on two topics developing around what politicians have done, what they will do and what they think about political issues. First one is about the politics itself: While politicians are talking about themselves, their parties, elections and why they should be elected; they also mention that their rivals are wrong and inadequate and talk about badness of previous governments. The second one is built on other areas of social life, politics of power and issues such as migration. In both cases, the dominant macro-structure of the speech is shaped by positive references to future (promises) and if the speaker is opponent by negative references to present. ... These discourse structures peculiar to political speeches in general and – in regards to the topic of our study- election speeches in particular are supported by local semantic. At this point, van Dijk, argues that prototypical meanings emerging in political discourse can be captured by qualitative content analysis that enables especially thematic analysis of speeches. On the other hand, properties of local semantics such as conditions of local coherence, presuppositions and entailment, indirectness and implicitness, strategies of description and representation, formation of partisan polarization, generalizations and specifications, use of examples ad contrasts, use of strategies like denial and ignorance for positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation require further analysis that goes beyond the possibilities of content analysis technique (van Dijk, 1997: 30-33)

Starting from these views of van Dijk on political discourse; this research analyses speeches and campaign messages of presidential candidates with a two-stage method. In the first stage, content analysis of speeches and campaign message has been conducted in order to identify to what extent the leaders mention themes regarding basic rights and freedoms and basic democratic norms and value, in other words how and how much democracy is covered in the election speeches. For this stage, a content analysis coding instruction composed of 27 questions has been developed, election speeches of the leaders has been coded through this instruction and



prominent themes have been identified by using SPSS. Since at least 5, at most 7 speeches were included in the analysis due to the limitations of the study; rather than frequency of use of related concepts and themes, this study focuses on which basic right, democratic principle or value was included and excluded by the leaders; in other words the study aims to identify the territories of the “democratic universe” offered by the leaders to voters.

In the second stage; main strategies of the discourse of democracy formed around the themes identified through qualitative content analysis; how the leaders make sense of basic rights and freedoms and basic democratic values and principles; features such as word preferences, wording, sentence structure and rhetoric have been analysed in order to identify limitations and opportunities of the perception lying under the democracy promises of leaders. At this stage, most frequently used words have been identified through Nvivo 12 qualitative analysis program, word clouds have been generated and finally general political understandings of the leaders have been tried to be revealed through analysis of combinations of these words. In addition, “word trees” have been produced through text search query in order to identify in which sentence structures the leaders use the concept of “democracy” and how they fill background of this concept. Twitter messages of the leaders have also been analysed with a similar method and the contexts in which the concept of democracy was used were analysed¹⁰.

I. THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF JUNE 24

On April 20, 2018, The Grand National Assembly of Turkey declared that snap general election and presidential election would be held on June 24, 2018. This decision was taken by President Erdoğan as a response to the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Chair Devlet Bahçeli’s call for a snap election. These two party had also collaborated for the referendum -dated April 16, 2017- on the Constitutional amendments that introduced the presidential system.

The snap parliamentary election and presidential election held on June 24, 2018 are particularly important because they were the final steps towards abolition of

the parliamentary system in Turkey which had been in practice since 1908. The referendum dated April 16, 2017 amended 18 different articles of the Constitution and introduced significant constitutional regulations establishing “the Turkish type of presidential system” as it is named by the government¹¹. These constitutional amendments were criticized by civil society organisations, democratic forces and international organizations with which Turkey is in relation on the ground that they might lead to serious problems in regards to democratic standards such as independence of judiciary and balance of powers. For example, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe; -in its opinion dated March 2017- criticized these amendments, pointed out problems that might be caused by the new system in terms of implementation of democratic principles and argued that amendments would disrupt check and balances system, accumulation of power in executive branch would violate the principle of separation of powers and in turn it would push the country in autocracy¹². Besides, the Commission also mentioned that the accountability of the president would be limited with the elections and the conventional tools of parliamentary supervision over executive branch such as vote of confidence and verbal questions would be removed. Stating that independence of judiciary would be damaged by implementation of new presidential system, the Commission identified these constitutional amendments as a serious step back in democracy tradition of Turkey¹³. Similar concerns were also articulated in the European Union Report on Turkey dated April 2018 which mentioned that implementation of these amendments would totally move Turkey away from the European Union¹⁴.

The significance of presidential and parliamentary elections of June 24 lies in the facts that they were final steps

10 The analysis was carried out between November and December 2018 using the trial versions of SPSS and Nvivo programs.

11 For new regulations introduced by constitutional amendments and their results please see: <http://ayrintidergi.com.tr/ece-goztepe-demokratik-bir-anayasa-toplumsal-vasatin-ustune-cikmak-zorunda/> ve <http://www.democraticprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Sevtap-Yokus-TURKIYEDE-2017-ANAYASA-DEGISIKLIKLERI-VE-COZUM-SURECI.pdf>; For an analysis of the issue after the elections please see: <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/politika/2018/07/13/ne-cumhurbaskanligi-ne-baskanlik-bunun-adi-monokrasi/>

12 <https://www.dw.com/tr/venedik-komisyondan-t%C3%BCrkiyeye-otoritarizm-uyar%C4%B1s%C4%B1/a-37887725>

13 <http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/events/?id=2369>

14 https://www.ab.gov.tr/siteimages/pub/komiyon_ulke_raporlari/2018_turkiye_raporu_tr.pdf



towards total enforcement of the constitutional amendments adopted by the April 16 referendum and thus transition from parliamentary system to the Turkish type of presidential system which way designed in a way that does not accord with democratic traditions. That is the reason why these elections were considered as a milestone by the ruling and opposition parties and voters as well; therefore mobilization of voters were high in terms of election campaigns and participation in the elections.

6 candidates (one of which was a woman) competed for the presidential election and 8 parties participated in the parliamentary election. Overall participation rate was 86 % (88 % in the country). The result of the presidential election was as follows: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (52.59 %), Muharrem İnce (30.64 %), Selahattin Demirtaş (8.40 %), Meral Akşener (7.29 %), Temel Karamollaoğlu (0.89 %) and Doğu Perinçek (0.20 %) and the result of the parliamentary election was as follows: The Justice and Development Party (AKP): 42.56 %, the Republican People's Party (CHP): 22.65, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP): 11.70 %, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP): 11.10 %, the Good Party (İYİP): 9.96 %, the Felicity Party (SP): 1.35 %, the Free Cause Party (HÜDA-PAR): 0.32 %, the Patriotic Party (VP): 0.23 %.

Besides its role in transition the Turkish type of presidential system, another significant aspect of these elections was the condition under which they were held: the state of emergency. The state of emergency was declared after the military coup attempt of June 15, 2016; it was extended for seven times until it was removed on July, 19 2018 and in turn it constituted an obstacle to elections to be held in a democratic environment in which freedom of thought and expression is fully secured. Following the state of emergency; the democratic gains achieved throughout Turkey's EU membership process have been eroded and a serious increase in violation of rights has been seen. Following the coup attempt of July, 15 2016, the security forces initiated operations on the citizens accused of being related with the coup attempt and according to the EU Report on Turkey dated April, 18 2018 over 150 000 people were taken into custody, 78 000 were arrested and over 110 000 civil servants were dismissed by statutory decrees¹⁵. Throughout this process while the government and the ruling party legitimized these violations of rights by referring to fight against terrorism, national interests, national security and survival

15 The number of dismissed civil servants reached up to 130 000 after the last statutory decree dated July, 8 2018.

of the state; it was also observed that opponent sections of the society, politicians, journalists and right defenders who pointed out problems regarding basic rights and freedoms had been tried to be silenced and intimidated through investigation, custody, detention and so on. According to the State of Emergency Situation Report issued by the Human Rights Joint Platform¹⁶, as of declaration of the state of emergency on July, 21 2016, not only violations of freedom of expression and press, right to security and right to a fair trial have been increased but also coercion over human rights organizations has been intensified. The report also notes that 174 media institutions¹⁷ and 1.419 associations were closed in the period of state of emergency till March, 20 2018. Throughout this process media ownership were also re-designed. According to the report of Benan Eres and Hakan Yüksel titled "The Changing Media Capital in the AKP Era"¹⁸, in the era of the AKP, a policy targeting "taming of the media" has been followed, tax inspections and re-distribution of advertisement revenues have played an important role in implementation of this policy and in order to ensure formation of media controlled by the government, media ownership has been manipulated. Following the closing of opponent media institutions and news agencies by statutory decrees; many media institutions including Hürriyet newspapers, CNN Turk TV channel and Doğan News Agency owned by Doğan Grup were transferred to pro-government Demirören Group and hence the possibility of production of news, information and views by the mainstream media that do not conform with policies of the government decreased to a great extent. Nevertheless the report shows that such a positioning of the media normalizes partisan and antagonizing editorial line.

16 Human Rights Joint Platform, Revised State of Emergency Situation Report, 20 March 2018, <https://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/196221-ohal-raporu-20-mart-2018-guncellemesi>

17 As it is mentioned in the report of Independence Election Monitoring Platform, CHP Deputy Sezgin Tanrikulu asked the number of closed media institution to the Prime Minister and the question was replied by Deputy Prime Minister Hakan Cavusoglu as follows: 6 news agencies, 18 TV channels, 22 radios, 50 newspapers, 20 magazines and 116 media institutions in total were closed. <http://www.diken.com.tr/khk-bilancosu-bugune-dek-116-basin-yayin-kurulusu-kapatildi/>, 09.05.2018). <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/>

18 Benan Eres, Hakan Yüksel, "The Changing Media Capital in the AKP Era", <http://halagazeteciyeiz.net/2018/05/10/akp-doneminde-turkiyede-degis-en-medya-sermayesi/>



2017 report of Front Line Defenders on human rights defenders¹⁹ identifies that extensive implementation of the laws related to the state of emergency considerably limited freedom of expression of media, parliament and associations. The report also shows that the detention wave on civil society reduces its capacity of dealing with ongoing violations and defending rights. Similarly the EU report on Turkey also mentions that the pressure over civil society results in a rapid shrinking space for fundamental rights and freedoms²⁰.

The parliamentary election and presidential election of June 24 were held under severe restrictions on freedoms of assembly and expressions and pressure over media, civil society and social opposition as well. The government's pressure over civil society and its interventions to the media constrained the environment of free competition which has a crucial role in ensuring a fair election. Nevertheless, similarly to the other international organisations, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Election Observation Mission, in its interim report, pointed out the possible problems in terms of integrity of elections that might be caused by holding of elections under an ongoing state of emergency²¹. Similarly, "It is difficult to imagine how credible elections can be held in an environment where dissenting views and challenges to the ruling party are penalized so severely" said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and called on the Government of Turkey to immediately lift the state of emergency to enable all of its citizens to participate fully and equally in the conduct of public affairs, and to exercise their rights to vote and to stand for election without unreasonable restrictions²². Similar concerns were also articulated by the European Council Parliamentary Assembly Monitoring Committee and it was emphasized that democratic elections could not be held while security operations were conducted in the southeast of Turkey²³.

The holding of elections under state of emergency -as it has been stated in the reports of international organiza-

tions such as OSCE- impaired fairness of elections and resulted in an uncompetitive electoral process through which the ruling party and the opposition parties and the current President and other presidential candidates ran their campaigns under unequal conditions. The issues that damaged fairness of elections throughout the campaigning period can be summarized as follows:

The Amendments in the Electoral Law

Just right before the elections, on March, 13 2018, AKP and MHP collaborated and made important amendments in the Electoral Law that might affect electoral security and fairness, without any prior consultation with the other opposition parties²⁴. According to the final report of OSCE dated September, 21 2018, these amendments contradict with the international standards set for electoral security and fairness. "Key amendments introduced to the election legislation in March were adopted without consultation, shortly before the elections, which does not provide for stability of the legal framework contrary to international good practice" said the report. Suspension of the constitutional safeguard that "prohibits amendments to election legislation to be applied to elections within one year from adoption" for the first next election by the constitutional referendum held in 2017 raised concerns that these amendments would serve the governing party. These amendments in the Electoral Law were widely criticized by main opposition party, the CHP, as jeopardizing the electoral security and fairness. The CHP unsuccessfully challenged some of the amendments in the Constitutional Court. In that regards the problems in terms of electoral security throughout the campaigning processes can be summarized as follows:

1. The amendments in the electoral legislation did not remove the 10 percent of electoral threshold which considered as the biggest obstacle to electoral fairness but they allowed political parties to engage in alliances for the elections and to pass the threshold conditional that the total votes of

19 https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/annual_report_digital.pdf

20 <https://www.ab-ilan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/20180417-turkey-report.pdf>

21 <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihr/elections/turkey/384858?download=true>

22 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/05/1009232>

23 <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=7036&lang=2&cat=3>

24 The Turkish Grand National Assembly enacted the Law No. 7102 on 13.03.2018 that amends the Law No. 298 on Basic Provisions on Elections and Voter Registers and the Law No. 2820 on Political Parties. For a detailed analysis of the amendments in the electoral legislation please see interim report on June, 24 2018 election of Independent Election Monitoring Platform: <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/> and the "Fairness of Election and Electoral Security" report of Association of Mulkiye Graduates : <http://mulkiye.org.tr/secim-adaleti-ve-guvenligi-raporu/>



the parties in an alliance exceeds 10 percent of all votes. The opposition parties interpreted this amendment as a precaution designed in order to keep the Nationalist Movement Party's presence in the parliament in reference to the assumption that the MHP might remain under the threshold due to potential loss of voters' support caused by its collaboration with the AKP and Erdoğan and the role it played in the process of referendum. The Grand Unity Party (BBP) also joined to this alliance called "the People's Alliance". In response to this alliance, the CHP, the Good Party and the Felicity Party joined together in the alliance called "the Nation's Alliance". Hereby, the electoral threshold of 10 percent was practically applied to the People's Democratic Party which remained of this dual alliance system.

2. Another problem related to electoral security and fairness caused by these amendments is the removal of principle of "total withdrawal of the executive branch from the electoral process and holding of elections exclusively by the judiciary branch" which was in practice since elections of 1950. As a result of these amendments, the obligation of ministers of internal affairs, transportation and justice to resign from their posts and fulfilment of these posts by independent persons was removed and thus intervention of executive branch in the elections was enabled²⁵.
3. Apart from these, as a result of these amendments, enablement of moving and merger of polling stations in the East and South-Eastern Regions was also criticized for complicating voters' access to polling stations. OSCE Election Observation Mission identified that at least 1,090 polling stations covering 16 cities and more than 120.000 voters were moved or merged²⁶. According to the interim report²⁷ of the Independent Election Monitoring Platform, polling stations -all of which were located in the East and South-Eastern Regions- covering around 170.000 voters were moved to different locations and this might have dissuaded voters in these regions from voting. The objections against

moving of polling stations to the Supreme Board of Elections were denied.

4. Another result of the amendment of the Electoral Law was entitlement of voters to call the law enforcement officers into the polling station. Before the amendment only the ballot box committee chairperson had the authority to call the law enforcement officers. The Electoral Security Report of Association of Mülkiye Graduates (Mülkiyeliler Birliği) notes that such a situation might directly damage voters' confidence. The report also states that holding of elections under the supervision of security forces of politically engaged Ministry of Internal Affairs instead of independent judges raised concerns of electoral security. Nevertheless, the HDP's report on the election day provides many examples on how polling station representatives of the Party and the voters observing the counting were taken out of the stations and how ballot box committee members and observers of the Party were removed from the stations as well²⁸.
5. Another result of the amendments was replacement of the political party representatives with civil servants as chairs of the ballot box committees. For the first time committees were chaired by a civil servant selected by lottery and this new practice raised concerns on committees' neutrality and possible interventions to the counting in favor of the ruling party. Nevertheless, as it is mentioned by the OSCE Election Observation Mission report dated June, 25 many chairpersons were not selected by a lottery and instead they were appointed by the governor or the district election boards²⁹.
6. In addition to all above-mentioned issues, validation of unstamped ballots by the amendment of the law raised concerns on election cheating.

Equality of opportunity and fairness of elections

It is possible to say that fairness of elections was impaired since all competing candidates and parties did not have equal opportunities. The problems in relation to equality of opportunity in the period of electoral campaign can be summarized as follows:

25 <http://mulkiye.org.tr/secim-adaleti-ve-guvenligi-raporu/>

26 <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihr/elections/turkey/385698?download=true>

27 <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/>

28 www.hdp.org.tr/tr/raporlar/hdp-raporlari/24-haziran-secim-ihlalleri-raporumuz/12219

29 <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihr/elections/turkey/385698?download=true>



1. One of the biggest obstacle to a fair election was the fact that one of the presidential candidates was in prison during the elections for the first time in political history of Turkey and he had to run his campaign from prison. The presidential candidate and former co-chair of the People's Democratic Party, Selahattin Demirtaş has been held in Edirne Prison since November, 4 2016. Despite the absence of a verdict his trial, he has been jailed pending trial on the grounds of the risk of absconding and tampering with evidence. His applications for release in the period of the electoral campaigns were denied, his application to the Constitutional Court was not even taken into agenda of the court and hence he had to run his campaign as a detainee in the prison. Upon Demirtaş's application, the Supreme Electoral Council allowed official propaganda speech to be shot in the prison. Although district election boards accepted his application for organizing election meetings in İstanbul, Gaziantep, İzmir and Mardin, he could not hold this meetings since his application for release was denied by the Ministry of Justice. Similarly, the prison administration did not allow him to join the live broadcast of Fox Tv on May, 30 by phone.
2. Another obstacle to the candidates and the parties to enjoy principle of equal opportunities during their electoral campaigns is the restrictions on freedom of assembly set by governors using the authority granted to them by the state of emergency. Meetings, demonstrations and enjoyment of freedom of association, expression and free propaganda –which are prerequisites of voters' free participation in the politics and deliberation of political views and choices- were obstructed to a great extent throughout the electoral campaigns. It was reported that governors granted with excessive authorities in the state of emergency precluded opponent political parties' meetings and demonstrations. OSCE's interim report dated June, 15 notes that the bans on assembly and expression first introduced in 2016 were still effective in Hakkari, Van, Mardin, Artvin and Eskişehir provinces. The report also indicates that in Van and Hakkari, the restrictions do not, however, apply to campaign-related activities of political parties; in an additional 14 provinces, the holding of public meetings throughout the state of emergency were sub-

jected to permission of the governor. Whereas in Tunceli there was a complete ban on public events including distribution of leaflets, and holding press conferences requires permission; in Bitlis a broad curfew applies in one district. According to the report of the Independent Election Monitoring Platform, besides restrictions on freedom of assembly and demonstration set by the governors in 17 cities covering all period of the state of emergency, in 8 cities the governors banned freedom of assembly and demonstration for the period of electoral campaign; in 25 cities freedom of assembly and demonstration was limited or banned. Similarly, according to the "Fairness of Election and Electoral Security" report of Association of Mulkiye Graduates, in case of a demonstration in where there was a ban on meetings and demonstrations, demonstrators were immediately taken into custody.

Nevertheless, according to the report of the HDP titled "Violations of Rights in the Period of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections"; 114 cases of confiscation, ban, obstruction, assault and threat were identified in the campaigning period of 58 days; 394 party workers or representatives were taken into custody; 18 people were arrested; 8 supporters of the HDP or other parties were murdered and 54 people were wounded³⁰. According to the OSCE report, mainly the HDP and also the CHP, the Felicity Party and the Good Party were affected by the attacks on their party and campaign offices. The HDP's campaign activities were specifically monitored by the police and the HDP was subjected to selective application of campaign rules. The OSCE considered Erdoğan's attempts of criminalizing the HDP and its supporters and the way in which he covers the HDP in his speeches as an attempt to create an atmosphere of fear and pressure and concluded that Erdoğan's attitude raised concerns about equality of opportunity and ability to campaign in a fair and free atmosphere as required by paragraph 7.7 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document and the Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice.

3. The critics on use of public resources by the ruling party and the President for finance of their cam-

30 <http://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/raporlar/hdp-raporlari/24-haziran-sec%CC%A7im-i%CC%87hlalleri-raporumuz/12219>



The Durations of Coverage of the Political Parties and Presidential Candidates in TRT Channels in between May 14-22, 2018				
<i>(Including news bulletins, live broadcasts, commentary programs and compulsory propaganda broadcasting)</i>				
	TRT 1	TRT News	TRT 6 (Kurdi)	Total
The People's Alliance and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	08:55:11	105:52:17	66:21:00	181:08:28
The CHP and Muharrem İnce	01:41:18	12:04:21	01:55:20	15:40:59
The İYİP and Meral Akşener	00:27:47	02:14:59	00:55:15	03:38:01
The HDP and Selahattin Demirtaş	00:02:01	00:30:00	0	00:32:01
The SP and Temel Karamollaoğlu	00:08:23	00:20:36	00:51:00	01:19:59
The HÜDA-PAR	0	00:10:00	01:22:10	01:32:38
The VP and Doğu Perinçek	00:06:41	00:30:28	00:01:00	00:38:09

Source: The HDP's Report on Violations of Rights in the Elections of June, 24.

paings were articulated by different resources. The OSCE points out that misuse of administrative resources was contrary to principle of "clear separation between the State and political parties". In the 10-day period of legal campaign the law explicitly prohibits the misuse of state resources by the Prime Minister, Ministers and members of parliament who are banned from using public vehicles and civil servants while on campaign tours; however this rule does not apply to the campaigns starting way before the initiation of legal campaigning period. Besides, since the applicability of campaign rules has not been updated since the introduction of the new presidential election system, the campaigns for presidential elections are not subject to such limitations. This situation causes serious problems regarding fairness of elections and opportunity equality. OSCE identified that the president inaugurated five completed projects and contrary to the law, in some cases, government officials publicly praised the achievements of government during the last 10 days of the campaign. Moreover civil servants, including military personnel and judges, engaged in campaigning although it is against the law and even in some cases municipality buses were allocated for transportation of citizens to the campaign meetings of the AKP. OSCE also noted that adoption of a bill by the parliament which was proposed by the Council of Ministers giving premiums to retired people, among others, is an instance of misuse of administrative resources by the ruling party which also violates principle of competition under equal conditions.³¹

4. As it is mentioned in the assessment provided above on the state of emergency; while a great majority of the mainstream media is controlled by the government, the opponent media faced serious problems in conveying views, promises and policy proposals of the opponent parties and candidates to public under the conditions of severe pressure, censorship and auto-censorship.

a. *Equal use of public service broadcasting:* Although TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Institution) is assigned to provide public service broadcasting by the Constitution and hence it is obliged to be neutral to all political parties and candidates and to cover their campaigns in a neutral way; it did not comply with its Constitutional duty by adopting an editorial line in favour of the AKP and Erdoğan both in terms of quantity and quality of its coverage of electoral campaigns. According to the report of the HDP, in the period of May 14-22, TRT covered Erdoğan and the People's Alliance for 181.08 hours, it covered CHP and Muharrem İnce only for 15.41 hours and the rest as follows: The SP and Temel Karamollaoğlu: 1,20 hour, the HUDA-PAR: 1.32 hour, the İYİP and Meral Akşener: 3.38 hours, the VP and Doğu Perinçek; 38 minutes, the HDP and Selahattin Demirtaş: 32 minutes. The broadcasting durations in the last week before the elections clearly exhibits the inequality in terms of the political parties' and the candidates' access to public service broadcasting.

On the other hand, according to the legislation, TRT is obliged to provide free broadcasting op-

31 <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihr/elections/turkey/385698?download=true>



portunities to the political parties and the candidates. The Supreme Board of Elections allowed detained Selahattin Demirtaş to shoot his two separate 10 minutes of propaganda speeches in the prison; however since the speeches were shot on the same day, he was not able to make any comments on the events and developments took place in between broadcasting dates of his two speeches. The presidential candidates of the CHP and the İYİP rejected their rights in reference to TRT's violation of principle of neutral broadcasting.

Besides, TRT refused to broadcast the CHP's political advertisement on the grounds that it included visuals of the Turkish flag and it was prohibited by the decision of the Supreme Court of Elections. However, TRT broadcasted political advertisement of the AKP which included visuals of the Turkish flag.

- b. *The Private Television Channels:* The Supreme Election Council's (SEC) authority of imposing sanctions to private media institutions for unbalanced and biased campaign coverage was repealed in 2017 by a statutory decree which turned into a law by adoption of it by the parliament. The SEC rejected applications regarding partisan coverage of electoral campaigns by the media on the basis that it did not have the authority³². The report of OSCE also notes that the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) did not perform its duty of monitoring media coverage of election campaigns and it did not issue monitoring reports. In addition, the report also provides the results of a media monitoring on 5 TV channels and 5 newspapers conducted by the International Election Monitoring Mission. The research reveals that the AKP and President Erdoğan had more often and positive media coverage in general. According to the research, the AKP and Erdoğan were covered in the 34 % of the total news and 65.5 % of

the current affairs airtime by TRT, A Haber, CNN Türk and Show TV. While Muharrem İnce had a coverage of 28 % and 46 % respectively, TRT1 and A Haber covered him with a predominantly negative tone. The candidate of the İYİP, Meral Akşener, had a coverage rate of 2.5 % and 5.18 % respectively. The research points out that the candidate of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtaş was not covered at all or he was covered in a predominantly or totally negative tone by the media. The coverage rate of Demirtaş in this period was as follows: TRT1: 2 % and 1 %, A Haber: 5.3 % and 2 %, CNN Türk 4 % and 2 %, Show TV: 8 % and 2 %. Likewise the SP, the VP, the HÜDA-PAR and their candidates had a very limited media coverage in that period. Fox TV presented relatively equally the presidential candidates of the AKP, İYİP and CHP, however it dedicated a limited coverage to the candidate of the HDP.

- c. *Printed media.* It is not possible to argue that the mainstream newspapers –owned by persons and institutions majority of which are either supporters of the government or in close commercial relations with it likewise the case of TV channels- covered political parties and candidates with a fair distribution. On contrary, the news and columns of the pro-government newspapers did not cover the opponent parties and candidates or presented them in a negative tone. According to the research of the International Election Monitoring Mission of the OSCE, in the news of Hürriyet, Sabah and Milliyet –which are among the newspapers with highest circulation- covered Erdoğan and the AKP in a positive note. The AKP and Demirtaş had 5 % of coverage in these newspapers in an exclusively negative note.
- d. *Social media.* The opponent parties and candidates tried to overcome the barriers set by the mainstream media by actively using social media. Since Selahattin Demirtaş did not have any access to address voters except social media; he tried to run his campaign through tweets he sent by means of his lawyers and family. Other candidates also actively used twitter and they tried to reach especially to young voters through animations and videos they posted

32 Two members of the Radio and Television Supreme Court applied to the SEC regarding TRT's unequal and unfair coverage of political parties and candidates. The appeal was rejected by the SEC on June, 9 2016 on the ground that "Sanctions for violation of equal treatment have been removed by the 10th article of the Statutory Decree No.687. Our institution can not take any criminal actions against a situation that is not associated with a sanction. (see. <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/>)



on Youtube and other social media channels. Nevertheless, pressure on social media continued in the campaigning period as well; according to the OSCE report more than 2.600 social media users were investigated for supporting terrorism, using hate speech against the unity of the state and the security of the society and 5.894 were legally charged.

5. While the ruling party benefited from public resources (for ex: transportation of the voters to the meeting arenas by public buses) in its campaign; campaign activities of the opponent parties were obstructed by different ways. When the related news and the HDP's report on Violations of Rights in the Elections of June 24 are analysed; many evidences are found on how campaign process was manipulated in a way that does not comply with fairness of elections. The related problems can be summarized as follows:

- a. *Obstruction of meetings and pressure on meeting participants.* According to the Violation of Rights reports of the HDP, Governance of Ankara, did not allow Ankara meeting of the HDP on June, 9 with the excuse that President Erdoğan would hold a meeting on the same day at the Stadium of 19th May. Similarly, the meeting of the co-president of the HDP Sezai Temelli in Ceylanpinar was not allowed and the police intervened in the meeting. It was also reported that, in many cases, live broadcasting vehicles and press were not allowed to enter in the meetings of the party. Besides, citizens participating in the meetings were also subjected to different kind of pressures; for instance more than 29 participants of the meeting held in Elazığ on June, 8 including co-presidents of Arıcak and Kovancılar and 17 participants of the İstanbul meeting held on June, 18 including a child were taken under custody after the meetings³³.

The meeting held by the Good Party in Gaziantep on June, 2 was disrupted by different ways including blocking of roads, evacuation of the meeting area with the excuse of bomb search and blocking of Akşener's convoy by a refuse lorry of the municipality.

- b. *Attacks on party buildings, election offices and stands.* According to the data of Independent Election Monitoring Platform, throughout the 51 days of official campaign period in between April, 30 2018 and June, 20 2018, at least 66 attacks and disruptions targeting activities of the political parties and candidates were conducted. 45 of them were physical attacks and 21 of them were obstructions. The report also notes that majority of attacks and disruptions (43) targeted campaign activities of the HDP and the rest of them is distributed as follows: the CHP: 9, the İYİP: 9, the SP: 3, the AKP: 2, the MHP: 1. In addition a joint event of the CHP and HDP was intervened in and an administrative fine was imposed according to the Law of Misdemeanors. Another fact presented by the report is that 20 % (13) of the attacks and disruptions was conducted by the security forces.

The attacks on party buildings, election offices and stands can be exemplified as follows: Ankara-Kecioren district building, Urfa-Viranşehir district building, İstanbul-Esenler, Ümraniye, Çekmeköy and Sultanbeyli district buildings, Muğla-Marmaris district building and Bolu province building of the HDP were attacked and also election offices, vehicles and stands of the party were attacked in many places; in return, for majority of this cases no legal action was taken for the attackers. Two persons were wounded as a result of the attack on election stand of the HDP in Büyükdada and a person claiming to be a police physically attacked to the party members in the stand located at Çankaya-Çayyolu-Metro exit and forcefully took the flyers and tore them apart. 6 members of the İYİP conducting campaign work at stand in İstanbul-Üsküdar were wounded by a knife attack (1 of them was severely wounded). As a result of an attack on election stand of the İYİP in Bursa, the stand was totally damaged and 5 people were wounded.

On June, 2 an attack targeted election tent set by İstanbul-Ümraniye branch of the CHP, the signature desk set for presidential candidate of the SP, Temel Karamollaoğlu, was attacked on May, 3. Members of the SP hanging party flags were attacked by a crowded group of members

33 <http://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/raporlar/hdp-raporlari/24-haziran-sec%CC%A7im-i%CC%87hlalleri-raporumuz/12219>



of the MHP at Ankara-Konya highway on May, 25; 15 people were beaten and 7 of them including Ankara parliamentary candidate of the party were taken to the hospital.

The Independent Election Monitoring Platform identified that, the security forces took 43 people into custody in 16 incidents. The report also provides examples of custodies targeting at obstructing campaign activities³⁴.

- c. *Removal of posters, flags and banners.* Removal of posters, flags and banners of opponent parties and candidates by supporters of the ruling party was reported as a common practice. So that, the campaign team of the SP put an instruction on their banners explaining the best way of taking down the banner in reaction to the municipal police cutting the ropes of SP's banners³⁵. Besides, according to the HDP's report on Violations of Rights in the Elections of June 24; the posters and banners advertising Muharrem İnce's upcoming meeting in Kars were removed, election posters of Muharrem İnce and CHP flags were replaced by AKP flags in Of district of Trabzon, CHP flags were taken down in Sisli district of İstanbul, Demirtaş's photos on city billboards were covered with Turkish flags in Urfa before Erdoğan's meeting, advertisement billboards of the HDP in Hoşnudiye neighbourhood of Eskişehir were covered with Turkish flags and paperboards, flags of the

HDP in Başkale district of Van were removed one by one and thrown away by special operations police in an armoured vehicle. The report also notes that a group composed of 50 people gathered in Cumhuriyet Square of Kesan district of Edirne, broke the window of advertisement board on which HDP's banner was hung and did not disperse until HDP banners hung on 3 different locations of the district were removed by the police.

A case reported by the Independent Election Monitoring Platform is a remarkable example of how security forces cooperated with local municipalities in obstructing campaign activities of the opponent parties: On June, 15 security forces, together with workers of the municipality, removed HDP flags in Findikli district of Rize.

According to the report of the Independent Election Monitoring Platform, the Good Party ranks first in terms suffering from intervention by public officers. In 5 different cases campaign activities of the party was intervened by the public officers; for instance the posters and banners advertising upcoming Gaziantep meeting of the İYİP were collected by the municipality officers and the party stand set at a rented area was tried to be removed by the municipality police in Sehzadeler district of Manisa and flags of the party were taken down before Kocaeli meeting of the party on June, 19.

On the other hand, media reported that flags of the SP in the campaign office of the party were taken down in Kayseri. On June, 2 AKP's banner of 15 meters was torn apart by sharp objects in Adana.

- d. *Criminalization and intimidation.* In the meeting held in Eskişehir on June, 12, Erdoğan argued that he was informed by the intelligence that almost all participants of Muharrem İnce's meeting in Diyarbakır were members of the HDP. Thus Erdoğan implied that supporters of both the CHP and HDP were monitored by the intelligence agency. Besides, in his many speeches, Erdoğan claimed that the HDP and its candidate Selahattin Demirtaş were in relation with the terrorist organization, called Demirtaş "a terrorist" and so that he initiated a smear

34 A case of obstruction of campaigns took place in Bursa, a 13 years-old child was taken under custody by the excuse that he wrote "HDP" (HDP) and "Selo" (abbreviation of Selahattin Demirtaş) on the walls of the houses. The President of Youth Branch of Marmaris District of the CHP and 7 members of the youth branch were taken into custody for hanging posters of Muharrem İnce and writing "We are walking through Turkey we dream of" on walls. In these cases people were released after their testimonies were taken. However two person taken under custody for writing "HDP" and drawing kettles* on walls were arrested by the court. *After tweets from Demirtaş's official twitter account, the guardians made a search in his cell and looked for a device for tweeting despite the fact that tweets were tweeted from outside by the social media team controlling the account. Demirtaş made a joke about this research: "There was only a kettle in my cell, hopefully they decided I can't tweet by it". After this joke, kettle became a political symbol. <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/>

35 <http://t24.com.tr/haber/saadet-partisinden-pankart-sokme-rehberi,658238>



campaign –backed by the pro-government media- against his political rival who was tried and not convicted yet. In Sanliurfa, a parliamentary candidate and his team entered a shop in where they argued with the shop-owner and his family members, the argument turned into a fight and a relative of the parliamentary candidate and shop-owner died and some people were hospitalised; then, the supporters and relatives of the candidate attacked on members of the family in the hospital and murdered two of them. President Erdoğan and spokespersons of the government held the HDP and the family attacked by the candidate and his supporters/relatives.

By referring to Muharrem İnce's visit to Selahattin Demirtaş in prison, Erdoğan accused İnce of "visiting head of terrorists in prison" and argued that they were in collaboration with PKK.³⁶

On the other hand, Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the MHP -the partner of the People's Alliance- argued that 100.000 of people who signed for presidential candidacy of Meral Akşener and Temel Karamollaoğlu should be investigated for their possible ties with the Fethullah Terrorist Organization and thus associated these candidates and their supporters with a terrorist organization. These words of Bahçeli were interpreted as a threat to all people supporting these candidates.

Despite all of these limitations and obstacles to propaganda activities and voters' participation in electoral campaign activities, it is possible to say that voters' mobilization was considerably high before the elections and campaigns were run actively. In addition to public meetings, gatherings with tradesmen, neighbourhood visits, iftar dinners and indoor meetings; the parties and candidates tried to reach voters through campaign stands, banners, posters, flags, audio vehicles, election songs, newspaper and TV advertisements, TV programs and special interviews, letters and interviews published in international media, social media animations and videos and social media messages as well. Campaign messages were communicated to the voters in Turkish and Kurdish and in public meetings of Muharrem İnce, sign language translation was provided for the hearing impaired citizens.

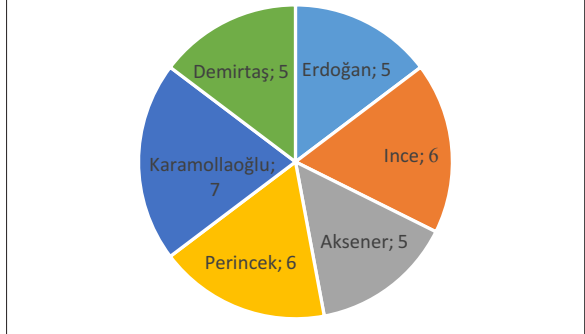
³⁶ <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/354581/Erdoğan-Demirtaşı-hedef-gosterdi-idam-cagirlarini-yanitladi>

II. DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE OF THE LEADERS

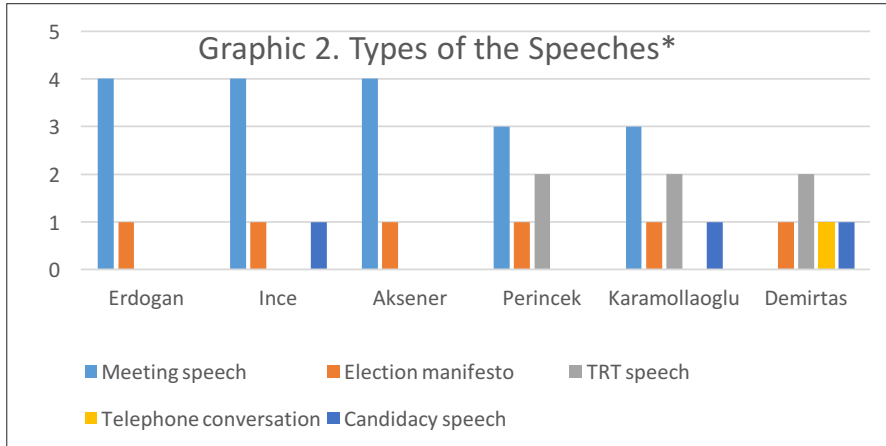
In this chapter, democracy discourse of the presidential candidates has been assessed through language and democracy agenda of the election arenas. For this purpose, first of all, democracy vision mediated by language use and word preferences of the leaders has been identified and how antagonizing discourse as a campaign strategy drew borders of democratic politics through antagonism of "us" and "them" has been searched. Secondly, the arguments which set the agenda of arenas of election have been analysed through the context in which the concept of democracy was used by the leaders in their speeches and messages, the democratic norms and principles and basic rights and freedoms covered by the leaders and the way in which they drew borders of them.

In the research, 34 speeches of 6 candidates have been analysed in total. The distribution of these speeches according to the leaders is shown in the figure below.

Graphic 1. Distribution of Election Speeches



4 meeting speeches of the joint candidate of the "People's Alliance" formed by the AKP and the MHP-Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his speech dated May, 6 in İstanbul in which he declared his election manifesto have been included in the analysis. 4 meeting speeches, 1 election manifesto and 1 candidacy speech of the candidate of the CHP-Muharrem İnce; 4 meeting speeches and 1 election manifesto of the candidate of the İYİP-Meral Akşener; 3 meeting speeches, 1 election manifesto and 2 TRT propaganda speeches of the candidate of the VP-Doğu Perinçek and 3 meeting speeches, 1 election manifesto and 2 TRT propaganda speeches of the candidate of the SP-Temel Karamollaoğlu have been included in the analysis as well. The candidate of the HDP-Selahattin Demirtaş could not make meeting speeches because of his detention and



* Since he was detained, candidacy letter and election manifesto of Demirtaş were publicized in written. These texts have been coded as speech in the figure.

hence 1 candidacy letter (which is reflected in the figure as candidacy speech), 1 written election manifesto, 1 telephone conversation which was broadcasted live over social media and 2 propaganda speeches at TRT of Demirtaş have been included in the analysis.

In addition to the speeches, 245 tweets of Muharrem İnce sent since announcement of his candidacy on May, 4; 118 tweets of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent since beginning of his campaign on April, 24; 608 tweets of Meral Akşener sent since announcement of her candidacy on April, 24; 197 tweets of Doğu Perinçek sent since beginning of his campaign on April, 18 and 218 tweets of Temel Karamollaoglu sent since beginning of his campaign on April, 18 have been analysed in the second stage of the research and the context in which related concepts and terms were used has been analysed.

A. The Language of Arenas of Election

In this section, the type of language preferred by the leaders while addressing voters at arenas of election and the discourse framework through which they set sense of belonging with their voters have been assessed. This assessment will be presented under the titles of “Words determining agenda of election” and “Strategies of Addressing Voters: Antagonism of we and they” and it is expected that it would reveal what kind of a politics is promised by the leaders and its relevance with democracy.

Words determining agenda of election

When the most frequently used 100 words are analysed³⁷, as it can be seen in the word cloud provided be-

low, “Turkey” and “of Turkey” are listed at the top. Putting words such as “as, will be, only, these” and connective words aside, “president”, “state”, “nation”, “Erdoğan” and “together” are the other most frequently used words.



Table 1: Most frequently used words in speeches

Showing the frequency of usage of words in all speeches, table-2 gives us an idea on the priorities of the leaders in constructing the language they use when addressing voters. Table-2 provides a list of the most frequently used words composed of at least 5 or more letters excluding the words such as “however, will-be, together, we-will-do, we-have-done” which do not make sense on their own. As it can be seen in the table, the word of “Türkiye” (Turkey) and the words derived from Turkey by affixes such as “Türkiye’nin” (of-Turkey) or “Türkiye’de”

frequently used connective words and pronouns.

37 In the analysis conducted through Nvivo, words composed of at least 5 letters were included in order to exclude



(in-Turkey) were repeated 865 times in speeches of the leaders. Such a high frequency can be explained by the leader's desire to address not only those in the arenas of election but also all voters through mass communication tools. The second most frequently used word is "nation" (millet) including the words derived by affixes such as "of-nation", 542 times in total. "State" (including the derived words) was used 327 times and "homeland" (including the derived words) was used 295 times. The sense of belonging aimed to be set by the presidential candidates by the means of words such as Turkey, state, nation and homeland points out the decisive role of nationalist discourse at arenas of election. Although frequency of usage of these words gives an idea on the political vision of the leaders on its own; the words do not appear in the least or less frequently used words should also be taken into consideration in order to identify the relation between word preferences and democracy perception of the leaders. Nonetheless, many words such as equality, freedom, pluralism that may mediate expression of basic democratic values and rights did not rank in this list. "Democracy" was used 129 times in the analysed 34 speeches³⁸. However the word of "terror" –that is used to justify restrictions on democratic rights- was repeated 137 times by Erdoğan and Perinçek. On the other hand, the word of "justice" was used 156 times which in turn points out that a vision of politics based on demand of justice came to the forefront at the arenas of election.

Repetition of word of "insallah" which means "if God lets" for 105 times indicates that the leaders prefer a populist and religious discourse when addressing voters. This issue will be analysed further in the following sections on the candidates' discourses.

Another word drawing attention in the table is Atatürk. The candidates who needed support of Kemalist, secular and patriotic voters as much as support of conservative, religious and nationalist voters, used word of Atatürk for 77 times in their speeches.

The other two frequently repeated words in the speeches are "president" (236 times) and "Erdoğan". Use of

38 Due to the program used in production of these tables, the words taking affixes do not count in the total number. For example when the word of "democracy" is counted, words such as "of-democracy", "democracies" or "democratic" are not counted together with "democracy". When these words are also included in the counting, the total number increases. The total frequency of usage of "democracy" including the words derived out of democracy is presented in the following sections on analysis of each leader's speeches.

name of Erdoğan for 186 times can be explained by agenda-setting through Erdoğan and criticism towards him which will be discussed further in the analysis of antagonising discourse.

Word (including affixes)	Frequency
Turkey	865
Nation	542
State	327
Homeland	295
President	236
Erdoğan	186
Justice	156
Education	141
Terror	137
Democracy	129
İnşallah	105
Atatürk	77

Table-2: Distribution of most frequently used words in speeches

Strategies of Addressing Voters: Antagonism of "us" and "them"

Arenas of election in which politicians can have face-to-face interaction with voters does not only enable them to articulate their criticisms, promises and policy proposals but they also provide them with an important tool to communicate with first-time voters and with so called "indecisive voters" who do not decide to which party or candidate they will vote and stay in between parties and candidates they feel closer until the election day. Politicians speaking at the arenas of election do not only address voters who are right there but they can also address much wider masses of voters through conventional media and social media as we have seen cases of which in the last elections. Therefore the language used at arenas of elections allows provocative and sensational outburst and heavy criticisms targeting rival parties and candidates which may attract media's attention and increase possibility of media coverage on the one hand, it also contains rhetorical elements that may strengthen voters' sense of belonging on the other. Politicians, telling their accomplishments and promises in their speeches at arenas of election, occasionally use a populist discourse that dignifies voters or a rhetoric equipped with religious elements, appealing to nationalist feelings and aiming to establish a strong sense of belonging with vot-



ers through an antagonism of “us” and “them” or time to time a hostile language appealing to fears of voters through conspiracy theories and speculations based on hostility. Holding daily meetings and sometimes more than one meeting in a day; politicians respond to arguments of other candidates, come up with new arguments, adopt a style that criticizes other and dignifies their political choices and run their campaign at a high pace that keeps media’s attention alive throughout the period of campaigning that takes a month more or less.

In regards to elections of June, 24, it has been observed that, during the election campaigns run at a high pace, the presidential candidates used harsh expression that go beyond limits of criticism against each other while addressing voters. Especially Erdoğan, in order to consolidate his supporters and persuade indecisive voters, aimed at producing a sense of “us” associated with historical, religious bounds and common national values and categorizing his rivals in a sense of “them” defined as enemies and pushed out of political arena, throughout his whole campaign. It has also been observed that Erdoğan’s antagonistic discourse had a determinative effect on speeches of other candidates, mainly on Muharrem İnce’s. Hence, in order to identify main characteristics of democracy discourse of the candidates, an assessment on Erdoğan’s antagonistic discourse in his speeches and its reflections on speeches of other candidates is deemed to be necessary. It will also be accompanied by an assessment on religious and sentimental notions in the speeches as elements of populist discourse which mediated to “setting of rules of the game by Erdoğan” at arenas of election in our consideration.

As it can be seen in table-3, Erdoğan used words of “we/us” for 165 times in his 5 speeches that we analysed, it is the second most frequently used word after “one”. Erdoğan said “I” for 39 times. In order to directly address his rivals and enemies, he said “these” and “of-these” for 32 times in total and used “they” or “them”

for 13 times. Besides, Erdoğan used “Muharrem” for 25 times to address his rival Muharrem İnce and said “Mr. Kemal” to address Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Erdoğan did not mention names of his other rivals. When we look at how frequently these words were used by İnce in order to make a comparison, we see that İnce used “I” for 80 times and “we/us” for 8 times which means that while Erdoğan sets an identification between himself and voters & his party; İnce focused on his own identity by using a language based on “I” maybe due to the fact that he run as a candidate for the first time. In order to address his rivals, other parties or those he considered as enemies, İnce said “these” for 10 times, “of-these” for 1 time, “they” and “them” for 3 times. However, İnce said “Erdoğan” for 86 times, “Recep” for 5 times and “Tayyip” for 6 times in his speeches. The frequency of usage of words indicates that while an antagonism based on “us” and “them” was generally prominent in Erdoğan’s speeches; İnce set the main antagonism between himself and Erdoğan and elaborated his speeches through his responses to Erdoğan or his accusations towards him. A similar tendency can also be seen in Meral Akşener’s speeches. Saying “we/us” for 50 times and “I” for 44 times, Akşener used words of “they/them”, “these” and “of these” for 11 times in total. Akşener said “Erdoğan” for 14 times but she did not mention names of other candidates. In addition, Akşener said “friends” and “this/these friend(s)” for 15 times to address Erdoğan.

Table-3 also shows that while Doğu Perinçek, similarly to Erdoğan, constructed his discourses over “us” and “them” antagonism; Temel Karamollaoğlu predominantly used a wide definition of “us” without an antagonising discourse and Demirtaş used a language based on “us” and “I”.

On the other hand, as “us” and “them” antagonism set by Erdoğan is one of the constituent element of antagonistic discourse that is prevalently used in arenas of elec-

Words	Erdoğan	İnce	Akşener	Perinçek	Karamollaoğlu	Demirtaş
We/Us	165	8	44	54	215	16
I	39	80	50	20	68	11
They/them	13	3	3	13	4	-
These	19	10	6	12	1	-
Of-These	13	1	2	18	2	1

Table 3: Distribution of words mediating antagonism of “us” and “them”



tion; it is possible to argue that speeches of other candidates (mainly Ince's) shaped by anti-Erdoğanism stand as the individualized reflection of this antagonism.

In order to have a better understanding of basic dynamics of the antagonistic discourse and to reveal how it constitutes an obstacle to democracy discourse, it would be beneficial to analyse how politicians define and make sense of "us" and "them" in details. In that sense, we will analyse how upon which common identities and antagonisms leaders construct dichotomy of "us" and "them", which aspects of "us" are emphasized by leaders and whether they generate an understanding of "them" which goes beyond political competition below. Meanwhile, we will try to discuss the relationship between democracy and understanding of politics lying under the harsh criticisms of leaders towards each other.

Antagonism as a campaign strategy in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches

Electoral speeches of President Erdoğan are predominantly based on a sentimental use of language. This sentimental language mediates establishment of "us" and "them" distinction through exaggerated expression of love to voters, homeland, country and religion accompanied by a threat perception and sense of fear kept alive by an over-antagonising discourse.

When addressing voters, Erdoğan identifies his party with himself and his political identity and says "we have troubles, we have love for our nation" while explaining policies of his party. This "us" refers to leader itself, the cadres of his accomplishing party and voters supporting him. Thus, he establishes an identification between himself, his party and his voters. The same identification pushes people who do not support AKP out of the "us" and defines them as "outers".

In his meetings Erdoğan talks about his love to country and nation, he mentions his love to İzmir, he says that his love to Diyarbakır would never and he emphasizes that his hearth belongs to Turkey. In his meeting in İstanbul, where he started his political career as a mayor, he uses a language that enables voters to identify themselves with him and the glory and victory story he tells over İstanbul. He calls İstanbul as "my love, my passion, my lover, my comrade, my confidant, my sanctuary, my sister, my life-long companion" in his speeches; while impersonating İstanbul and describing it as a lover; he does not only appeal to İstanbul but also to voters in the meeting arena as well:

İstanbul, even loving a district of yours is worth a lifetime; İstanbul, not only those smiling but also those crying in you are happy; İstanbul, today you are magnificent as always; you are writing history, you give us power and courage once again. I salute you all, İstanbul.

The rainbow takes its colours from you, the silver steals its colour from your sea sparkles, you are the real love of poets, all architectures admire you and sultans are charmed by you. You are Romeo, Juliet is you; you are the fire in the hearths, İstanbul. (İstanbul, June, 17 2018).

For Erdoğan, İstanbul is a symbol of a success story like himself; İstanbul had been occupied and had suffered, people had given their lives for it and eventually it was conquered and ended in glory. The Seljukian and Ottoman history and the history of the Independence War are told through the love of and longing for İstanbul:

Alparslan carried your love when he was in Manzikert, Saladin was in love with you when he was conquering Jerusalem and you opened the path for Ertugrul. In Sogut Osman Gazi planted the first sapling for you. The tree of Ottoman spread to all word with your glory. Soldier Mehmeds died for you in Gallipoli, the whole Anatolia stood up for you in the independence war. Sütcü İmam in Maraş, Şahin Bey in Antep, and Nene Hatun in Erzurum fought for you. Şerife Bacı in Kastamonu enveloped her hearth with you. Muhammad Iqbal wrote his poems for you. Oppressed people of Africa prayer for you. You are the cure to broken hearths, you are the hope for all oppressed people and you are the pole star of our future. I salute you İstanbul with respect, appreciation and longing.

In addition, the identity presented to voters by means of İstanbul enables voters to identify themselves with the Ottoman history, victories and all Muslim world.

... I salute young hearths, the successors of Sultan Mehmed who conquered this saint city...I salute our Syrian, Iraqi, Turkistani brothers fighting for freedom and justice in all corners of our geography (İstanbul, June, 17 2018).

Depending on the location of the speech, identification is based on religious brotherhood (especially in İstanbul and Diyarbakır. In order to appreciate massive participation in his meetings, Erdoğan says "Mashallah" (as God willed), "Mashallah Barekallah" (the great Lord willed), "Aman ya Rabbi" (Oh, my great God) and "May God



Table-4 only contains words composed of at least 6 letters; when the frequency of words such as “ben” (I), “biz” (we/us) and “onlar” (they) composed of 5 or less letters taken into consideration, it is seen that Erdoğan identifies himself with voters through “we/us” and “I”, he describes others through “they/them” and “these” and positions them on the opposite site under the category of “common enemies”.

The identity of “us” in Erdoğan’s speeches is constructed in reference to common history and religion. This common history flows in a continuity; it starts from the Seljuq State, continues with the Ottoman Empire, goes through Independence War and transition to multi-party system and finally reaches its peak with Erdoğan’s political career. Erdoğan addressed his voters as “successors of Fatih Sultan Mehmed who conquered the sacred city-İstanbul when he was 21 years old” (June, 17 2018) and defines “us” as “those who revitalises the spirit of Gallipoli and saves the motherland from invasion” in the speech he declared his election manifesto (May, 6 2018). Thus, establishment of the Republic of Turkey after collapse of the Ottoman Empire is considered to be a continuity instead of a break; voters are honoured by the greatness and victories of the Ottoman Empire. The legacy defined as “the thing that made us who we are” goes from Turks’ first entry into Anatolia to establishment of the Ottoman state, from conquest of İstanbul and spread of Islam to patriotism of Abdulhamid, from Gallipoli victory and stories of martyrs and heroism eventually to virtue, will and courage of nation which has suffered from coups and oppression on its beliefs.

My dear nation, which made this land our homeland, these lands have been our motherland and homeland since the Victory of Manzikert in 1071. They made us who we are. Our state was founded in yuruk tents in Söğüt ... The prophesied army that ushered in a new era in İstanbul was our army. Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror was our ancestor. It was our takbirs that echoed in the domes of the Suleymaniye Mosque... We were all Abdulhamid, who said: “The land taken with blood cannot be sold for money.” We were those who challenged the entire world at Gallipoli – those who gave their lives but denied passage to the enemy... We were the lions who rushed from the trenches like arrows upon hearing the words of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: “I order you to die.” We were the ummah’s will, committed to victory, in Kut al-Amara. ... It was our hands and our hearts

that cried in prayer. In 1923, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, it was our will that declared our state to be a Republic (Election manifesto, İstanbul, May, 6 2018).

Linking past to present through a continuity, this narrative defines “us” as the people “whose will was suppressed”, “who suffered”, “who were imprisoned”, “who were targeted by military coups and memorandums” and “whose beliefs were suppressed”; so that even in the course of construction of “us”, “them” is positioned against “us” as the responsible of all of these unjust treatments.

The May 27, 1960 coup was carried out against us. It was our will that was hung. The March 12, 1971 memorandum was issued against us. The September 12, 1980 coup targeted us. On February 28, they tried to drown the nation’s faith. We were the ones who were imprisoned, oppressed—the ones who suffered— after each coup. They tried to undermine our very existence, our unity, our harmony, our welfare and our peace. We did not give up. We did not go down. We did not refrain from fighting. With virtue, will and courage, we facilitated Turkey’s rise (Election manifest, İstanbul, May, 6 2018).

In addition, from the very first moment, Erdoğan identifies himself with the “us” who have fought against all these enemies and with the political movement (which is indeed AKP) is claimed to have facilitated Turkey’s rise. Nevertheless, the association set by Erdoğan in between “I” and “us” can clearly be seen in the election manifesto as follows: “We were elected President with our nation’s support to doom their plans to failure” (election manifesto), “We started to serve Turkey in here” (İstanbul meeting; he refers to his own political career) and “we are as such, we are accomplishing over and over for the people, because we feel responsible” (when telling accomplishments of his party to voters).

For Erdoğan, the constituent element of “us” does not only depend on historical references but also on existence of a historically continuous category of “internal and external enemies”. So that, the perception of threat is kept alive and the “us” is expected to strongly unite and sacrifice if necessary including martyrdom. The phrases such as “We were those who did not let occupiers walk all over this country’s honour”, “the coups targeted us” and “they tried to drown nation’s faith” in the election manifesto show how wide the category of the enemies is. Erdoğan implies a continuity between those



who occupied the country and tried to walk over country's honour and the "powers" who wanted to put their yoke on the national will and their "global masters".

An important component of the category of enemies (which is named as "front of evil" by Erdoğan) is the "West" that is described as "the imperialist powers" and accused of committing hostility to Islam and cultural racism. Erdoğan interpreted the interest of the European Union and western countries in the election of June, 24 as follows: "Why is the west looking at June, 24; what is it waiting for? Are they watching over to see 'How Erdoğan will collapse'? We are ready to teach a lesson to them as well" (June, 17 2018, İstanbul), According to Erdoğan, "global evil forces" are maintaining colonial policies, trying to "collapse Turkey from inside" and when they do not succeed they are trying to "surround Turkey with a terror corridor" and "they are hiring assassins in order to set a terror corridor along our borders". Legitimizing operations of Euphrates Shield and Afrin Operations and military intervention to Qandil in that way, Erdoğan builds "his security" discourse over this continuous perception of threat (Election Manifesto, İstanbul, May, 6 2018). Besides, the evil front is broadly defined inside as well; terrorist organizations such as FETÖ, PKK and DAESH, the opponent political parties such as CHP and HDP and other organizations of social opposition which are accused of collaborating with terrorists are presented as components of the evil front. For example, Erdoğan in his election manifesto, considers the protests of Gezi Park of 2013 which is named as "Gezi Uprising" by him and the corruption operations of December 17-25, 2013 targeting the government which were understood to be carried out by Gülen Community as the activities of the same evil front and accuse this front of "targeting our democracy" and "attempting to hostage our will". Erdoğan argued that Kobane protests of October 6-8 2014 during which 50 people died were caused by separatist terrorist organizations, sponsored by imperialist powers and held Selahattin Demirtaş -former co-president and presidential candidate of the HDP-responsible for these events without explicitly mentioning his name. According to Erdoğan, the coup attempt of June, 15 2016 was also a game of this evil front.

Erdoğan's statements targeting Selahattin Demirtaş who has been kept in prison without a conclusive court decision and the HDP which is a legal party entitled to run for elections and his accusations towards Muharrem İnce who had visited Demirtaş in prison show how severely legitimate political sphere is narrowed by this hate speech.

My brothers and sisters. Who called people of Diyarbakır to pour into streets? Wasn't he the guy in Edirne prison? 53 brothers and sisters of ours died and martyred in there. Who were the people who lost their lives? Weren't they my Kurdish brothers? Did not they kill our son Yasin Boru? Did not they martyr him? What is the situation now, he is a candidate for Presidency. Now, I see that all of them are visiting that guy in Edirne prison as if they are visiting a tomb. Mr. Muharrem is proud of it, he says "I will go and visit him".

...

My brothers and sisters. Demirtaş washed his hands with blood of 53 brothers and sisters. Sooner or later, he will pay the price of it.

Erdoğan enemized the HDP through stating that "They exist to demolish the country" in Diyarbakır meeting. He held the HDP responsible for the terrorist actions and he targets the Party as follows: "Haven't they bombed houses in here? Haven't they demolished houses? Haven't they dug tunnels under houses? They demolished our mosques, they demolished and bombed our schools. Likewise, they demolished the Clock Tower and set it on fire". He also accuses the HDP and HDP municipalities of sending money to the terrorist organizations and backing it.

Erdoğan accused the CHP of being on the same front with FETO which is considered as an organization of betrayal by him and Erdoğan argued that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu had acted together with those who attempted a coup on July, 15. In his Ankara meeting, Erdoğan claimed that Kılıçdaroğlu had gone to the Municipality of Bakırköy in a controlled manner and in the company of tanks and some people -who used to be protestors in the Gezi uprising- had applauded passing of tanks on Bağdad Street (June, 9 2018, Ankara). When addressing voters in İzmir, Erdoğan noted that "a group of elitists" (the CHP is implied) "are trying to hide their betrayal and mistakes under the concept of secularism" and "are putting a yoke on votes of some districts in Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir". In his İzmir meeting Erdoğan argued that the CHP had not produced any project for İzmir (April, 28 2018) and in his Ankara meeting he criticized the CHP as follows "The CHP is dirtiness. The CHP is garbage. Their all history is full of garbage" (June, 9 2018). According to Erdoğan, the CHP is a party of fascist and oppressive nature and these characteristics of the CHP have never changed in years. In his İstanbul meeting Erdoğan ac-



cused the CHP of hanging Menderes and his friends and said “Their biggest accomplishment is applauding military coups and getting prime ministers hung. Now, if they could, hand in hand with the political extension of the terrorist organization (implying the HDP), they would have turned Turkey into an authoritative Ba’ath regime” (İstanbul, June, 17 2018).

As it is seen, the scope of the “them” that is used by Erdoğan in order to establish and consolidate the identity of the “us” is considerably wide. Erdoğan de-legitimizes rival parties of the CHP and the HDP, the leaders and presidential candidates of these parties and the social opposition as well and associates them with terrorist organizations. According to Erdoğan, the western counterparts of Turkey constitute a threat against the existence of the country and they are imperialist forces attempting to divide the country. So that, any criticism targeting himself and his party can be associated with broadly defined enemies. There is no doubt that such an understanding of politics based on the paranoia that the country is continuously under a big threat coming from all sides serves more than one purpose. The perception of continuity of the threat did not only legitimize the state of emergency and provide a legitimacy ground for authoritarian practises but it also motivated the voters feeling under threat to unite around the “us” offered as a cure to all problems by Erdoğan. Nevertheless, the “us”, which is manifested as the reflection of the “national will” claimed to be represented by Erdoğan and his party, is presented as the single power that can deal with that threat.

The “us” in Erdoğan’s speeches, that is used to refer Erdoğan himself, his party and sometimes his voters, is the “nation” as well. The constituent elements of the “us” in which the leader is identified with the nation is the “lands turned into homeland by the common history and blood sacrificed”. At this point, there is continuity between the martyrs of the Independence war and the martyrs who died during the fight against “the terror corridor created by those who wish to divide the country” and the coup attempt that is considered as “the greatest betrayal against the country”. While noting that the “us”, in other words the nation, fought together in the night of the coup attempt, Erdoğan attributes a super-human power to the nation by arguing that “the nation killed the death”: “We are the ones who stopped tanks with our bare hands. I celebrate you, I congratulate you, that night you killed the death”. In his same speech

Erdoğan said “As we have doomed their plans to failure, we will keep doing that” and ensured his voters that the ongoing threat would be defeated. Such an insurance also reflects on the identification between himself & his party and the will of the nation (which indeed refers to his supporters) & the state: “We are the free will and the indivisible integrity of Turkey!” (Election manifest, İstanbul, May, 6 2018). Erdoğan promises “Re-rise of a nation that completed its foundation and resurrection” in his election manifesto. Indeed this re-rise is a promise of resurrection of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, Erdoğan presents this resurrection as a “salvation” for the region and all Muslim countries described as the oppressed people of the world: “Our re-rise shall facilitate the well-being of our region and all oppressed people around the world”. Erdoğan associates his aggressive foreign policy preferences which have been criticized by his rivals with an implicit desire and promise of “re-rise” through referring the Ottoman hinterland that he describes as “the spiritual geography”: Not just the security of our country but also the peace and welfare of our neighbours, friends and spiritual geography, is an item on our agenda”. Therefore the “us” corresponds to the “hope of oppressed parts of the world” and the “world’s leading provider of humanitarian aid” (Election manifesto, İstanbul, May, 6 2018).

As it is seen, the “us” and “them” antagonism that plays a determining role in Erdoğan speeches is built on continuity of the “perception of threat” which is mediated by a nationalist and hostile discourse equipped with religiosity. While referring to his political identity and party as the single power that can deal with this threat; Erdoğan indeed declares all kinds of politics that are not compatible with his national, religious and political preferences illegitimate. This attitude is highly problematic since it constrains sphere of democratic politics to the extent that political plurality is totally abolished and no room is left for legal opposition.

Conspiracy theories and security discourse in Doğu Perinçek’s election speeches

Similarly to Erdoğan, antagonistic discourse has a considerable weight in Perinçek’s speeches. Perinçek used phrases of “they/them” or “these” for 43 times in his 6 speeches in order to mark “enemies” as a security threat against “us”. In Perinçek’s speeches, the antagonism is mainly built through security discourse reinforced by conspiracy theories and it is argued that the inter-



nal and external enemies threaten Turkey's security. In this discourse, the leading "enemies" are the USA as an imperialist power and Israel that is served by the USA. Nevertheless, as it can be seen in the word cloud displaying the most frequently used words in Perinçek's speeches, "Amerika" (the USA) is among the most frequently used words after Turkey. Besides, Atatürk and Israil (Israel) are among the prominent words.



Table 5: Most frequently used 100 words in Perinçek's speeches (composed of at least 6 letters)

Perinçek argues that the USA plans to found a second Israeli state under the name of Kurdistan through arming PKK, threatens Turkey's security from north of Syria and Iraq and it even poses a threat for Turkey in the Mediterranean and Aegean regions.

According to Perinçek, the USA, together with Israel, Greece and Southern Cyprus, have been planning to attack Turkey's continental shelf, confiscate energy resources in there and transfer Turkey's natural gas resources to Europe (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018). In the press conference in which he publicized his election manifesto, Perinçek accused the USA of "provoking both ethnic and separatist terrorist organizations and fundamentalist terrorist organizations into attacking on Turkey" and said "That is the reason why the West and the Atlantic are sources of threat and division for us". Similarly Perinçek argues that NATO is against Turkey and Turkey should leave NATO alliance.

According to Perinçek, second plan of the "West" over Turkey is "imposing economy of indebtedness under

the cover of integration to the world economy. Hence, Perinçek asserted that Turkey had to "elect" between "division of Turkey and ending terror and securing integrity of the country". According to Perinçek, both government and opposition parties are stuck in between choices of Atlantic system however the solution is to engage in relations with Asia, China, India, Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran which are categorized in "contemporary civilization" by Perinçek. Perinçek argued that Erdoğan could not establish these relations since these countries did not have a trust in Erdoğan but he and the Patriotic Party were able to engage with these countries with which they had good relations and ongoing engagements. The reason why Perinçek offers to engage with Asia rather than the western civilization is that "We are an Asian nation as Atatürk stated" according to him. So that, Perinçek argues that the "us" can find its true identity in the East against the USA and the West that he describes as the "enemies of Turkey" and he accuses of provoking separatist terror and supporting "fundamentalist terrorist organizations acting on behalf of Islam but has nothing to do with it".

The "internal enemies" on which conspiracy theories focus are FETO accused of attempting a pro-American coup and PKK argued to be backed by the USA and Israel. However Perinçek does not only accuse terrorist organizations but also the government and opposition that "engage, meet and negotiate with the separatist terrorist organizations under the name of Kurdish 'opening' and also prepare a constitution for Turkey and draw roadmaps with them". According to Perinçek, the Kurds do not have a problem and single solution rests in arms: "They pull the gun provided by the USA on Turkey, this issue can only be handled by weapons" (Istanbul, June, 21 2018). At this point, Perinçek claims that CHP supported the Kurdish opening (initiative) and even it said "I would do it better" (Izmir, June, 22 2018). Perinçek demands closure of the HDP for its "activities against the unity of the nation and the integrity of the homeland" (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018). Similarly to Erdoğan, Perinçek associates a legal party –the HDP- with terror and argues that "Terrorist are allowed to plant mines, fire guns on Turkish soldiers and collect tribute by means of the HDP". Perinçek repeated this opinion also in his TRT speech on June, 23. Besides, he also associates the alliance between the CHP and the İYİP with terror by asserting that PKK/HDP is the secret partner of the Nation's Alliance.



In Perinçek's speech, the "us" is the solution to the enemies of Turkey which are described through conspiracy theories. The "us" corresponds both to the Patriotic Party, its leader and personality of the leader. Turkish nation is a whole composed of "all of us" and it is the name of people of Turkey who founded the Republic of Turkey as Atatürk stated, according to Perinçek. However the claim of "wholeness" depends on a demand for homogeneity and under the identity of Turk, ethnic differences are ignored and Kurds' demands for rights are interpreted as provocation and the USA. In that regards, in his TRT speech on June, 17 Perinçek said "We will embrace our Kurds. We are the Kurds and we are the Turks. We are the Turkish nation". He repeated a similar view in his İstanbul meeting on June, 21: "There is not a Kurdish Issue. There is an America issue. The Kurdish issue turned into an American issue. The Kurd is our Kurd. We are the Kurds and we are the Turks. We are the Turkish nation". On the other hand, Perinçek gets closer to Erdoğan's historical continuity thesis when he identifies Turkish nation as a nation with a tremendous historical accumulation that founded great empires of the world. According to Perinçek, Turkish nation inherited the talents of organizing and living with honor from this past; Turkish nation fought against imperialism and made a revolution that reached its peak with Atatürk; Turkish nation is a hard-working, self-reliant, moral and cultured nation (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018).

In the leader's speeches, the second meaning of the "us" corresponds to the party. According to Perinçek, the Patriotic party is the name of the extraordinary solution and the carrier of the spirit of the Independence War. The Patriotic Party assumed the mission of protecting secularism and Atatürk revolution and wrote "the founding program of Turkish revolution as summarized by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at the top of its party program". "The history calls Turkish nation to form the revolutionary, populist and national government" and the party to lead this duty is the Patriotic party: "The Patriotic Party is the single party standing against the separatist terror" and it is the party which had knocked down the walls of Silivri prison in which Turkish Army were imprisoned by a FETO conspiracy and opened the path for Turkish nation (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018).

Final correspondence of the "us" in Perinçek's speeches is himself, the person who is claimed "to have disproved the lie of Armenian genocide in front of the European Court of Human Rights" (June, 23 2018,

Eskişehir). When saying "We have started the fight for elimination of FETO, we have called the President in the night of coup attempt", "we have warned that 'it is not the Turkish army attempting the coup, stand still, stand tight", "we have reminded its duty to the Turkish army" and "We have changed all balances on TV screens", Perinçek refers to himself. Nevertheless, he said "I immediately run to Tehran" and argued that he had talked to the Iranian government regarding Barzani's attempt to declare foundation of Kurdistan and he had repaired relations between Turkey and Iran. In addition, in his speech in Eskişehir on June, 23 he also argued that he had held meetings with Iran in September in order to disrupt Israel's plan to found Kurdistan, he had met with the President of Syria and he had met with the Chinese authorities.

Perinçek benefits from the antagonism of "us" and "them" when he analyses developments in internal and foreign politics through conspiracy theories. However, in order to be a part of the "us", the precondition of acceptance of homogeneity should be met as in the case of Erdoğan. While Erdoğan identifies the borders of the "us" in reference to supporting AKP and being religious; Perinçek's interpretation of "us" is based on Kemalist nationalism and acceptance of "Turkish" as the supra-identity. However such a definition of "us" does not allow neither the government nor the supporters of the opposition parties except his party to be included in the "us"; he marks them all as the agents of conspiracy theories (that are core of his speeches), excludes and enemies them. Such an antagonism inevitably constrains the sphere for democratic politics as it does in the case of Erdoğan.

Anti-Erdoğanism and personalization of antagonism in Muharrem İnce's speeches

When addressing voters at the arenas of election, Muharrem İnce used a language similar to Erdoğan however he refers to different arguments. Harsh criticisms towards his rivals which can be considered as insult, leader-centred and over-personalized understanding of politics and (in order to mobilize voters) use of threat perception and introduction of the leader figure as a saviour against the threats in are among the similarities. He used religious themes in his speeches but not as much as Erdoğan does; for examples he repeated the phrase that "When I will be a president by the wish of our nation and will of God" so many times and he gave the mes-



sage that his election victory would be possible not only by the will of voters but also by will of God to gain support of religious voters. There is no doubt that an understanding of politics in which determination of the governors depends on God's will before people's will is not compatible with Ince's ideal of "contemporary, democratic politics". In that sense, that kind of appealing to voters might be attributed to the preference of introducing popular elements in speeches. Another populist feature of Ince's speeches resembling to Erdoğan is reading poems of the poets which match the political characteristics of the respective cities. For example Ince read poems of Ahmet Arif in his Diyarbakır meeting and said "I am Muharrem Ince from Yalova and I am 54 years old. Now, I am as excited as I was when I first read poems of Kurdish Ahmed Arif from Diyarbakır when I was 15, I am feeling what I felt before". In his candidacy declaration speech in Ankara, Ince said that poems of Ahmet Arif caused him to get closer to leftist ideology. He also read lines from Nazım Hikmet (Diyarbakır, June, 11 2018). In his İstanbul meeting, Ince read lines from Yahya Kemal and Necip Fazıl and he said "We will embrace everybody. Yahya Kemal is ours, Necip Fazıl is ours, Nazım Hikmet is ours (İstanbul, June, 23 2018).

Another aspect of Ince's election speeches is the antagonism built through anti-Erdoğanism. As it can be seen in the world cloud below, Ince's most frequently used word is Erdoğan. The coincidental order of the words in the world cloud makes a sentence that is "Erdoğan will be the President of Turkey" (Türkiye Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan olacak). When all speeches of Ince is analysed, it is not possible to say that he threw in the towel at the very beginning but he based his speeches over anti-Erdoğanism and comparisons between himself and Erdoğan. In that sense, rather than a controversy between "us" and "them"; an antagonistic discourse formed through "I" and "he" can be identified as the main element of his speeches. Nevertheless "we" and "I" are often intertwined with each other in Ince's speeches.

According to Ince, the common history of "us" starts with the Republic and Mustafa Kemal. In one of the two speeches in which he talked about the Ottoman history, he noted that the Ottoman Empire had been established in 1299 and had gone through an interregnum period before 1413 during when political and administrative turmoil had taken place and the army had been dissolved. Finally he made an analogy between that period and the current situation of Turkey (Candidacy speech,

May, 4 2018). In his Ankara meeting he said "Ottoman kept losing lands for 223 years in between 1699-1922 and Mustafa Kemal Pasha started to re-gain lands in 1922 for the first time". According to Ince, throughout the republican history, Turkey lost land for the first time in the AKP's rule by the loss of Tomb of Suleyman Shah (June, 22 2018, Ankara). These two examples point out, in contrast to the continuity between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey seen in Erdoğan's speeches, Ince refers to a theory of break that is compatible with Kemalist ideology. Nevertheless, Ince defines the Republic of Turkey as "a state which had been pioneer of and model for the independence wars of colonies and preferred to walk to the future in the light of principle of independence" in his election manifesto that he called the "Future Declaration" (Election Manifesto, May, 19 2018).



Table 6: Most frequently used 100 words in Ince's speeches (composed of at least 6 letters)

Another meaning of the "us" is CHP which is specifically highlighted as the party that founded the Republic. In his candidacy speech, Ince described his party as "a grand plane, roots of which traces back to The Anatolia and Rumelia Association for the Defense of Rights" and said "Turkey has never needed the CHP that much before" (May, 4 2018). In his election manifesto, Ince said that he had taken the duty of presidential candidacy "from the party that founded the Republic". While reasoning why the president should be neutral, he said "Ataturk, our savior and founder is not Ataturk of the CHP members but of 80 million" and established an association between himself and Ataturk that he describes as the



savior. That is the reason why he took his CHP badge off and became a candidate to be “the president of everyone” (May, 18 2018).

The third expression of “us” is the “everyone” which is often addressed as “81 million” by İnce. Despite this catch-all addressing, indeed he refers to “those who defend the Republic” as he said “We wish to walk together with each and every member of Turkish nation who believes in the Republic”. Other descriptions of the “us” can be seen in his following statements: “Our self-sacrificing nation that is committed to its freedom to the death and taught all world how to fight for independence”, “our people ... who are overwhelmed of the chaos they are pushed in ... who are intimidated and frightened ... who are looking for a drop of peace and screaming out that “enough is enough” (Candidacy Speech, May, 4 2018). So that an analogy is made between the national movement history and the current situation. In addition that, everyone also refers to “everyone who does not think in line with Erdoğan”, in other words those who do not vote for Erdoğan. Nevertheless, when he said “This Sunday, there is no you, there is no I, there is no he, there is we”, the “us” he referred was “everyone” assumed to be united against Erdoğan (Ankara, June, 22 2018).

In his “future declaration”, İnce says that they would not let people’s minds to be fooled anymore. In his candidacy speech he says “The party founded the Republic will save the Republic”. However, in order to achieve this goal, he needs power of the nation that he describes as “the light enlightening our path”. When he says “We trust in the power of this nation which was the main basis upon which Atatürk and his comrades stand in their blessed cause” he associates his mission with Atatürk and his comrades’ blessed cause of “leading Turkey to liberation”. The power of the nation will arise in the ballot.

Similar to Erdoğan’s and Piriçek’s speeches, the argument that “Turkey faces threats” is associated with issue of “survival” in İnce’s speeches. However, in this case, the source of the threat is not the interior and exterior enemies but the government itself that has been ruling Turkey for 16 years. According to İnce, the alliance of AKP-FETÖ “took Turkey off its road to civilization” (Candidacy speech, May, 4 2018) and they confessed that “Turkey is facing a problem of survival” (Election Manifesto, May, 9 2018). According to İnce, the current period “threatens our existence” and “the current way of politics is damaging our country and our minds”. Erdoğan and AKP are held responsible for these

damages. They “weaken the values that hold the nation together”, “terminate rule of law, rights and freedoms” and “suspend the Constitution”. İnce notes that the antagonistic language of the government is the main source of the problems which turn into an “issue of existence”: “The antagonistic language of the government poisons us more and more, day by day... Our people who have lived in peace for centuries have been antagonized through belief, sect, ethnic origin and life style and they can’t tolerate each other anymore”. Arguing that “international powers are rubbing their hands with glee” in the face of given situation, İnce extends the limits of the threat and all of these are presented as an indicator of “Turkey is going through a disaster at full speed”. İnce describes severity of the situation as follows: “We are not only at where words fail, we are at one step before where the freedom totally fails”. He appeals to fears of the voters.

Following such a description of the current situation, İnce presents himself as a “savior” as Erdoğan does. He ends his meeting by saying “A nail saves a horseshoe. A horseshoe saves a horse. A horse saves a hero. A hero saves a country”. Thus, his emphasis that “The party founded the Republic will save the Republic” becomes clearer; the promise of salvation would be realized through himself. However, İnce defines his identity of savior through the competitive relationship he establishes between himself and Erdoğan; he compares and contrasts himself with Erdoğan in order to convince voters that he is a better presidential candidate. That is the reason why he kept criticizing Erdoğan more and more harshly throughout his campaign and designed his speeches in way to respond to Erdoğan’s criticisms towards him. As a result Erdoğan started to set İnce’s agenda in his speeches. In İnce’s speeches, Erdoğan is described and criticized as follows: “The so called world leader is hueing and crying every day”, “he thinks he knows everything”, “the one-man” (Election manifesto, May, 19 2018), “a person who cares nothing but his ego, ambitions and himself”, “an arrogant person who disdains other people” (Candidacy speech, May, 4 2018) and “a fake master”. Saying that “We should get rid of such a man”, İnce identifies the main aim of the election as “to get rid of Erdoğan” (Ankara, June, 22 2018). In this framework, the meetings were mainly designed on the basis of Anti-Erdoğanism and challenges towards him: For example, in response to Erdoğan who had said “Look at me Muharrem”, İnce said “Well, I looked at you Recep, speak!” in his Diyarbakır meeting and con-



tinued: "You think that everyone will bend to your will. But I am not like those around you! (Diyarbakır, June, 11 2018). Indeed, in his candidacy speech, he had given the signal that he would be mainly focusing on his responses to Erdoğan in his following speeches as follows: "I am expecting that we will be talking about economy, foreign policy, agriculture and education at arenas of election. But if they prefer not to talk about these issues but to engage in a campaign of fight, frame, accusation and smear, I will do more than they can ever imagine!" (Candidacy speech, May, 4 2018).

In result, Ince explained why voters should vote for him on the basis of antagonism between himself and Erdoğan and reduced the election to a competition between two personalities. Using a populist discourse, Ince defines himself as a member of the poor folk and Erdoğan as a "man of palace", "friend of rich people" and "a wasteful person":

My brothers and sisters from Diyarbakır, I am telling to you: those who want to eat free cakes may vote for Erdoğan but those who want to have a job should vote for me. Let me tell you the difference between Erdoğan and me. Erdoğan drinks white tea that costs 4.500 TL. I drink black tea that you know. Erdoğan is feeding quails for their eggs in his palace, I eat eggs that you can buy in every store. Erdoğan has his if-taree in his 7 star palace, I have mine with you at streets. It means that Erdoğan is 'a white Turk' but I am the 'negro' of his country ... I am the real son of the people, I am the son of the nation. Erdoğan, you are the man of palace, you are an aristocrat who lives in a palace! ... In 2002, when he started his political career, he was a child of folk, I can't deny it. However he said "My God, give me what I want, halal or illicit I don't care, I will eat them all!" and he became a man of palace, he is not one of us anymore (Diyarbakır, June, 11 2018).

Similarly Ince forced voters to make a choice between him and Erdoğan:

Tomorrow, if Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is elected, there will be a panic in the markets, interest rates will rise, Dollar will rise and Euro will rise. The economy based on construction will continue. Syrians will keep coming. If Erdoğan wins, luxury in the state will continue. If Erdoğan wins, he will keep wiretapping our phone calls. If Erdoğan wins, the order of fear will continue. If Erdoğan wins, generations full of hatred will grow... Tomorrow, if Ince wins, production will increase, Dollar will fall, Euro will fall, and interest

rates will fall. Tomorrow, if Ince wins the state will limit its unnecessary spending, the citizens will not. Tomorrow, if Ince wins brain drain will stop, if Ince wins independent courts will be in duty, if Ince wins there will be meat on plates (İstanbul, June, 23 2018).

Ince's strategy of delivering his messages through over-personalization and anti-Erdoğan in his campaign inevitably pushes voters to make a choice not between two different political models and democratic promises but between two different leaders. Making comparisons between himself and Erdoğan, Ince reduces electoral competition to individuals which in turn leads to the impression that the election is in between personalities of two leaders rather than an election between reconstruction of democracy, basic rights, rule of law and parliamentary system as promised in his election manifesto and the current political understanding that he criticizes in reference to its practices getting more and more authoritarian.

However the language he used when presenting himself as the cure to all problems does not provide an insurance for the leadership (which is different from Erdoğan's) he would display if he was elected. In the first days of his campaign Ince had given the message that he would not be hostile to anyone but as election day got closer he threatened executives of the TRT, the Supreme Election Council and the Anatolian News Agency and said that they would be judged: "I will send executives of these three institutions to court. I will send them to justice" (Ankara, June, 22 2018). In his speech in Nevşehir on June, 2 that is not covered in this research, Ince criticized the Commander of the 2. Army for applauding Erdoğan's speech and said "I will rip your epaulettes off. I swear, I will!"

In conclusion, Ince run his campaign through an antagonism focusing Erdoğan, reduced politics to competition between leaders and reduced solution of problems to replacement of Erdoğan by himself and thus constrained the sphere of democratic politics; while accusing Erdoğan of being "one-man", he gave the impression that he would maintain leader-centric political understanding by saying "I will do, I will make" when he was explaining what he would do if he was elected.

The Antagonism of Statesperson and Politician in Meral Akşener's election speeches

Although she addressed mainly to women at election arenas, Meral Akşener preferred to use a masculine and



slangy language. When she was criticising Erdoğan she often called Erdoğan as “Dear Erdoğan”, “this friend” and “this man”. In addition when talking about Erdoğan and other politicians of the AKP, she called them “brothers” and “aghas”. For example, in her meeting in Kayseri on May, 25 she said “These brothers can’t rule Turkey, because they don’t how to do, because they do not attach importance to merit” and “these brothers built roads”. In her İzmir meeting, when responding to the AKP followers asking how she would find resources for her economic promises, she said “Let me tell to these aghas where I will find resources. The resources are the money in your pockets, the money that you had stolen” (June, 10 2018). She ended her criticisms towards her rival by emphasises such as “Get off you guilty man!”, “Shame on you!”, “What a shame!” and she used slang phrases such as “They spit on our education” and “The guy talked about ‘education, you have been spitting on the education for 16 years”. The following phrases she used in her Erzurum and Kayseri meetings are deserving attention since they exemplify the language style she deems appropriate for election race.

They attack on our election stands, they beat and injure our female friends. They act like a jerk and do everything that is against our nation’s culture, traditions and wisdom. I would get them on their knees and make them sorry for whatever they have done but I want this election to be held. That is the reason why I ignore them” (Erzurum, June, 20 2018).

Brother, you are right about everything. You are the victim in every issue. You cry like little babies since you have been elected... Are you a scarecrow?” (Kayseri, May, 25 2018).

The language used by the leader at the election arenas might be interpreted in reference to her desire to be close to voters, look like one of them and show how strong she is. Nevertheless, while explaining her promises she said “We have unemployed teachers here, when I am elected, I will appoint you so fast and so hard that their head will spin!” and when telling she would not be intimidated against threats she said “Everyone is threatening everyone, people like me is never scared of such bullshit” and “I am a coward if I do not take back each and every penny they have stolen” (Erzurum, June, 20 2018). The language Akşener uses when addressing her rivals contradicts with the identity she tries to build and her attempt to differ her political movement from Erdoğan’s. Akşener argues that Erdoğan does not have the proper character to be a ruler: “In Turkey, a statesman can’t

act like a spoiled teenager... Assuming that a country could be ruled by intimidating, hueing and crying is a reflection of a problematic perspective that is totally irrelative to state culture”. Akşener positions herself and her team against this perspective. According to Akşener, the country should not be ruled by men of politics such as Erdoğan and politicians like him but by “statesperson”. According to her, this perspective squeezed the country within “short-term visionless policies, vicious conflicts and selfish approaches” and the future of the state “is sacrificed for temporary ambitions of holding power”. Hence she says “All we need is our country to be ruled not by politicians but by statesperson”.



Table 7: Most frequently used 100 words in Akşener’s speeches (composed of at least 6 letters)

As it is seen in the table-7 “devlet” (state) is most frequently used word in Akşener’s speeches. Articulating state for 73 times, Akşener explains the meaning she attaches to being a “statesperson” in her election manifesto in reference to her and her friend’s vision of ruling a state. That vision identified as “my, our basic aim” by Akşener “aims to remove the state standing like a fist over people’s heads and replace it with a hand touching to shoulders of nation” (Election manifesto, May, 15 2018). However the state-citizen relation described as such does not refer to a relation equipped with rights and freedoms but it evokes a patriarchal relation in which state touches not to citizen but to nation’s shoulder with the compassion of a father. According to the leader, “primary duty of the rulers of the state is to meet person with state and state with world”. When explaining how it will happen, she says “we are saying ‘you are



not alone' to our people who are more and more maltreated and we want to combine such an understanding with an understanding of state". Akşener notes that she imagines "a state that will again be referred as an example to all world". So that the common identity defining "us" gets more explicit; "Always we have been an example for east and west, we will give an end to our turbulence of recent years and we will be coming with a state design that will be an example for all world again".

Repeating "we are a great nation", Akşener says "The head of our nation touched skies with the values of Osman Gazi, Fatih, Yavuz, Kanuni and the republic", "not only ours, but thanks to us, the head of humanity touched skies". The "us" indicates the common identity and the leader builds it through dignifying Turkey. Akşener appeals to religious and nationalist voters: "Turkey is the hearth of Turkish world composed of 200 million people speaking Turkish. Turkey is the country to which Muslim world of 1 billion turns its face". In her same speech, she also appeals to liberal and pro-Western voters: "Turkey, at the same time, is the Europe" and she does not forget Kemalist voters: "Turkey is the achievement whatever the conditions are. We have learned it from our eternal leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk". She invites all different segments of voters to unite at the line of "state humanity" that is claimed to be represented by herself and her friends.

On the other pole Erdoğan and the AKP -politicians-who are severely criticized and even insulted by Akşener- are located. Nevertheless, in her election manifesto, Akşener argues that the society is divided into two; on the one side there are millions of people struggling to earn their lives in a halal manner and there are political brokers seeking easy money on the other. Akşener invites voters to vote not for politicians but for cadres who represent "the state" which indeed is a reflection of her wish to revitalize political understanding that she adopted when she was a minister in 90's together with Tansu Çiller and Mehmet Ağar. Akşener mediates re-visibility of tradition of "state's mind" in the political area. On the other hand, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan invited Tansu Çiller and Mehmet Ağar to podium in his İstanbul meeting which can be interpreted as a response to Akşener's that attempt.

"Cause fraternity" and "us" discourse in Temel Karamollaoğlu's speeches

The President of the Felicity Party, Temel Karamollaoğlu, rather than using the "I" language, prefers to use "national view" -that is the historical name of the political

movement claimed to be represented by the SP- or "us" that refers to the cadres of the party. Nevertheless he used "we/us" for 215 times in his analyzed speeches. According to the leader, the "us" is the cure to the most important problem of the country -polarization- which should be overcome for the survival of the country. So that, the main antagonism is set between the mentality and politics leading to polarization and the cure to polarization. Arguing that "creating tension in society for more votes", "seeing election as a war" and "adopting such a style that divides people in poles almost on every issue" is "the greatest evil that can be done to the nation", Karamollaoğlu blames his rivals (Candidacy speech, May, 1 2018). Therefore, according to the leader, the elections of June, 24 "is the last exit before the cliff" (Election manifesto, May, 27 2018).

He presents the cadre of his party which he calls "a cadre that does politics not for money, prosperity, fame, position and advantages but for the God's sake" and "a totally clean cadre" to the issue of polarization. According to the leader, "the organization of the Felicity Party which is firmly committed to its cause" (Candidacy speech, May, 1 2018) has a cadre "which is full of nothing but love and passion for its nation and country" (Election manifesto, May, 27 2018. Starting to his election speech at TRT by saying "My dear brothers and sisters; my dear comrades who are working for goodness, justice and beauty day and night" and sets an antagonism between cadres of the AKP (that he calls "those doing politics for money, prosperity, fame, position and advantages", "those getting rich through corruption", "Aristocrats", "those degenerating moral values", "those betraying to people" and he describes as "these friend got tired, they accept they have metal fatigue") and the "us" which has a "spotless and proud history" (May, 27 2018) and "is different in the positive sense" (June, 4 2018). He describes the bond between the SP and the "National View Movement" as "We can't tolerate injustice... We are students of Erbakan the teacher" (İstanbul, June, 22 2018). According to him, the SP is the successor of Necmettin Erbakan and it has a political tradition that approaches to the issues in a totally different way. Embracing the history of the party that he claims to be "spotless" and "moral" (including the coalition between Erbakan and Ecevit in 1974 that ruled the country for 11 months), he builds his future promises over nostalgia. In that regards, it can be identified that Karamollaoğlu predominantly adopts a conservative political understanding.



In his speeches, Karamollaoğlu associates the government with corruption; poverty; unrest; fight; prohibition; events that lead us to lose our faith, morality, values, friends and relatives; plunder and partisanship. The Felicity Party promises to “re-open its heart to whole Muslim world” (Istanbul, June, 22 2018) and “wisdom, justice, morality, commitment and nobility” (Election manifesto, May, 27 2018).

As it is seen the world cloud, “justice” is the most frequently used word in Karamollaoğlu’s speeches.



Table 8: Most frequently used 100 words in Karamollaoğlu’s speeches (composed of at least 6 letters)

Articulated 79 times in Karamollaoğlu’s speeches, justice, partially refers to rule of law and equal rights however it is predominantly used in a religious contest. Nevertheless religious phrases such as “May the almighty God be with you” and “I wish from God” are frequently used in the speeches and the common identity is established through religious fraternity.

The argument that “People constitute a whole composed of Kurds, Turks, Alevi, Sunnis, rightists and leftists” lies under his protest to polarization that is claimed to have “brought the country to the edge of cliff”. The commonality on which this “wholeness” depends traces back to Islam civilization in which people of different beliefs could live together in peace. The “us” means “Muslims”.

We established great civilizations in the past. The states we founded and the civilizations we established entitled rights to all people with different beliefs. ... they lived like that for 13 centuries. ... they could live in that way because they were tolerated

by the governors. ... However when the state government got weaker, Christians (Spain is meant) became dominant, they engaged in a slaughter that left no Jews. ... Therefore if the world wants peace and tranquility, it has to pay respect to our principles, belief and values. We are the single power that can bring peace to the world. We totally believe in that” (Candidacy speech, May, 1, 2018).

The commonality that enabled living together is the basis for the promise of common future in peace: “Everybody should know that, as our teacher Erbakan pointed out, we are members of a civilization that will raise our country, all Islam world and underdeveloped country and be an example for the western civilization” (Istanbul, June 22 2018). Hence, the leader argues that there is a “strong harmony and togetherness in terms of belief and culture between Turks and Kurds living on the same land”. This togetherness derives from communalities between Turks and Kurds; “they belong to the same religion, they are children of a common history, they are daughters and sons of the same motherland ... they are organs of the same body” (Election manifesto, May, 27 2018). Under these circumstances, according to Karamollaoğlu, the main division is in between “those violate others’ rights and those whose rights are violated” and “oppressors and oppressed”. Karamollaoğlu argues that, against this division, the Felicity Party will re-build justice which is assumed to be foundation of the state. Karamollaoğlu ends his speeches by saying that “The victory belongs to believers, the victory is close, I leave you to the God, and may the God be with you”.

We vs ‘one man’ in Selahattin Demirtaş’s speeches

Since Demirtaş was in prison, he was not able to address voters at arenas of election and have face-to-face interaction with them. However he used a language directly addressing voters in his written election manifesto, candidacy letter, two propaganda speeches at TRT and phone call with his wife that was broadcasted alive on social media. In his texts and speeches, Demirtaş preferred “we” instead of “I” and addressed voters as “you” in plural form. As it is seen table-9, the most frequently used word in his speeches is “together”. Compared to frequent use of “they” and “these” in other candidates’ speeches as shown in table-3, Demirtaş did not employ these words in his speeches, frequently used “we”, “you” and “together” and ended many sentences with verbs conjugated for pronoun of “you”



gle person. All democratic gains of the republic will be removed in a single night ... In a regime of fear and oppression you will become breathless, you will feel as if you are suffocating (TRT speech, June, 17 2018).

As it can be seen in the quotes above, pointing out the election of June, 24 as a critical cornerstone, Demirtaş presents a disaster scenario as Erdoğan does. While Erdoğan’s scenario is based on his absence, Demirtaş’s scenario is built over Erdoğan’s presidency. Although Demirtaş criticizes Erdoğan’s antagonizing politics, Demirtaş carries antagonism to a personal level through reducing the issues of the country to Erdoğan’s personality.

In his TRT speech dated June, 17, after saying “those fake bullies who are threatening, hueing and crying all the time” and referring to disaster scenario, Demirtaş presents “us” as a cure to this threat: “Don’t miss the opportunity to teach a lesson to third class village bullies. Therefore make sure you vote”. In his election manifesto he appeals to voters as follows: “You are the producer, you will be the governor as well ... We will re-built this country together”.

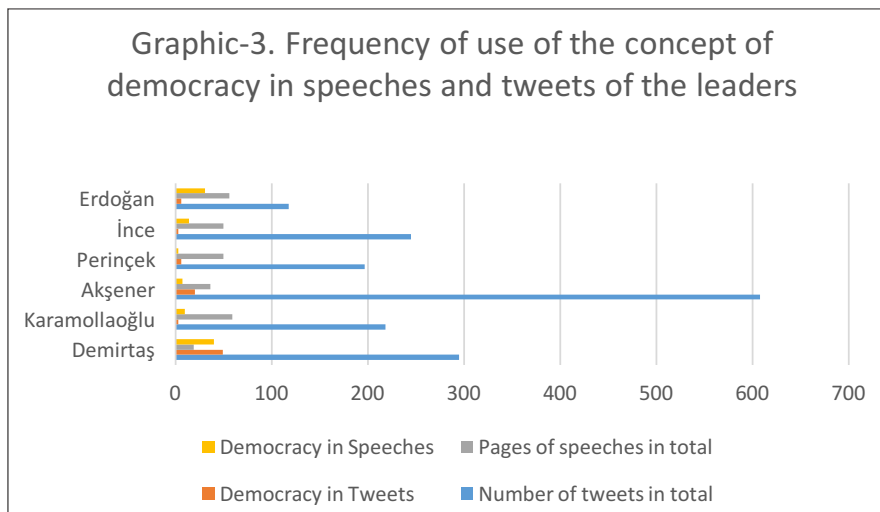
B. Democracy Agenda of the Leaders

In this part of the study, the question that “how and to what extent the ‘promise of democracy’ was covered at the arenas of election” will be dealt with the light of results of qualitative content analysis on the themes through which the presidential candidates formed their democracy discourses. The answer to this question is provided below under three main titles: The first one fo-

cuses on how and to what extent concepts, norms and values related to democracy were covered. Under this title, the context in which the word of “democracy” was used in election speeches and related tweets of the leaders will be focused. Secondly the themes through which basic rights and freedoms are covered in the speeches will be assessed. Thirdly, whether statements on restriction of basic rights and freedoms take exist in speeches of the candidates will be analyzed.

1. The concept of democracy in speeches and texts of the leaders

The concept of democracy was frequently used by the leaders throughout the election campaigns due to election agenda and the new presidential system that would be introduced after the election; while the government argued that the new system would strengthen democracy, the opposition defended it would weaken democracy. Similarly, it has been observed that, in social media posts (tweets) democracy and related concepts were frequently used. As it is seen in Graphic-3, Demirtaş is the leader who used the word of “democracy” most frequently. Demirtaş had limited opportunities to address voters. His speeches, candidacy letter and election manifesto covered by this research are composed of 19 pages and within this written text of 19 pages the word of democracy (including uses with affixes) was used for 40 times. In 295 tweets of Demirtaş, the word of democracy was used for 49 times. Following Demirtaş, Erdoğan ranks second in terms of use of the word of democracy, 31 times in his speeches composed of 56 pages and 6 times in his 118 tweets. Muharrem İnce used the word of democracy for 14 times in his speeches composed of 50 pages and 3 times in his 245 tweets. Other lead-





ers used the word of democracy less in their speeches and tweets as follows: Temel Karamollaoğlu: 10 times in speeches composed of 59 times and 3 times in 218 tweets; Meral Akşener: 7 times in her speeches composed of 36 pages and 20 times in 608 tweets; Doğu Perinçek: 3 times in his speeches composed of 50 pages and 6 times in 197 tweets.

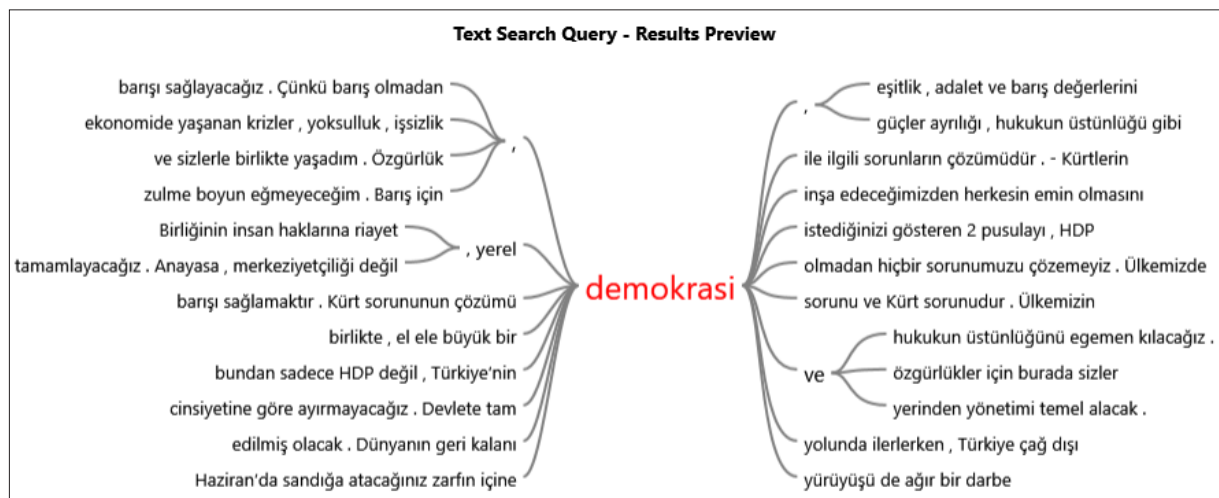
The frequency of use of concepts and the relation between this frequency and size of speeches and number of tweets are worth to pay attention because they show to what extent the promise of democracy is included in the leaders' agendas. Although graphic-3 provides us an idea in that regards, in order to understand how leaders make sense of "democracy" a detailed analysis of the related texts is required. Under this title, firstly how the leaders approach to democracy in general will be analysed and secondly which concepts are associated with democracy by the leaders will be assessed.

The concept of democracy in Demirtaş's speeches and texts

Selahattin Demirtaş is the leader who built his election campaign consistently on the promise of democracy. In his election manifesto, current governing understanding and the new presidential system are harshly criticized for their damage on democracy and it is argued that "the new system will paralyse all democratic mechanisms gained through accumulation and struggle of many years". In his phone call dated June, "the anti-democratic practises of recent years turned society of Turkey into the most unhappy and pessimistic people in the world" he says.

As it is seen in the "word tree" below, Demirtaş employed "democracy" in his speeches together with the concepts of peace, equality, justice, freedom, rule of law and Kurdish issue as well.

The election promises of Demirtaş is listed under the title of "program of emergency transition to democracy". According to this program, the solution to current problems is possible democratization of the system. Hence he promises "to use his powers to de-power himself after he is elected". The election promises of the leader listed in the "program of emergency transition to democracy" prioritizes making a democratic constitution that will be based on local democracy and decentralization and will enable transition to an empowered parliamentary system and strong local democracy. The leader links solutions to problems of many policy areas such as education, economy and foreign policy to "solution of problems regarding democracy". In that framework; equality, freedom, pluralism, rule of law are presented as key concepts. According to Demirtaş, a pluralist democracy will enable "everyone to live their social lives freely according to their belief, culture and world-view. In order to accomplish this target, he says that the cadres of his party "will build great democracy hand in hand with people" in his candidacy letter and he notes that they "will ensure superiority of full democracy and rule of law in the state" in his phone call. According to the leader, achieving these goals is possible through "elections" that he describes as "decision making stages of utmost importance in democratic regimes". In his TRT propaganda speech dated June, 17 he appeals to voters as follows: "By your votes, you will elect our representatives who



Graphic-4: Word tree. The sentences in which the word of democracy is used in Demirtaş's speeches.



will make laws and govern our country ... At this critical intersection of June, 24 elections, you will decide to which direction our country will go". If voters make their choices in favour of the AKP and Erdoğan at this critical intersection, he warns of a great danger: "While the rest of the world are moving forward in the path of democracy; Turkey will become isolated due to an outdated way of government and evolve in an authoritarian, repressive country that loses its ties with democracy". Voting for the HDP and Demirtaş is presented as the cure to the danger. However, when asking for votes at the end of his speech, he says "Put your votes for the HDP and Demirtaş in the ballot, show that you want democracy and leave the rest to us" which contradicts with his emphasis on participation and promise of "doing together" in his earlier speeches and texts. Demirtaş, heads towards a discourse that reduces citizens' role to voting and ignores citizens' active participation in political processes after the election.

In his TRT speech dated June, 23 the leader notes that in case of the HDP remaining below the anti-democratic election threshold of 10 percent, Turkey's walk through democracy would be severely harmed and calls voters to vote for the HDP and "make their choices in favour of democracy".

Since Demirtaş had to run his campaign in prison, he used every possible means to reach voters. Throughout this process, he kept his official twitter account running through his lawyers and family and shared his messages through tweets. Besides, he organised a twitter meeting⁴⁰ that he called "a first in the world's democracy history" through responding to questions posed on twitter by means of his lawyers (June, 21 2018). When Demirtaş's tweets are analysed, it is observed that he articulated his promise of democracy for 49 times.

As he does in his speeches and texts, the leader invites voters "to build a strong democracy together" and "to unite not in one-man, one-opinion and one-light bulb but in universal principles of democracy"⁴¹ in his social media messages. According to Demirtaş, "Sunnis, Alevis, Turks, Kurds, conservatives, seculars, Kemalists and socialist of the country should support process of transition to democracy in the light of lessons derived from past"⁴².

40 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1009838019245944832>

41 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1009856011727974400>

42 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1009673015410470912>

In Demirtaş's messages, democracy is a concept approached together with a government that is transparent, accountable, auditable and respectful to law⁴³ and with promise of living together in peace⁴⁴. He also promises re-initiating negotiations with the EU by rapid reforms on negotiation chapters that had deadlocked such as human rights, democracy, independence of judiciary, freedom of expression⁴⁵. That is the reason why the leader invites voters to "make their choices in favour of peace and democracy by voting for the HDP"⁴⁶ and to interact with the voters of other parties on the basis of fraternal solidarity and an attitude that is in line with democratic maturity⁴⁷.

The concept of democracy in Erdoğan's speeches and texts

Employing the concept of democracy for 31 times in his speeches and 6 times in his tweets, Erdoğan uses the concept in three contexts. The first one is about accomplishments and developments in national and international politics in his era. Within this context, Erdoğan considers democracy as an element of discourse of "servicing". The following quote from leader's election manifesto is worth to pay attention since it exemplifies the perspective that considers democracy together with service, investment, development and economy:

That is the reason why, when he have started our journey to serve to the nation, we said more democracy, more freedom, more growth. We have not only worked to keep our promises of more roads, more hospitals, more schools, more bridges, more jobs, more services but we have fought day and night to build justice.

... From democracy to economy, we have seen each step that we have taken as a part of our nation's pursuit of justice and development (Election manifesto, May, 6 2018).

Erdoğan, in his speeches, argues that the AKP "has raised democratic standards of Turkey" and that in turn

43 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1008999577792311296>

44 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/992441307925766147>

45 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1005033558463995905>

46 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1010781156101550080>

47 <https://twitter.com/hdpDemirtas/status/1010446318387499008>



has strengthened the country both in economy and international arena. The leader, in his meetings in İzmir and İstanbul, invites voters to make their choices in favour of “democracy, development and service” and manifests the perspective that considers democracy within the discourse of service. Another reflection of this perspective is seen when he announces in his İstanbul meeting that Yassıada Island –in which Adnan Menderes and friends were executed- would be turned into a museum called “the Island of Democracy and Freedoms”

The second context in which concept of democracy is used is “unification of state and nation” that in practice refers to elimination of threats towards the regime and bureaucratic tutelage. In that sense, “Gezi uprising” and corruption operations of December 17-25 that Erdoğan calls “a coup attempt of security forces and judiciary” are regarded as “actions that targeted our stability and democracy and tried to seize our will”, though AKP has eliminated all threats and knocked “coups and juntas” down (İzmir, April, 28 2018). He also says that people of Ankara –that he calls ‘my brothers and sisters from Ankara’- has fought against coup-plotters and shares the credit of that success with voters resisted against coup (Ankara, June, 9 2018). So that he associates his voters with the anti-coup people who fought against coup.

The third context is related to the Constitutional amendment and introduction of presidential system. He says in the period he calls “over the 16-year period of resurrection” they have promoted unification of state and nation and they have put the state under the nation’s command and he adds: “With regard to improving the standards of our democracy and promoting human rights and liberties, we have been determined regardless of the circumstances”. According to Erdoğan, through constitutional amendments “social restoration” and “mental transformation” have been completed and the time to complete the institutional transformation has come. Erdoğan explains necessity of such a transformation that would be achieved through introduction of the presidential system as follows:

Today, as in yesterday, we are in favor of democracy, liberty and the free exercise of rights. We shall favor the same principles in the future. At the same time, however, we are in favor of being strong and being independent. We do not believe that those two concepts are each other’s alternative. Instead, we con-

sider them complementary. We want a fully independent, fully democratic and prosperous Turkey where the nation exercises sovereignty (Election manifesto, May, 6 2018).

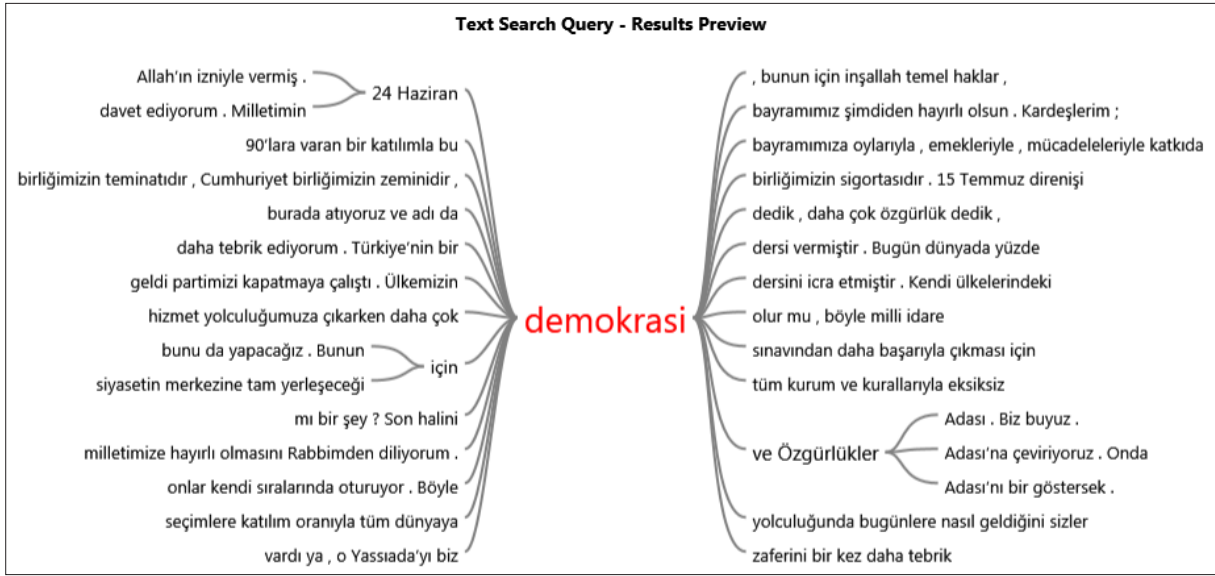
According to the leader, in order to reach an independent Turkey where the nation exercises sovereignty, the path of the presidential system –in which democracy will properly function with its all institutions and rules since “national will be at the centre of the politics”- should be followed. Erdoğan argues that the new system will remove “order of tutelage”, “the single way of coming in power will be possible through elections and nation’s will” and hence the new system will enable “democracy to be more settled and institutionalized” and become “the guarantee of freedoms”. According to him, all of these will result in “permanent stability in the new system”. So that, he associates results of election with national will and argues that the choice manifested through majority of votes (in other words his presidency) will define the single power representing nation’s will and he considers it as a must for both “democracy” and “stability” (Election manifesto, May, 6 2018). This perspective calls the election of June, 24 “a democracy festival” (İstanbul, June, 17 2018).

The word tree below points out that Erdoğan uses the concept of democracy together with the words of “nation”, “festival”, “victory”, “fight” and “service” which is in accordance with the assessment provided above.

Limited number of tweets Erdoğan tweeted throughout his campaign includes the concept of democracy. In 6 tweets tweeted by Erdoğan’s official tweet account in between April, 24 and June, 23 the concept of democracy was used in order to establish linkages between democracy and politics of servicing and to claim that the new system would strengthen democracy. In these tweets⁴⁸, Erdoğan argued that his party had been working with its all power to improve democracy, freedoms, civil and cultural rights. The leader also defended that the new system would institutionalize politics, make executive branch more effective, make legislative branch more creditable, make judicial branch more independent and hence ensure permanency of stability⁴⁹.

48 https://twitter.com/RT_Erdogan/status/990275207343558657

49 https://twitter.com/RT_Erdogan/status/993110501868613633; https://twitter.com/RT_Erdogan/status/988760980300685312



Graphic-5: Word Tree. The sentences in which the word of democracy is used in Erdoğan's speeches.

The concept of democracy in Muharrem İnce's speeches and texts

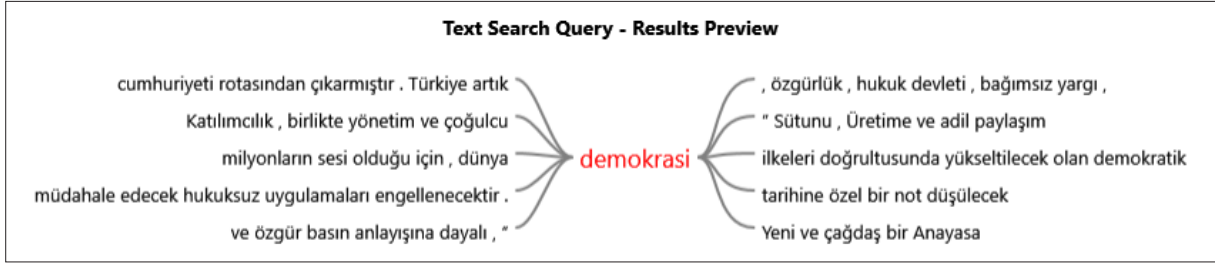
In İnce's 6 speeches covered by this research, the concept of democracy is used 14 times (including uses with affixes); 11 of which is in the election manifesto and 2 of which is in his candidacy speech.

When the election manifesto and candidacy speech of İnce are analysed, it is observed that the leader approaches to democracy in two axis. One of which is his criticisms toward the current government. Saying "we are facing a twisted understanding that has nothing to do, we are under the domination of a team that uses religion to manipulate everything" İnce argues that the mentality of AKP has darkened the future of the country and "the partnership of the AKP and FETO has taken the country out of its route". According to the leader, Turkey turned into a country "where it is not possible to talk about democracy, rule of law, independent judiciary, human rights and freedoms and where the judiciary has been put under the chain of command".

The second axis is set through the leader's promises against the dark portrait drawn by himself. İnce offers a "recovering policy aiming at re-building impaired values of the republic" that is composed of 5 policy sets one of which is focuses on democracy. Under the title of democracy he makes promises on "basic rights and freedoms, social peace, pluralism, participation and free press" which can be summarized as follows: introduction of "necessary regulations and reforms in order to ensure public institutions can use authority of impartial, modern

and democratic supervision", construction of a "strong parliamentary regime based on a new and modern constitution and separation of powers", "a fully functioning and continuous democracy with its all institutions and rules", "basic rights and freedoms, equality before law, pluralism and free press", promotion of "local administrations and civil society ... in the lights of principles of participation, participatory government and pluralist democracy", "empowerment of local administrations" and introduction of "regulations in line with objective and responsible journalism". Under the title of democracy, the promise of "zero-tolerance fight against all terrorist organizations threatening our national unity and security" is listed as well. As it is seen, the leader covered all principles required for re-construction of a democratic regime in his election manifesto however he did not hesitate to have "fight against terrorism" in his "democratization package" despite the fact that many rights and freedoms had been excessively suspended with the excuse of "fight against terrorism" under the conditions of the state of emergency in which election was held. The promises İnce relates with the concept of democracy can be seen in the word tree below.

The single meeting in which İnce touched upon the concept of "democracy" is his Diyarbakır meeting. İnce noted that the Kurdish issue was an issue of economy, culture and democratization and a problem of political ethics as well. In his İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara meetings he did not articulate the word of democracy even once; in other words he did not carry his promises related to de-



Graphic-6. Word tree. The sentences in which the word of democracy is used in İnce's speeches.

mocracy which had a considerable weight in his election manifesto- to the arenas of election.

İnce's social media messages had a limited coverage of democracy as well. He used the word of democracy for 3 times in his 245 tweets in between April, 17-June, 23 2018. In the first one of these tweets he said "Turkey needs sisterhood, peace, democracy and freedom"⁵⁰. In the second one he said "we are coming to build democracy and law" and ensured that they would not engage in personal hostility with anyone and allow any kind of behaviours going beyond the limits of law⁵¹. In the last one he said "I am sure that those saying 'democracy' against one-man rule will win the victory" on June, 24⁵².

The concept of democracy in Temel Karamollaoğlu's speeches and texts

In election speeches of Temel Karamollaoğlu, democracy is used in the context of anti-coup politics, pursuit of national will and justice and democratic standards of the European Union. The leader used this concept for 10 times in his speeches and he stated that "military coups that interrupted democratic life of Turkey in each 10-15 years" had destroyed "nation's hope and dreams for the future". When criticizing coups, Karamollaoğlu does not only refer to the military inventions but also to domination of a party or person:

Either military or either civil, either with weapon or without weapon; the Republic of Turkey can and should not be put under tutelage or domination of any institution, any structure, any party or any person.

According to him the alternative is elections: "respect to democracy means devotion to nation's will", "election poll is the cure and alternative to coups". In that context, ensuring security of election polls is deemed neces-

50 <https://twitter.com/vekilince/status/994596533172662272>

51 <https://twitter.com/vekilince/status/993132996759900160>

52 <https://twitter.com/vekilince/status/991204153643892737>

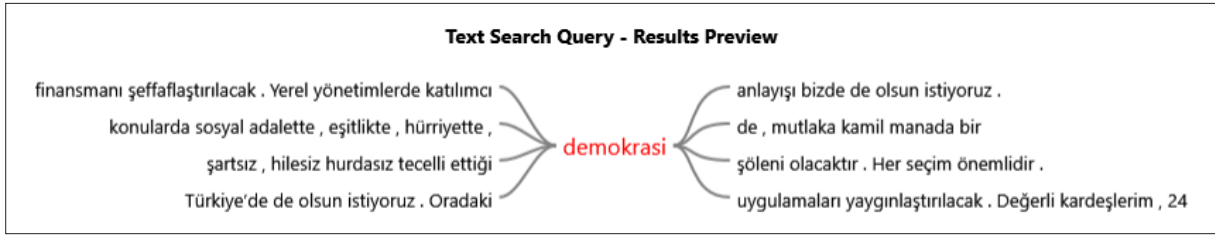
sary for "manifestation of nation's will without any condition and any kind of manipulation" (Election manifesto, May, 27 2018). In his TRT speech dated June, 17 he maintains his approach associating democracy with elections and promises removal of the electoral threshold⁵³ and transparency of financing of politics. However it would not be accurate to argue that the leader's democracy vision is limited with election that he considers as nation's will. In his election manifesto, he says they will "establish separation of powers", "in order to secure basic rights and freedoms of people". In his candidacy speech, he argues that "normalization of Turkey" could be achieved through termination of the state of emergency. He also mentions that the NGO's should serve to society not to the government and practices of participatory democracy should be promoted in local administrations. In his Ankara meeting dated June, 4 he says that they want to bring justice and democracy understanding of the European Union in order to "dissolve anti-democratic air in Turkey".

The word tree below showing with which words Karamollaoğlu uses democracy in sentences summarizes his democracy understanding.

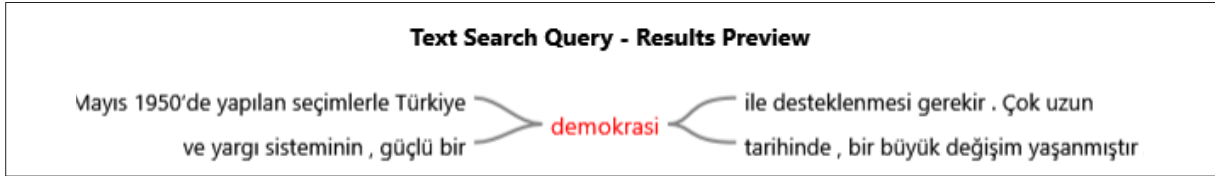
Among 2018 tweets tweeted by Karamollaoğlu's official twitter account in between April, 18 – June, 23, only 3 tweets include the word of democracy. In his these tweets, he stated that, the petitions submitted for presidential candidacy were also petitions devoted to sisterhood and democracy⁵⁴, he noted that the amendments to be made in political parties and electoral laws in order to remove obstacles to nation's will were the responsibility of all parties respecting a healthy functioning de-

53 Along with Demirtaş, Karamollaoğlu is one of the two leaders who argue that the electoral threshold is anti-democratic and it should be removed. Perincek defends decreasing the threshold to 5 percent.

54 https://twitter.com/T_Karamollaoğlu/status/992859288124231680



Graphic-7. Word tree. The sentences in which the word of democracy is used in Karamollaoğlu's speeches.



Graphic 8: Word tree. The sentences in which the word of democracy is used in Akşener's speeches.

mocracy⁵⁵ and he emphasized that an Assembly in which all parts of the society are represented would be "more democratic and reputable in the eyes of the nation"⁵⁶. So that, in his campaign messages, the leader once again adopted the position that reduces democracy to the context of elections.

The concept of democracy in Meral Akşener's speeches and texts

Meral Akşener used the concept of democracy for 7 times, 6 of which is in her election manifesto. Considering coinciding of the day she publicizes her election manifesto with the anniversary of "first democratic election in Turkey" as a "meaningful coincidence", the leader notes that the nation is again in need of the great change that took place in the democracy history of Turkey in 1950 and promises that such a change will be realized by her and her party (May, 15 2018). In that context she relates the petitions given for her presidency to democracy by saying "my nation did not disappoint me ... and showed that it protects democracy".

The second context related to democracy in her election manifesto can be found in the following quote: "A good justice and judiciary system needs to be supported by a strong democracy. Democratic participation-strong parliament, national will relationship is indispensable". So that, the leader states that national will can be manifested through a strong parliament and democratic participation. Therefore Akşener says that they are planning a transition period for return to parliamentary system and

just after she defines borders of the change she promises as follows: "We will never allow chaos" (Election manifesto, May, 15 2018).

The single meeting in which the leader used the concept of "democracy" is her Erzurum meeting dated June, 10. When criticizing attacks on her party' election stands, she says "I would get them on their knees and make them sorry for whatever they have done but I want this election to be held in accordance with democratic principles. That is the reason why I ignore them". On the one hand she intimidates, she notes that they want a democratically held election on the other. Thus, the leader once again limits her demand of democracy with elections held in line with democratic principles. The word tree provided below shows limitations of the leader's perception of democracy.

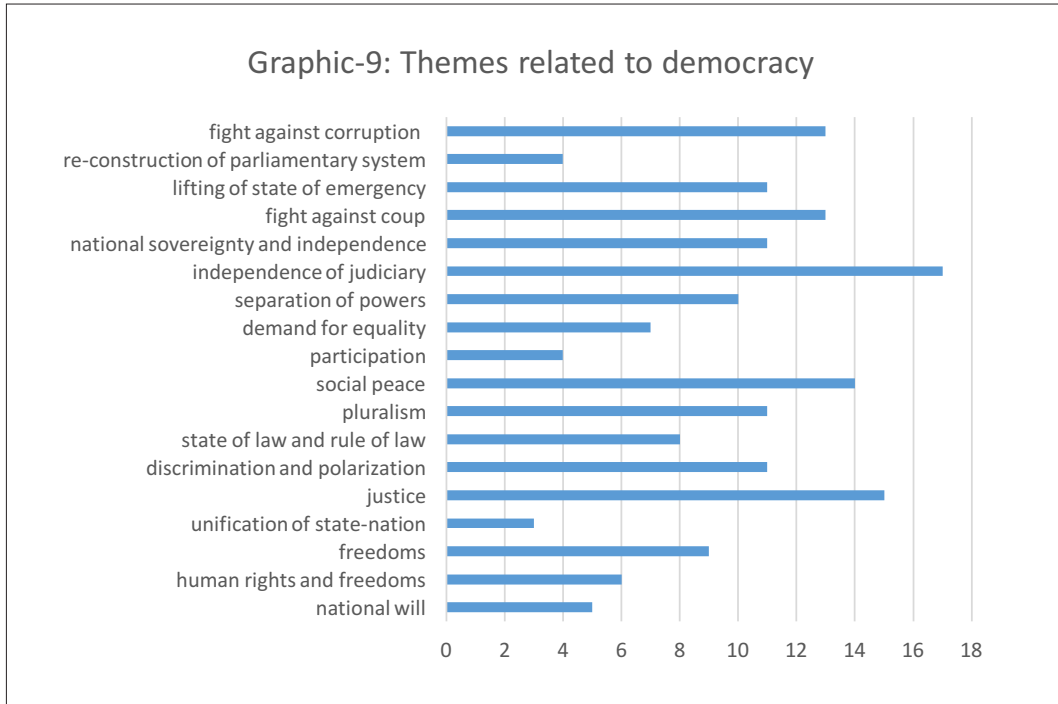
It is possible to say that the concept of democracy is employed in a broader perspective in the leader's social media messages. In her 18 tweets including the word of democracy (including uses with affixes) Akşener wishes success to her rivals and interprets shown in her meetings as an indicator of "belief in and longing to democracy and living freely"⁵⁷. The leader associates democracy with the promise of a country where "the rule of law and justice will be ensured, women and children will not suffer from violence"⁵⁸ and promises to "revise the electoral law in compliance with democratic norms and universal standards and decrease the electoral threshold to 5

55 https://twitter.com/T_Karamollaoğlu/status/992743716480745473

56 https://twitter.com/T_Karamollaoğlu/status/988330594483539968

57 https://twitter.com/meral_aksener/status/1008619413485031424

58 https://twitter.com/meral_aksener/status/1010522313723346944



percent⁵⁹. She repeats her promise of re-establishment of parliamentary system by saying that “The republic and democracy are so valuable that they can’t be left to a one-man. Such a value can be preserved by democratic parliamentary system”⁶⁰. She also informs that they are working on a road map with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in order to “establish a democratic, strong and improved parliamentary system deficiencies of which are eliminated”⁶¹.

The concept of democracy in Doğu Perinçek’s speeches and texts

Doğu Perinçek is the leader who used the concept of democracy least in election speeches. He used the concept twice in his election manifesto in order to argue that the practice of “paid military service” was not in accordance with democracy:

Mehmets (Turkish soldiers) are the basis of democracy in Turkey. Because everyone, all of us becomes equal at Mehmets. All young people do military service when they come to a certain age, turn 20 years old which is the most basic democratic institution and relationship since the French Revolution (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018).

According to Perinçek, military service is the institution

59 https://twitter.com/meral_aksener/status/1001771584879824897

60 https://twitter.com/meral_aksener/status/1001751487876337664

61 https://twitter.com/meral_aksener/status/1003597008438005761

that establishes equality between citizens and basis of the democracy since the French Revolution. Not promising democracy at arenas of election, he promised to re-institutionalize “parliamentary democracy” in his TRT speech dated June, 23.

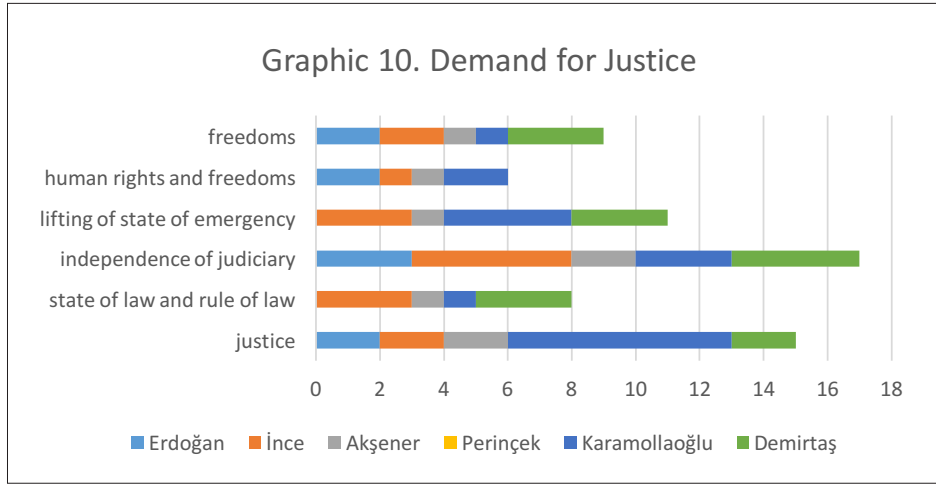
In his tweets, Perinçek used the concept of democracy for 6 times. In one of them he said “Democracy can’t be achieved through terror. Freedom can’t be given those firing bullets at our soldiers and planting mines under our homeland. Democracy exists where the homeland is defended”. His tweet dated June, 22 targeted the HDP: “You can’t solve anything by letting the PKK in the parliament in the name of democracy”⁶². So that he defends restrictions on rights of a legal party, the HDP, and its supporters. His promise of democracy is seen in his tweets in which he promised to bring “parliamentary democracy” back and said “we want our nation to elect us for an independent and democratic Turkey”⁶³.

2. Principles and values related to democracy in election speeches

When the election speeches are analysed in terms of to what extent principles and values related to democracy are covered in the speeches, it is observed that independence of judiciary is the theme most frequently related

62 https://twitter.com/Dogu_Perincek/status/1010229073195487239

63 https://twitter.com/Dogu_Perincek/status/1006984013595250689; https://twitter.com/Dogu_Perincek/status/1005154342448652288



to democracy (in 17 speeches). In that regards, the leaders touched upon demand of justice in 15 speeches, social peace in 14 speeches, fight against corruption in 13 speeches and fight against coup in 13 speeches as well. Themes of national sovereignty and national independence, lifting of state of emergency, pluralism, discrimination and polarization are covered in 11 speeches; separation of powers in 10 speeches and rule of law in 8 speeches. Besides, 9 speeches of the leaders cover freedoms and 6 speeches of the leaders cover human rights. Graphic-9 shows that re-construction of parliamentary democracy is a promise covered only in 4 speeches.

Below, the principles and values related to democracy in the leader’s speeches are analysed under three categories: “Demand for justice”, “social peace” and “the character of the regime”.

Demand for justice

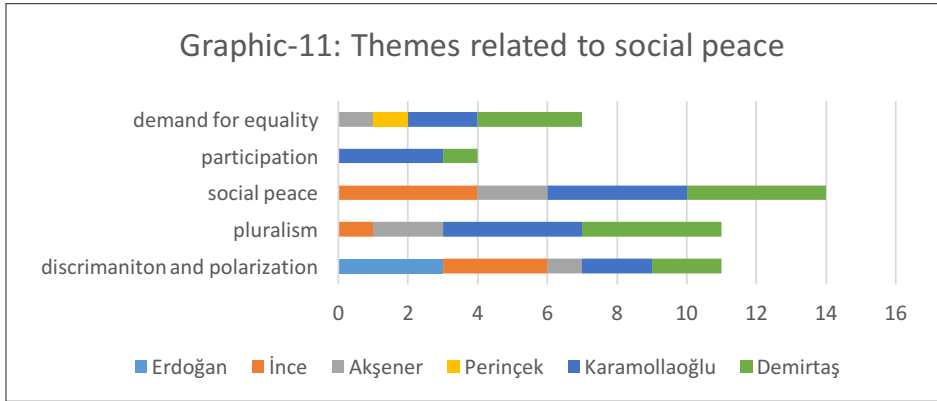
The most prominent theme related to democracy in analysed speeches is independency of judiciary. In addition to that the theme of justice in general is covered in 15 speeches and in 8 speeches the themes of rule of law and state of law are covered. The leaders except Erdoğan, appealed to voters with the promise of re-construction of rule of law and social sense of justice which have been impaired by the practises of state of emergency going beyond legal borders and the judiciary’s attitude approving violations of rights. Nevertheless, lifting of state of emergency -which can be related to demand for re-construction of state of law- was included in almost one-thirds of all speeches. The candidates’ emphasises on freedoms (9 speeches) and human rights (6) were associated with criticisms on the practices of state of emergency and the AKP’s increasingly authoritarian attitude.

However, as it can be seen in graphic-10, the President Erdoğan did also cover themes related to demand for justice in his speeches. Differently from other candidates who expressed their criticisms regarding this theme, Erdoğan argued that Turkey was respectful to human rights, the judiciary was independent and freedoms were secured. The graphic below also shows that the theme of justice does not exist in Perinçek’s speeches.

Social peace

The second thematic focus of the speeches can be related with demand for social peace. Besides 14 speeches directly articulating demand for social peace, the leaders mentioned about pluralism in 11 speeches, the theme of equality in 7 speeches, and discrimination and social polarization in 11 speeches. The theme of participation was included in 4 speeches as a reflection of re-construction of social peace.

As it is seen in graphic-11, both Demirtaş and İnce representing left-wing and social democrat politics and Karamollağlu representing Islamist-conservative politics gave considerable place to the theme of social peace in their speeches. Demirtaş and Karamollağlu also gave place to pluralism and demand for participation in their speeches. Similarly expressions about social peace and pluralism can be found in Akşener speeches. Perinçek and Erdoğan did not cover the theme of peace in their speeches and did not give place to demand for pluralism in their speeches. The words of Erdoğan which can be related with social peace are exclusively on the topic of discrimination. The leader noted that media should not make discrimination and give place to discriminative content. Other candidates, in their speeches, touched upon issues caused by social polarization and argued



that the government were making discrimination in favour of its supporters. The frequency of covering these issues changes from leader to leader.

The character of the regime

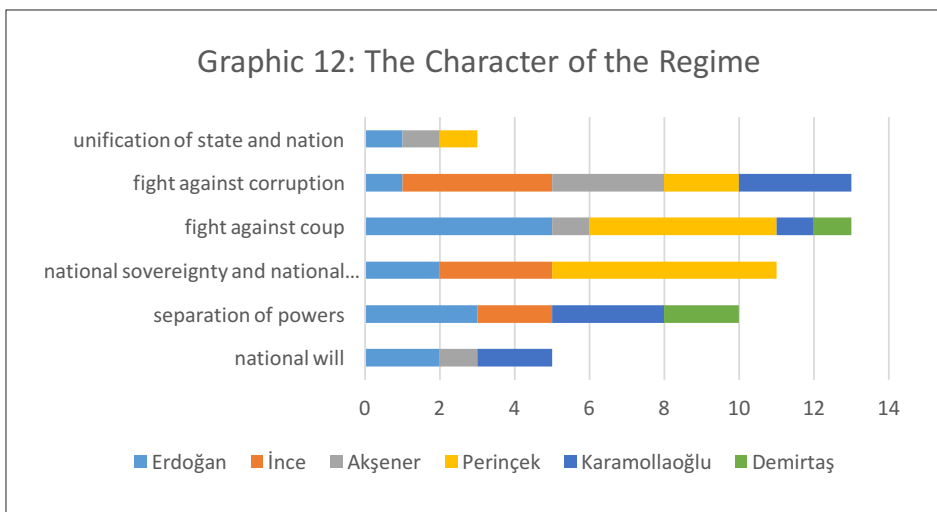
The third thematic focus is about the character of the regime. Under this title, besides leaders arguing that state-nation unification or manifestation of national will at ballot box is the pre-condition to existence of democracy; we see leaders talking about re-construction of parliamentary system for re-construction of democracy (4 speeches) or separation of powers (10 speeches). In addition to these, the theme of fight against corruption, in relation with principles of transparency of government and accountability, was covered in more than one-thirds of the speeches.

National sovereignty and national independence (11 speeches) and fight against coup are amongst other prominent themes concerning the character of the regime. Since it was the first election held after the coup attempt of June, 15 2016 the leaders, mainly Erdoğan,

expressed anti-coup views in their speeches.

When graphic-12 is analysed it is seen that, despite their different political positions, Perinçek, Erdoğan and Akşener intersect at the nationalist ideology and define main character of the regime on the basis of unification of nation and state. In addition, Erdoğan, Akşener and Karamollaoğlu defend the thesis that national will manifests through elections.

Separation of powers, as another element defining the character of the regime, is covered in speeches of all candidates except Perinçek. However, differently from other candidates, Erdoğan argues that the presidential system will improve separation of powers. Although all candidates referred to fight against coup in order to emphasize the importance they attach to democracy; Erdoğan and Perinçek are the leaders who covered this theme most. National sovereignty and national independence are the themes covered by Perinçek, İnce and Erdoğan either on the basis of criticism of Turkey's foreign policy or promises related to it.





3. Basic rights and freedoms in election speeches

In this stage of the research, how and how much first generation of rights secured by the International Declaration of Human Rights and also second and third generation of rights are covered by election speeches is analysed. In that framework, themes related to civil rights, political rights, right to freedom of assembly and protest, cultural rights, social and economic rights, woman rights and gender equality, rights of persons and groups requiring special protection, rights of minorities, LGBTI rights, refugee rights, right to environment and freedoms of press, communication, expression, thought, religion and conscience in speeches have been identified and the arguments articulated around these themes have been analysed.

Graphic-13 shows that promises and themes related to social and economic rights had a considerable weight in the speeches. Besides, in association with the election context, political rights had a considerable weight in the speeches. Rights of minorities, rights of persons and groups requiring special protection, woman rights, cultural rights, freedom of expression, press, religion and conscience and right to environment were covered in one-third of the speeches. However, absence of rights of LGBTI and refugees who suffer serious violation of rights and absence of basic political rights such as right to assembly and protest in Graphic-13 point out the limitations of election agenda of the candidates who did not cover these issues in their speeches.

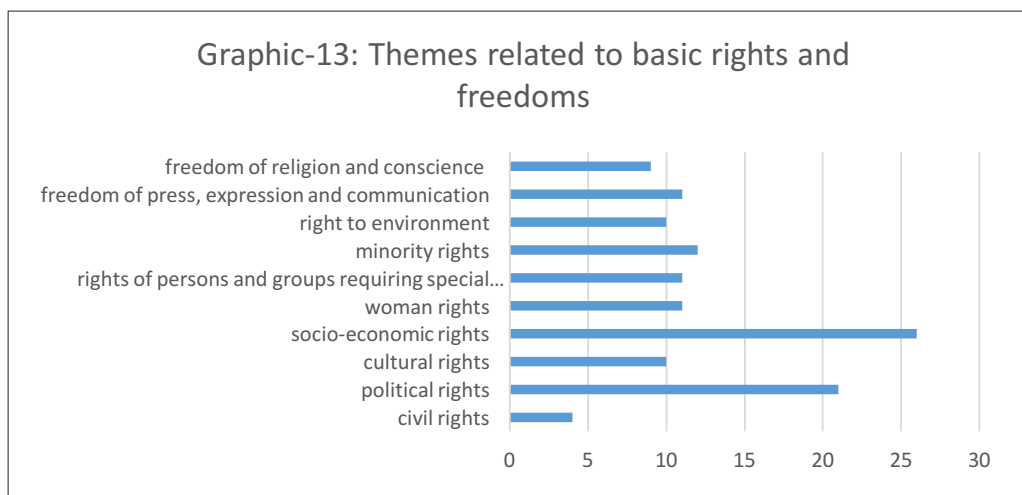
Socio-economic rights

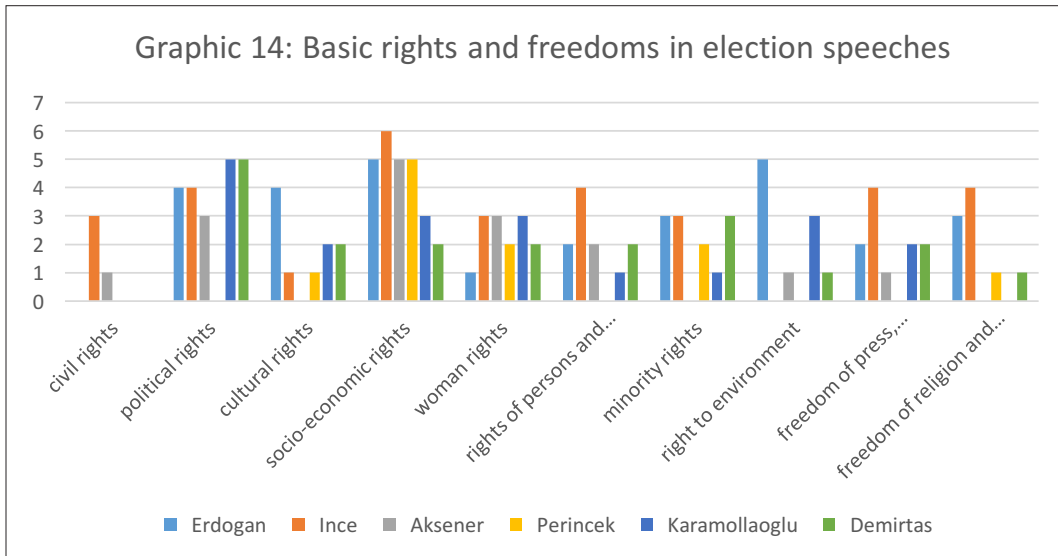
Running of election campaigns predominantly through explaining (by ruling party) or criticizing (by opponent

parties) current government activities and publicizing promises for the future is a conventional political communication strategy. This strategy also applies for the election analysed in this research; while addressing voters, the candidates advertised their promises especially regarding social and economic rights and they criticized or praised government's performance in relation to these rights. Themes related to economic and social rights such as improvement of education and health services, fight against poverty and unemployment, wage rises, advancement of incentives for farmers, achievement of income fairness were extensively covered in majority of the speeches. However, themes such as right to social security, occupational health and safety, trade union rights and tax fairness were rarely mentioned in the speeches.

Graphic-14 shows that the candidates predominantly touched upon social and economic rights. As it can be seen in Graphic-15, Muharrem İnce ranks first and Selahattin Demirtaş ranks last in terms of covering these rights in speeches.

In speeches of all candidates, the prominent themes and promises related to socio-economic rights were about education system & unfairness of exams (these topics were highly popular in the period of elections) and incentives for and payments to farmers (cheap fuel, nut price etc.). Besides, city hospitals build in the era of the AKP government and issues related to right to health; right to accommodation in reference to collective housing constructions; right to transportation in reference to airport and bridge projects and constructions; fight against unemployment and poverty in reference to criticism towards the government were other frequently covered topics related with economic and social rights.





Trade union rights, right to social security, fairness of tax, occupational health and safety and social state are the themes which were rarely or never covered in the speeches.

Two most frequently covered themes in speeches, social & economic rights and political rights are briefly analysed for each leader below. The other, less frequently covered themes related to rights and freedoms are assessed for each theme as well.

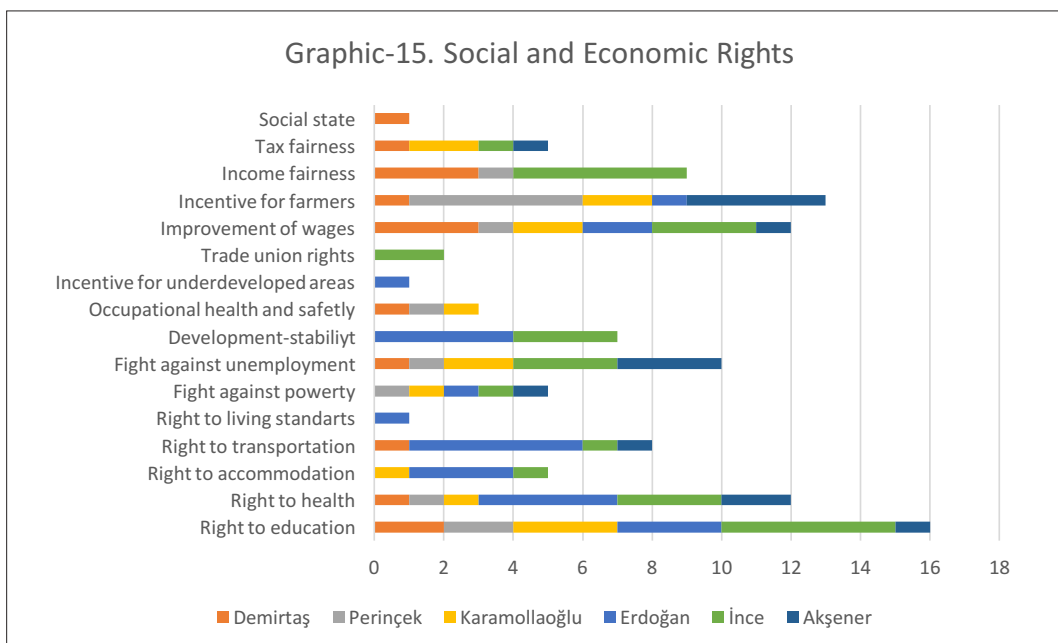
▪ *Social and economic rights in Ince's speeches*

Social and economic rights were covered in the election manifesto of Ince through themes such as equal access to health and education services, right to accommodation and transportation, fight against poverty and un-

employment, decreasing regional inequalities, incentives for farmers, and fairness of tax. In his İzmir meeting, Ince mentioned themes of economic development and growth. Ince touched upon trade union rights both in his election manifesto and İzmir meeting speech but he approached the issue through police's freedom of association in his election manifesto. Although he was the candidate of a party that defines itself as "social-democrat" it is interesting that Ince did not cover the theme of occupational health and safety in his speeches.

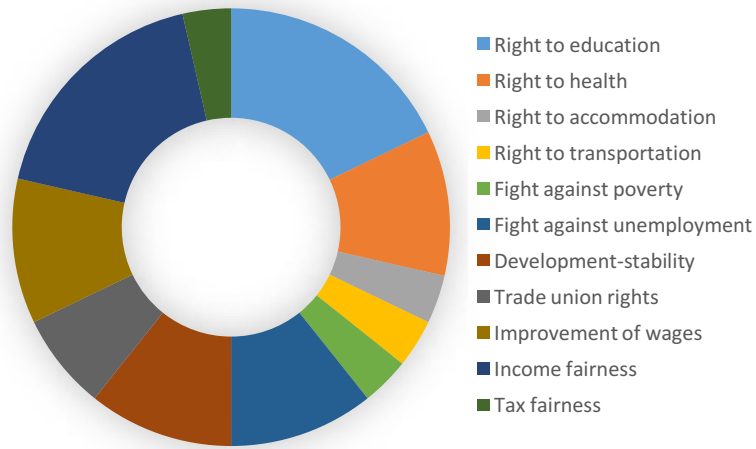
▪ *Social and economic rights in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches*

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan covered economic and social rights in the context of accomplishments of his par-

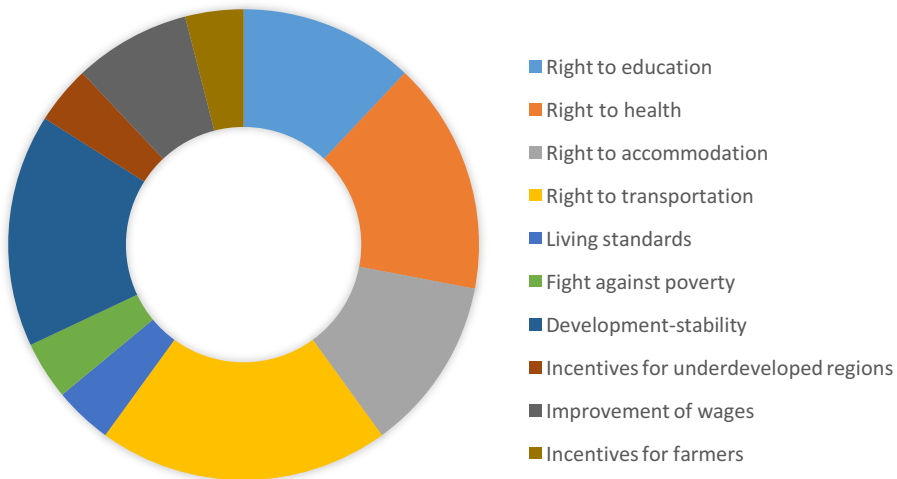




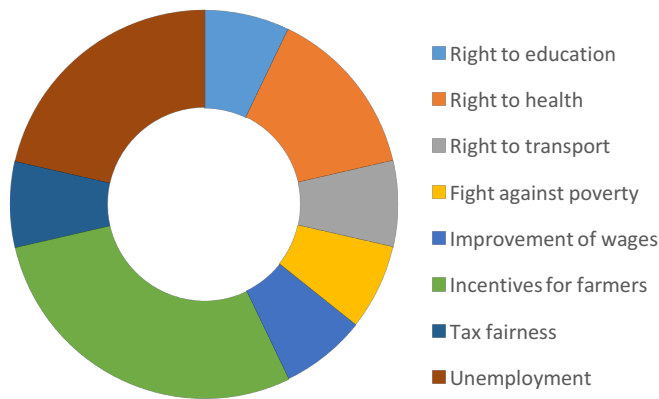
Graphic-16. İnce: Social and Economic Rights



Graphic-17. Erdoğan: Social and Economic Rights

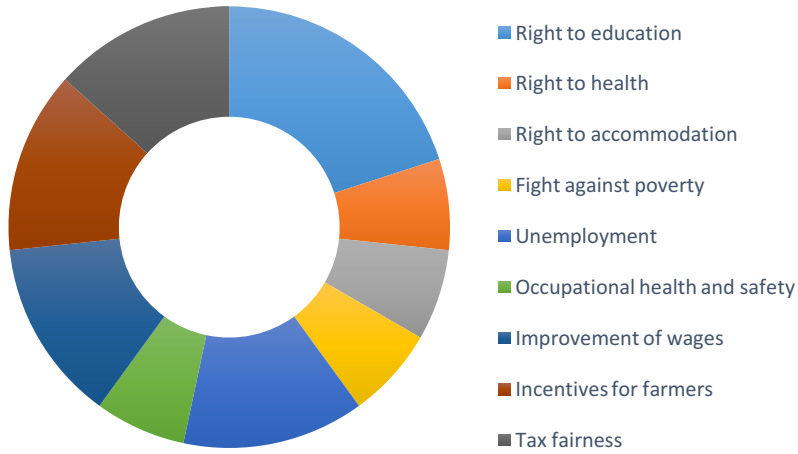


Graphic-18. Akşener: Social and economic rights

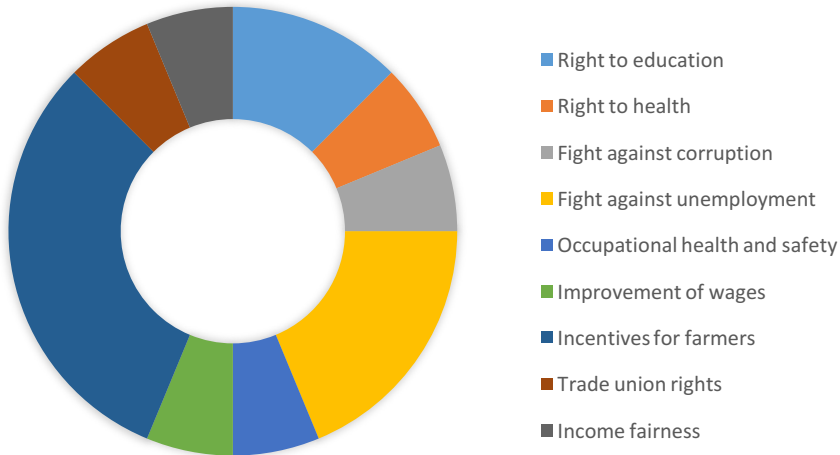




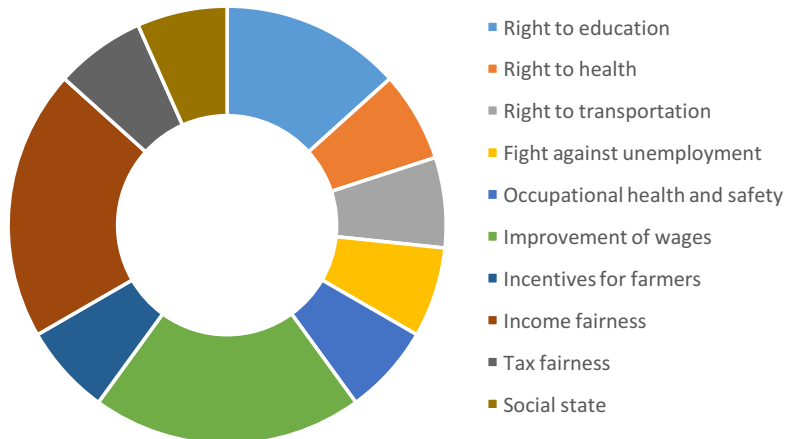
Graphic-19. Karamollaoğlu: Social and economic rights



Graphic-20: Perinçek: Social and Economic Rights



Graphic-21. Demirtaş: Social and economic rights





ty and his promises for the future through themes such as improvements in right to health, education, accommodation and transportation; advancement of living standards; economic development and growth and improvement of wages and living conditions of workers. Erdoğan's statements on opportunities of house acquisition provided to low-income earners by Housing Development Administration have been coded under the title of right to accommodation and his statements on road, airport and bridge constructions have been coded under the title of right to transportation. In addition, Erdoğan also touched upon the issue of incentives and investments for underdeveloped regions in his Diyarbakır meeting. Themes such as right to social security, trade union rights, occupational health and safety, income fairness, tax and fairness were not covered in the election agenda of Erdoğan.

▪ *Social and economic rights in Meral Akşener's speeches*

Approaching to social and economic rights from a relatively narrow framework, Meral Akşener touched upon these issues mainly through poverty, unemployment, improvement of worker's wages and delivered her promises and criticisms on equal access to health services, right to transportation, tax fairness and incentives for farmers. Differently from other candidates, Akşener did not mention social and economic rights in her İzmir meeting. Themes such as occupational health and safety, trade union rights, right to social security and income fairness were not included in the agenda of Akşener who adopts a right-liberal political line.

▪ *Social and economic rights in Temel Karamollaoğlu's speeches*

Temel Karamollaoğlu covered social and economic rights in his speeches through themes such as equal access to right to education and health, right to accommodation, fight against poverty and unemployment, improvement of workers' wages, incentives for farmers, tax fairness and occupational health and safety as well. However Karamollaoğlu did not mention social and economic rights in his TRT speech dated June, 17 and he only mentioned tax fairness as a theme related to social and economic rights in his TRT speech dated June, 23.

▪ *Social and economic rights in Doğu Perinçek's speeches*

Doğu Perinçek approached social and economic rights through themes such as equal access to right to education and health, improvement of workers' wages, income

fairness, incentives for farmers and promise of employment for all. Occupational health and safety and trade union rights were also covered in Perinçek's speech.

▪ *Social and economic rights in Selahattin Demirtaş's speeches*

Within limited opportunities of addressing voters, Demirtaş covered themes such as right to education, right to transportation, fight against unemployment, occupational health and safety, improvement of workers' wages, incentives for farmers, fairness of income and tax in his written election manifesto. While in his "phone call" of 5 minutes through which he addressed voters, in his candidacy letter and in his TRT speech dated June, 17 he did not mention any themes related to social and economic rights; he delivered promises on right to education and health, improvement of workers' wages, income fairness and social state.

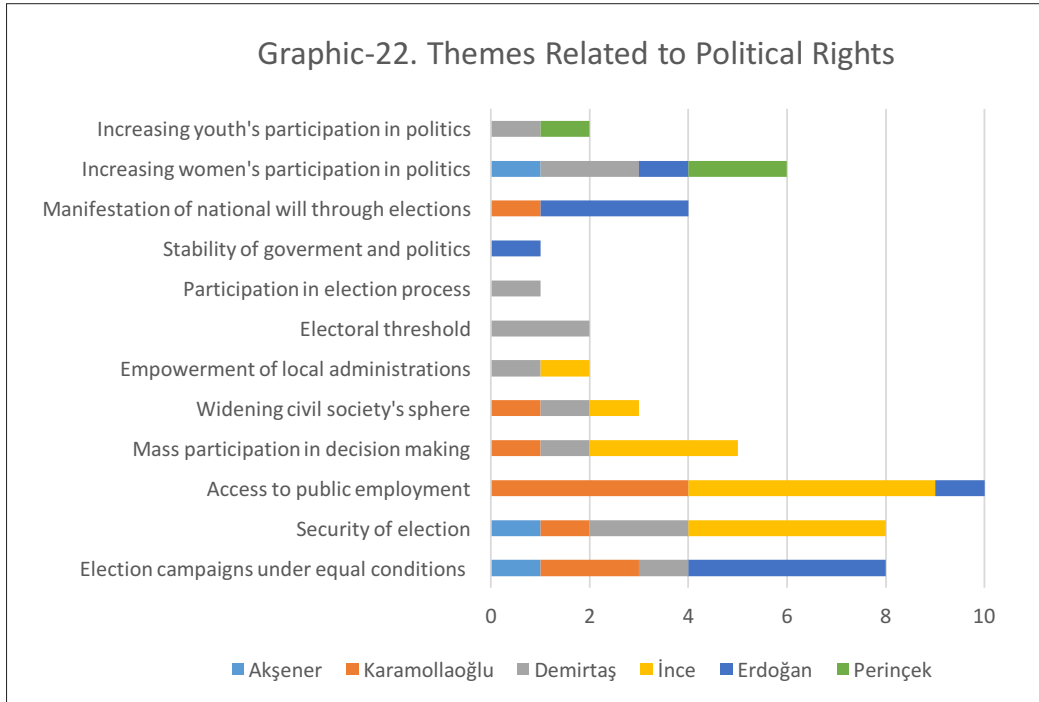
Political rights

Graphic 22 shows that the candidates, in accordance with the context of the speeches, gave a considerable weight to political rights in their speeches except Perinçek who only touched upon political rights in his 3 speeches, in 2 of which he said they placed women candidates on higher ranks of the list and in 1 of which he noted they gave place to young candidates on higher ranks as well. However, in a high majority of these speeches, political rights are constrained with the themes of voting and election security. Right to employment in public services is partially covered through merit as the criterion of assignments and promotions; very limited place is given to improvement of representation of women, disabled and youth; and themes such as alternative ways of citizens' participation in decision making processes and widening civil society's sphere are almost not covered at all.

Selahattin Demirtaş and Muharrem İnce are the leaders who covered most number of themes in their speeches, in other words who approached to the issue with the broadest perspective. Muharrem İnce elaborated on these themes for 14 times and he is followed by Selahattin Demirtaş (12 times) and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (10 times). An analysis on how leaders covered political rights is provided below.

▪ *Political rights in Muharrem İnce's speeches*

Citizens' widespread participation in decision making process is among prominent themes of Muharrem İnce's speeches. İnce emphasizes election security on the one hand, covers involvement of civil society organizations in



decision making process and empowerment of pluralist democracy and local administrations on the other. For example, in his election manifesto dated May, 19 he says:

Local administrations and civil society will come to the forefront in our democratic social structure which will be built on participation, co-government and pluralist democracy.

Local administrations will be strengthened. Centralized authorities that cause inefficiency will be delegated to local administrations.

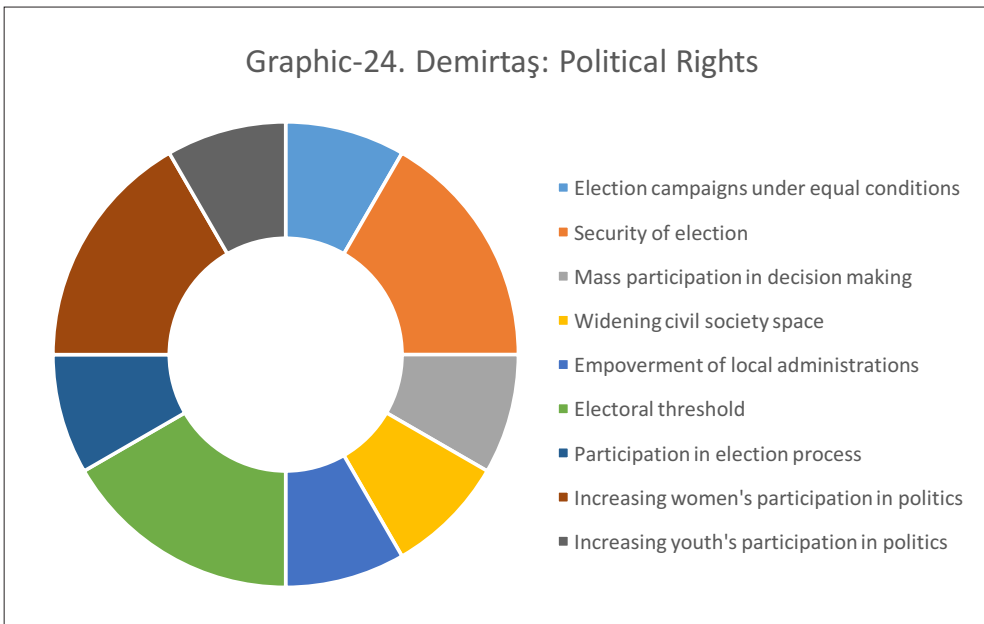
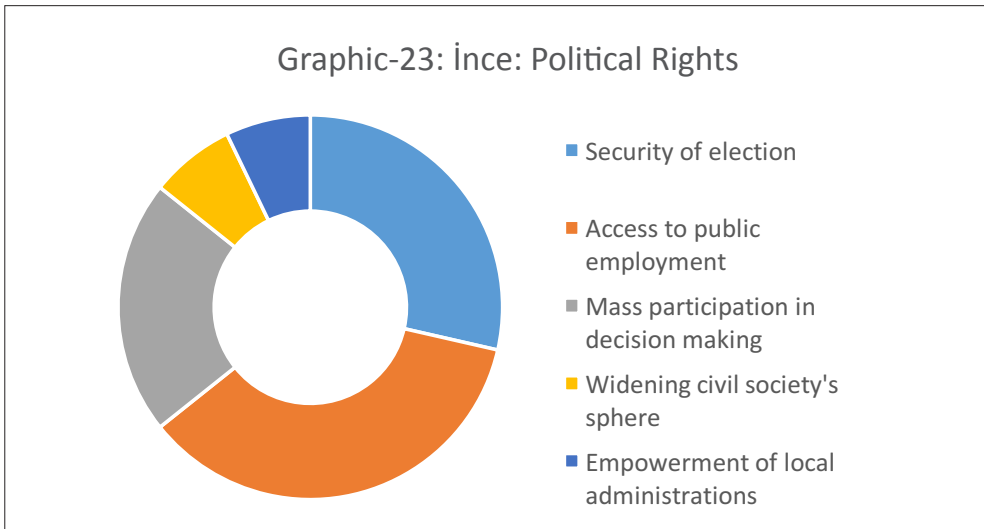
Like other candidates, İnce touches upon "merit" as the key to access to public employment and promotions within employment through his criticisms on government's related policies.

Appealing to young people in his speeches, İnce delivers his promises on issues such as scholarship, education and unemployment, reminds he used to be a teacher and addresses young people as "young people, my students, my children, my sisters and brothers". Such an addressing raises the idea that he engages in a relation with youth similar to Erdoğan's. Nevertheless, in his meetings İnce promises young people to teach them occupations which they even don't know, make them a conscious and self-reliant generation and save them from drugs in his meetings. Young people's political participation was in the agenda of İnce's meeting in İstanbul dated June, 23 in which he assigned young people to wake up early in the election day and ensure election security.

▪ *Political rights in Selahattin Demirtaş's speeches*

Security of elections, electoral threshold and election campaigns to be run under equal conditions are the prominent themes in Demirtaş's speeches. Referring to his continuing detainment, Demirtaş noted that election campaigns were not conducted under equal conditions. The alliances set by the AKP, the MHP, the İYİP and the SP resulted in electoral threshold to be applied exclusively to the HDP and Demirtaş criticized it in his candidacy letter as follows: "The leadership of all other political parties who are refraining from standing side to side with us, acting as if we do not exist, trying to keep us under threshold and crush us will be embarrassed of their attitude" (May, 4 2018).

Increasing women's and youth's participation in politics and effective citizen participation in decision making processes are other themes related to political rights in Demirtaş's speeches. Differently from other candidates, Demirtaş does not limit political rights with elections and touches upon necessity of provision of opportunities for widespread citizen participation in politics. Nevertheless, in his election manifesto, he promised not only education, employment and scholarships for youth but also a country where they can freely express themselves: "Rather than saying 'I will solve problems of youth best', WE will build mechanisms that will enable youth's active participation in government and make their own decisions".



On the other hand; policies such as strengthening decentralization, involvement of civil society organizations in decision making and development of alternative means of participation that will facilitate democratic negotiations were covered in Demirtaş's election manifesto.

▪ **Political rights in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speeches**

The thematic analysis of leader's speeches show that Erdoğan associates political rights with election processes and voters' participation in elections. The leader argues that "the nation's will" –which he associates with majority of votes- will be at the centre of the politics by introduction of the presidential system after the elec-

tions of June, 24. Accordingly, new governmental system "will make executive branch more effective, make legislative branch more creditable, make judicial branch more independent". According to Erdoğan, the nation's will take the centre of the politics through the presidential system that strengthens executive branch, in other words through his presidency. In his election manifesto dated May, 6, he argues that in the new system "democracy will properly function with its all institutions", "democracy will be more settled and institutionalized" and hence freedoms will be guaranteed.

In that framework, citizens are expected to participate in election processes and his party's election campaign. He attributes a role especially to women and youth in



that regards. Increasing women's participation in politics –as it will be analysed further under themes related to women's rights- found a small place in Erdoğan's election manifesto.

Since there are more than 10 million voters in between 18-27 ages, it is observed that all candidates appealed to young people and promised to solve problems of youth such as unemployment and education. However, youth's political participation had a limited place in the leader's agenda and in majority of the cases when the leaders touched upon this issue, they "assigned" young people with election security. This approach also applies to Erdoğan's speeches. Mentioning about youth for 26 times in his speeches, Erdoğan underlines the importance he attached to youth in his election manifesto as follows: "Dear young people... You are our rise and ascendance" (May, 6 2018). He also says "You are the future, to whom we bestow our dreams of 2053 and 2071. We shall not order you. We shall not dictate to you. We shall not push you in moulds. We will simply work together with you. We will walk together with you" and highlights the significance his party attributes to young people. However Erdoğan's words on youth are contradictory. By addressing young people as "You are the future, to whom we bestow our dreams of 2053 and 2071" he delays young people's active role in politics to a far future, even to his own age. In the following of his speech, he appeals to young people like a parent and rather than considering them as political actors acting on their own will, he adopts an attitude based on giving advices and assigning duties to young people. Saying "We will not let you trapped by any terrorist organization or network of evil" he sees young people as creatures that are in danger of being trapped and can not act at their own will. Nevertheless, in his Diyarbakır meeting, he said "Dear young people, tell what I told you to those young people supporting the terrorist organization" and he assigned them to tell his investments in the region to other people. The leader also invited young people from Diyarbakır to "give a solid response to those abusing them for years and darkening their future".

The young people who are argued to be abused by terrorist organizations and involved in the category of "common enemy" in Diyarbakır, are described as "successor of Fatih the conqueror" in İstanbul and integrated into the common identity built by glorification of the Ottoman and conquest tradition. Another duty assigned by the leader to youth is to contribute in election cam-

paign of the AKP as he does in the case of women. In his meetings in Diyarbakır, Ankara and İstanbul, he assigned young people to "tell the AKP to all young people until June, 24", "knock all doors" and "take security of election polls and their voters".

The sphere of political participation for all including women and youth is reduced to elections by the leader. Widening sphere of civil society as a mean of political participation or alternative channels of participation could not find a place in Erdoğan's agenda.

▪ *Political rights in Temel Karamollaoğlu's speeches*

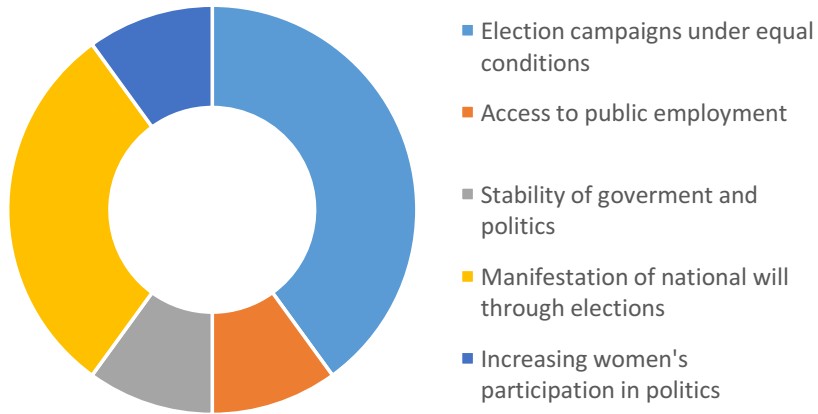
In speeches of Temel Karamollaoğlu, political rights are covered mainly through election campaigns to be conducted under equal conditions and -as a reflection of principle of equality- application of principle of "merit" in citizen's access to public employment and promotions in public employment. Security of election and development of tools that will enable widespread participation of citizen's in decision making processes are among themes related to political rights in his speeches.

The promise of consultation, which is formulated as "meeting with people of different views and ideas and trying to solve issues together" in his candidacy speech, shows that Karamollaoğlu attaches importance to an understanding of politics in which decisions are made through consultation with relevant parties (May, 1 2018). In addition to that, preferring the word of "consultation" (istisare) instead of "participation" (katilim), Karamollaoğlu refers to "consultation mechanism" in the Ottoman state tradition. Although the meaning he attributes to this concept points out that he is deliberating on alternative ways of political participation for citizens and different sections of the society, it is not possible to say that he offers to improve participation as a right. In his speech in Diyarbakır dated June, 6 he clarified the meaning he attributed to "consultation": "Without knowing what people think, how can you come together with people and please them". So, he defined "consultation" as a way to "please" people rather than as a right that will enable citizen's political participation.

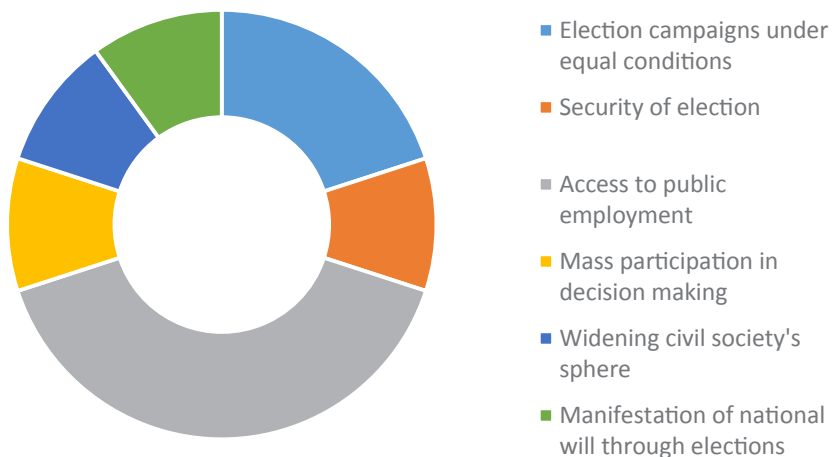
Karamollaoğlu is the leader who appealed to youth most in election speeches. Using the word of "young" for 51 times in his speeches, he took the stage with young people holding letters of his name. He defined young people as "guarantee of our future", emphasized the importance of "protecting youth" and touched upon prob-



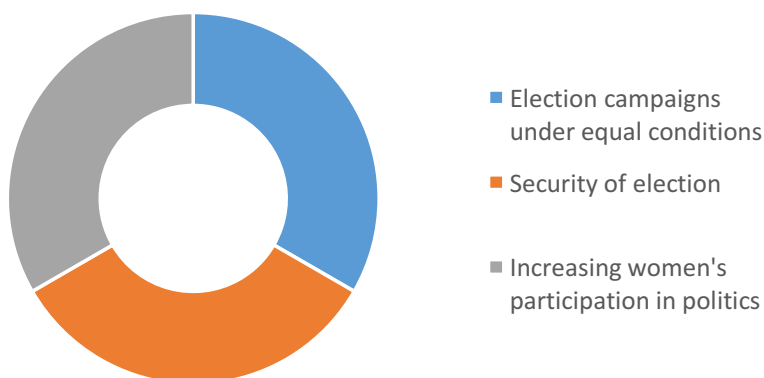
Graphic 25. Erdoğan: Political Rights



Graphic 26. Karamollaoğlu: Political Rights



Graphic 27. Aksener: Political Rights





lems of youth such as unemployment and education. In his Diyarbakır meeting, he called youth to “have a cause whether they are sick, tired or old”, advises them to act like him and put effort for the cause to the end; however he did not say a word on political participation of youth in his speeches.

He touched upon women’s political participation only in his İzmir meeting in which he talked about a meeting he held with women’s branch of his party. He called women “my lady siblings” and said “the head of our lady’s branch informed me”. In his Diyarbakır meeting he pointed out existence of women participants in the meeting hall: “The excitement of our lady siblings increases my hope”.

▪ *Political rights in Meral Akşener’s speeches*

Analysis of Meral Akşener’s speeches points out that she covers political rights in a very narrow framework. Akşener touched upon that election campaigns were not conducted under equal conditions in her two speeches, she talked about women’s participation in election campaign in one speech and mentioned election security in another. Young people’s political participation was covered only through the assignment she gave to young people which is “talking with their friends and asking them which candidate Erdoğan would not like to see in the second round of election” (Kayseri, May, 25 2018). Except this assignment, young people could find place in Akşener’s election agenda through promises on unemployment and education.

▪ *Political rights in Doğu Perinçek’s speeches*

Doğu Perinçek approached political rights through his party’s choice to position women candidates and young peoples at the top of candidate lists. However, the leader needed to emphasize that these candidates were “highly distinguished women”: “Our women friends are at forefront of our lists but they are distinguished women of Turkey such as former deputy president of Gazi University-Tulin Oygur and the single female orchestra chef in Turkey-İnci Özdiil and our women friends Şule Perinçek and Mrs. Seval” (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018).

On the other hand, calling young people as “Youth of Atatürk” in his election manifesto, the leader mentioned that “The parliament backing Atatürk was young as well” and touched upon that they had young people in his party’s candidate lists. After listing their names one by one, Perinçek specifically emphasized that “they are

friends who are capable of governing Turkey, forming a government and serving as ministers”. In his all speeches, the leader referred to youth that he called “Youth of Atatürk”, repeated his promise to make parliament younger and thusly covered the theme of increasing political participation of youth.

Cultural rights

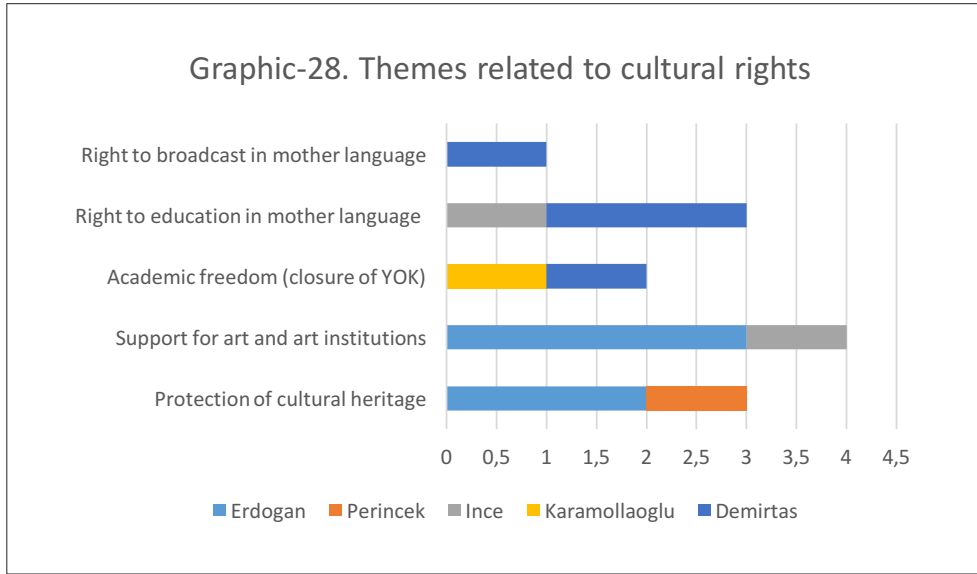
Cultural rights are covered through different thematic preferences by the leaders. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is the leader who covered cultural rights most in his speeches. In general, he approaches the issue through accomplishments and promises on protection of cultural heritage. In that framework nation’s coffeehouses project and opening of new museums are among the main promises. He also covered cultural rights through promises of supporting of art and art institutions and opening of science and technology centres.

Like Erdoğan, Perinçek also mentioned protection of cultural heritage however he approaches to the issue through protection of Turkish and prohibition of education in foreign languages and signboards in foreign languages.

In Temel Karamollaoğlu’s speeches, cultural rights was covered through closure of YOK (the Council of Higher Education) and re-structuring of the Inter-University Council.

Muharrem İnce mentioned about protection of art and works of art in his election manifesto but he touched upon right to education in mother language as a culture rights only in his Diyarbakır meeting. As it can be seen below, education in mother language can find place in İnce’s agenda not as a response to citizens’ demands for that right, but as a human heritage that should be protected and he approaches to the mother language together with other languages which should be learned to raise children as world citizens.

It means that a language is a human heritage... And we will teach our official language, Turkish, to all our citizens and children. This is the first one. Secondly, children speak a language with their parents at home. It might be Kurdish, Arabic, Circassian and so on. We will also teach our children their mother languages. Even we teach them official language, even we teach them their native language, we would not say “it is enough”. We will make them world citizens. We will teach English, French, Italian, Arabic, Russian and Chinese (Diyarbakır meeting, June, 11 2018).



No theme that can be related to cultural rights is found in Meral Akşener’s speeches.

Selahattin Demirtaş is the leader who covered cultural rights in a broader framework compared to other leaders. In his election manifesto, he elaborated on right to education in mother language and he touched upon this issue in his TRT speech dated June, 23. The leader said they will “consider different languages not as a threat but as a richness” and he noted that besides Turkish as official language, children would be provided with “scientific, secular, democratic, emancipatory and pluralist” education in their mother languages. Demirtaş also said they would constitutionally guarantee that “everyone will be entitled to access public services such as education, health and communication in their mother languages”.

In his speeches, Demirtaş also articulated demands of respect for freedom as a prerequisite to scientific researches and creative activities and promotion of scientific freedom (closure of Higher Education Council).

Minority rights

Thematic analysis of speeches and texts shows that minority rights are mainly covered by Demirtaş.

▪ *Minority rights in Selahattin Demirtaş’s speeches*

Themes related to minority rights in Demirtaş’s campaigns are covered in a framework related with the leader’s approach to minority rights. In his election manifesto and candidacy letter, Demirtaş associated associated minority rights with pluralism and multi-culturalism and

promised to get all minority rights including educational, cultural and democratic rights recognized through a civil and libertarian constitution. In that regards he promised to enable “everyone to live their social lives freely according to their belief, culture and world-view” in the light of principles of pluralist democracy and he noted that the new constitution would provide “living spheres for different identities, cultures and beliefs which are in line with equal citizenship law and their own identities and authenticities”. Demirtaş also emphasises that “pressure over all oppressed and excluded identities, belief groups, cultural groups and gender identities will be removed” (Election manifesto) and “all democratic rights of Kurdish people, Alevis, Sunnis and people of other beliefs” will be secured (TRT speech, June, 23 2018).

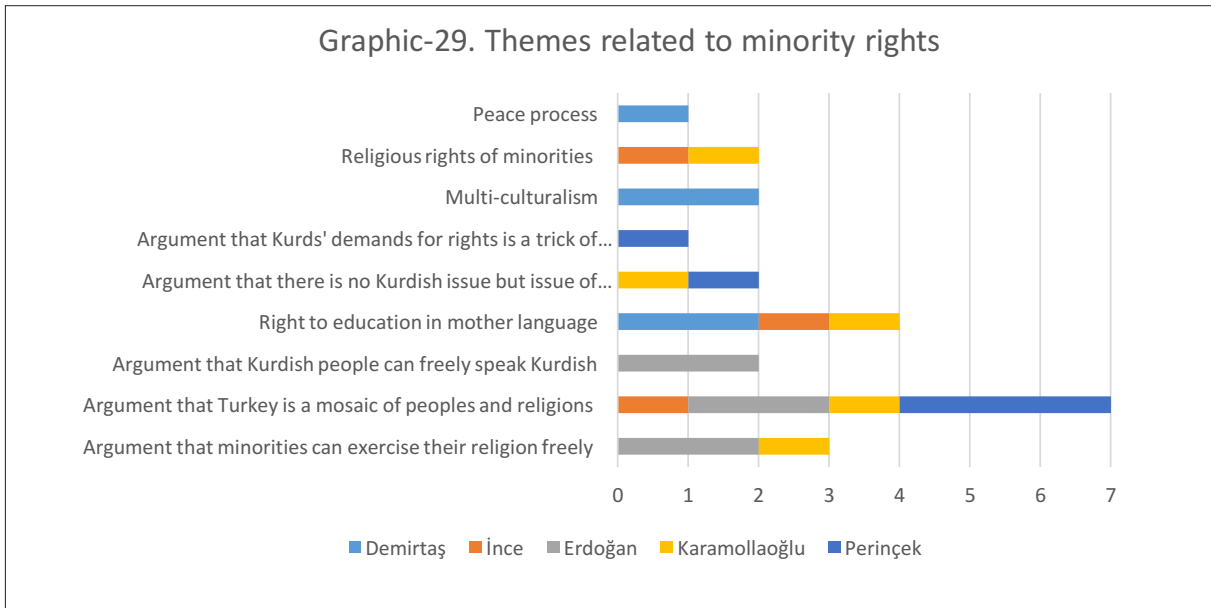
Peaceful resolution of Kurdish issue is another theme covered by Demirtaş who argues “Kurdish issue can be solved through common will of peoples” and talks about “ending violence and conflict with an honourable peace through taking Kurdish issue out of violence circle”. In his TRT speech dated June, 23 he referred the parliament as the address for a peace process that would ultimately end violence and arms. Besides, in order to ensure conditions for living together in peace, he promised to do necessary works for having state delivering official apologies for genocides and massacres targeting different peoples and beliefs in the past.

▪ *Minority rights in Muharrem İnce’s speeches*

Muharrem İnce touched upon themes related to minority rights in his election manifesto and Diyarbakır meet-



Graphic-29. Themes related to minority rights



ing. In his election manifesto, instead of minorities’ demands for rights, Ince covered the theme that Turkey is a mosaic of peoples and religions which have been living together in cohesion and peace for centuries. In his Diyarbakır meeting, he touched upon religious rights of minorities, Kurdish people’s right to education in their mother language and solution to Kurdish issue. However rather than relating the issue with Kurds’ demands for rights, he preferred to argue that “Kurds want to be honoured” and “concerns of Turks should be addressed”. Like Demirtaş, Ince argued that the parliament is the place where Kurdish issue can be solved and promised to have discussions at TRT in order to honour Kurds and address concerns of Turks when he is elected as president.

▪ **Minority rights in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speeches**

The argument that “minorities in general and Kurds in specific do not suffer any violation of rights in Turkey” comes to the forefront in Erdoğan’s speeches. In that regards, Erdoğan’s speeches coded as “speeches related to minority rights” are built on denial of these rights. In his Diyarbakır meeting, referring to the argument that Turkey is a mosaic of peoples and religions, he argued that minorities can freely exercise their religions and Kurds can freely speak their mother language everywhere. Similarly, in his İstanbul meeting, he noted that Kurds can speak their language in prisons, they can learn and speak their language however he did not mention right to education in mother language.

▪ **Minority rights in Doğu Perinçek’s speeches**

The argument that Turkey is a mosaic of peoples and religions and hence Kurds do not suffer any violation of rights is also repeatedly articulated by Perinçek in these words: “We are Kurds, we are Turks, we constitute Turkish nation”. Arguing that there is not a Kurdish issue but there is an issue of America, the problems of Kurds are not related to being minority but related to underdevelopment and it can be solved through “giving jobs to our Kurds”. At this point Perinçek gets closer to Erdoğan who speaks in a framework based on denial of minority rights.

▪ **Minority rights in Temel Karamollaoğlu’s speeches**

Similarly to Erdoğan and Perinçek, the argument that Turkey is a mosaic of peoples and religions and there is a strong harmony and association between ethnic groups has a considerable weight in Karamollaoğlu’s speeches. In his election manifesto Karamollaoğlu underlines that Turks and Kurds are members of the same religion and hence they are organs of the same body. However, in his Diyarbakır meeting, he touched upon Kurds’ right to education in mother language as Ince did and said “Of course education in mother language is a right. It will eventually be recognised”. Stating that right to education in mother language was brought up by Erbakan 25-30 years ago and for that reason he was sentenced and banned from politics, Karamollaoğlu emphasised that his party has such a heritage in relation to rights of Kurds. The leader covered solution of Kurdish issue in his elec-



tion manifesto but stated contradictory ideas on the issue in his speeches. Saying “Turks do not have a problem called Kurds, Kurds do not have a problem called Turks”, Karamollaoğlu believes that “the main problem is in the approaches and policies which have been trying to divide and separate the nation”. Later he noted that the issue could not be solved solely on the basis of security and emphasised necessity of “overall reforms in social, psychological, economic, cultural and political spheres” however he did neither explained these reforms nor mention how peace process will be conducted.

In the analysed speeches of Meral Akşener, likewise the case of cultural rights, no theme related to minority rights was found.

Women’s rights

Women’s rights were on the agendas of all leaders one way or the other since they needed to appeal to women constituting half of the voters. Visibility of women at arenas of election might be another factor as well. Nevertheless, except Karamollaoğlu who held indoor meetings, when meetings videos of the leaders were watched, women’s considerable presence at the arenas of election was seen. The single female candidate, Meral Akşener, is the leader who covered themes related to women’s rights most.

▪ *Women’s rights in Meral Akşener’s speeches*

Introducing herself as “the single women presidential candidate of the nation” in her Kayseri meeting dated May, 25 covered themes such as women’s participation in election campaign, women employment and financial difficulties that women experience in her speeches.

Violence against women is another topic covered by Akşener who considered it as an indicator of gap of governing: “Our children are abused, our young girls are murdered at the streets before the eyes of people. Men who have weapons in their hands and pockets are walking down the streets. Our women suffer violence and they are murdered because there is a gap of governing” (May, 15 2018). However the leader did not offer a policy on fight against violence against women in her election campaign which implies that if she is elected the gap will be filled and problem will be solved.

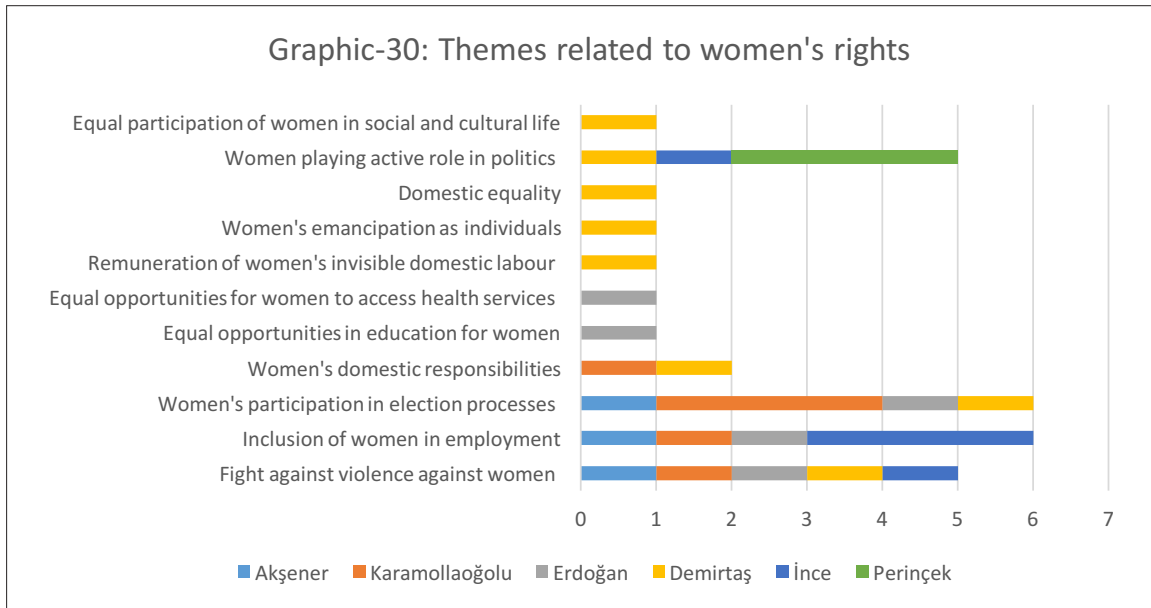
Indeed it is possible to say that Akşener’s consideration of women reflects patriarchal roles. The leader sees the nation as “a huge family sitting around a dinner table” rather than a whole composed of citizens endowed with rights. According to Akşener, “As it is the case in all fam-

ilies, also in this family” women are assumed to play a vital role. She defines women’s role in politics in reference to their role in families; according to her women’s duty is to “raise our republic over their shoulders” (Election manifesto, May, 15 2018) and to devote themselves to the country: “We applied our henna and we devoted ourselves to Turkey. Henna means devotion” (Istanbul, Fatih, June, 21 2018). Wearing scarfs gifted by her women supporters at her meetings, Akşener sees these scarfs as an indicator of women’s support and argues that scarf is an expression of peace, hope, tranquillity and fraternity and “one of the purest, cleanest and strongest symbol of the Anatolia”.

Akşener mentioned about women 24 times in a framework associating women with domestic and traditional roles in her speeches but in none of them she offered a policy proposal for emancipation of women as individuals and involvement of women in political life as equals.

▪ *Women’s rights in Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s speeches*

In Erdoğan’s election agenda, women rights are covered through fight against violence against women, women’s role in election campaigns, women’s equal participation in work life, women’s right to education and access to health services. In his election manifesto Erdoğan argues that women have had important gains throughout his era, because “they have paved the way for women through fighting against all kinds of discrimination” and hence “women are waiting for assignments in working life”. Erdoğan also claims that women have broken through in terms of political participation by means of women branches of his party and the highest level of women representation in the parliament has been achieved. Erdoğan states he considers appearance of women in all spheres of social life and decision making mechanisms vital. However, when explaining these accomplishments, the leader says “I always believed that strengthening women means strengthening our country”, he underlines that these gains he claims in women rights were achieved through his own will but he does not relate these gains with women’s demands for rights. Besides, his election manifesto he promises to provide more opportunities for women in the new government system; keep supporting women in education, employment, health and family issues and keep fighting against abuse, violence and harassment. In his election manifesto Erdoğan approaches to the women rights from a broader perspective: We will eliminate all types of jahili-



yyah-era customs against women. We will keep fighting until women become equal citizens of this country and nation with all types of equal rights.

However, it is not possible to find any promise on the precautions and practices through which women's rights will be advanced in the leader's election manifesto. Besides there is not any coverage of women's rights in his speeches as well. Preferring to address women as "ladies", he asked women to keep actively working in the election campaign in his speeches in Diyarbakır, Ankara and İstanbul by saying "Mashallah, Mashallah! You are great ladies! Do you work day and night? Do you knock each and every door?" The leader did not deliver any promise on increasing women's political participation.

▪ **Women's rights in Muharrem İnce's speeches**

In his election manifesto İnce says: "Our women will have the place they deserve in all spheres of life from labour market to politics and they will enrich our social life" (May, 19 2018). Expressions of "our women" and "they will enrich our social life" in this sentence point out that the candidate has a male-centred perspective regarding women and he approaches to the issue with a kind of belonging relationship. However the manifesto also says "Women will be supported with positive discrimination and they will be promoted in terms of participation in politics and taking higher positions in government. The labour force participation rate of women will be raised from 32% to 50%" and introduces a perspective based on women's demands for rights. In his

Diyarbakır meeting, İnce said "A child-care centre for each neighbourhood, children to childcare women to work" and touched upon the issue of childcare that is of great importance for removing obstacles to women employment. The leader also covered fight against violence against women and children as well.

▪ **Women's rights in Temel Karamollaoglu's speeches**

Addressing women as "my sisters", Karamollaoglu also covered themes related to women in his speeches. Although a broader framework on women's rights is seen in his election manifesto, he had a limited coverage of the issue in his speeches. While he addressed women as "ladies" in his speeches, he used the word of "woman" in his election manifesto and identified women's social status and rights as one of the main problem. Stating that "gender-based discrimination, intimidation or violence" is "a problem of humanity" he promises that his party will stand against "physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence and discrimination against women". Besides, in his election manifesto, he promises that necessary regulations will be made –with women's participation in the process- in order to end sufferings of victims of violence, the issue of mobbing will be fought against and working women will be supported in terms of childcare. Although maternity leave for working women is an item in his election agenda, he did not approach to the issue as a women's demand for right but he explained it through "protection of family means protection of generation". Touching upon women's finan-



cial problems and their duties such as taking care of children's education, Karamollaoğlu promised improvement in these areas.

▪ *Women's rights in Doğu Perinçek's speeches*

Nothing that he put women candidates at the top of candidate lists, Perinçek covered women's rights through women's political participation in his speeches. However he puts the emphasis on "distinguished" women rather than women's political participation and improving women's political representation.

▪ *Women's rights in Selahattin Demirtaş's speeches*

Selahattin Demirtaş is the candidate who covered women's rights in a broader framework and interrelated the issue with women's demands for rights. He covered women's rights in depth in his election manifesto and under the title of "women will change" he promised to initiate a social mobilization to change patriarchal mentality. According to his election manifesto, the first step of this mobilization is the measures he promised which will aim at improving women's political participation and women's representation in decision-making processes. He noted that women will play a determinant role in solution of social problems; in order to construct a pluralist parliamentary system a "social consensus" platform will be built which will enable all social sections, mainly women and youth, to submit their opinions and proposals to the parliament and a government system based on women's equal representation will be introduced. Besides, he also argued that co-presidency at all levels of political parties will be legalized in order to secure women's equal representation. Another promise related to women's demands for rights is about women's emancipation as individuals. At this point he says "no attack on women's body, life style and values will be allowed" and "they will adopt policies that will socialize domestic responsibilities". Violence against women is also covered by the leader who promised to put effort to introduce deterrent and fair penalties for femicides. Violence against women is covered in his candidacy letter and he repeated his promises in his election manifesto at his TRT speech dated June, 23 as follows: "We will take necessary constitutional, administrative and practical measures to ensure women's free and equal existence at all spheres of life. Nobody will be discriminated or oppressed on the basis of their life style or clothing. Half of the ministers will be women in our cabinet".

Rights related to persons or groups requiring special protection

When addressing voters, the leaders delivered promises on groups requiring special protection such as disabled persons, elders and children. Promises about more than 664.000 disabled voters ranked first.

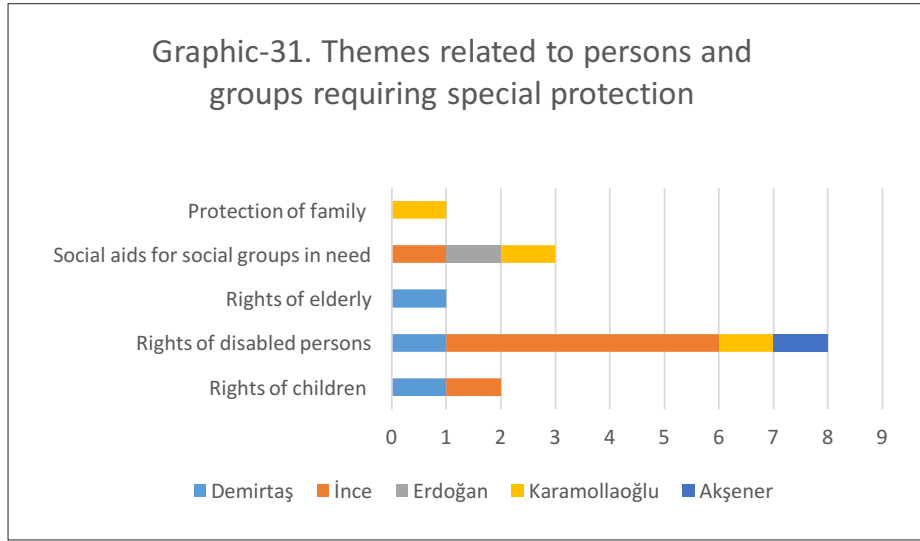
In his election manifesto, Erdoğan promised to provide new facilities and opportunities for "our disabled persons, as equal citizens, for whom we have removed all obstacles in all spheres of life" and he informed on the amount of social aids they have provided in 16 years for those in need he calls as "our disabled persons, our elderlies, our orphans and waifs". Akşener noted that she has disabled relatives in her family, she elaborated on the measures that should be taken to include disabled persons in social life" (Kayseri, May. 25 2018). Muharrem İnce delivered promises for disabled children as well and said that these children will be under state protection throughout their life, new special education institutions will be opened and the presidential residence built in Marmaris (that İnce calls "summer palace") will be turned into a community centre for disabled children. In addition, İnce is the single candidate who had an interpreted for hearing impaired voters with him at his meetings.

Demirtaş also delivered promises for disabled persons in his election manifesto. Demirtaş promised to fully use employment quotas for disabled persons in public workplaces, make public transportation free and disabled-friendly for disabled persons and provide all disabled citizens with social security.

Karamollaoğlu said they will make Turkey a disability-free country and they will not consider any service for disabled citizens as a "favour".

In sum, all leaders except Perinçek delivered promises for disabled persons however none of them touched upon increasing disabled people's political participation, having disabled citizens in the parliament and fight against discrimination against disabled persons.

Children's rights was rarely covered in speeches of the leaders who prioritized to address parents who are having troubles in providing food for their children or asking for the best education for their children. Erdoğan did not cover any theme related to children's rights. İnce mentioned about provision of high-quality education for all children Both İnce and Akşener included fight against violence against children into their agenda. In addition, Akşener promised to open a hospital for



children. Karamollaoğlu promised to give scholarship to children of low-income families, noted that children get harmed when their families disintegrate due to poverty and said that they will protect children and youth from drug addiction.

Selahattin Demirtaş is the leader who approached to children's rights in the broadest framework among the leaders. Demirtaş promised to stop child abuse, prevent child marriage, "introduce a scientific education system in mother language based on human rights and developmental needs of children" and secure children rights and rights of disabled persons by the new constitution.

Besides covering social aids and rights of disabled persons, Karamollaoğlu touched upon family as a group requiring protection, explained domestic violence in reference to unemployment and emphasized importance of resolution of domestic conflicts. According to the leader, the main cause of the domestic violence and conflicts is the model of "the father who can not earn a living for his family and the mother who can not endure hunger and misery any more". Therefore, in his election manifesto, Karamollaoğlu considers fight against poverty as the solution to domestic violence and promises "to strengthen family and institution of marriage" and "to provide interest free loans to young persons who can't marry because of financial difficulties" when he comes in power.

LGBTI rights were not covered in speeches of the leaders including Demirtaş. However, in his election manifesto, Demirtaş promised to remove pressure over sexual identities.

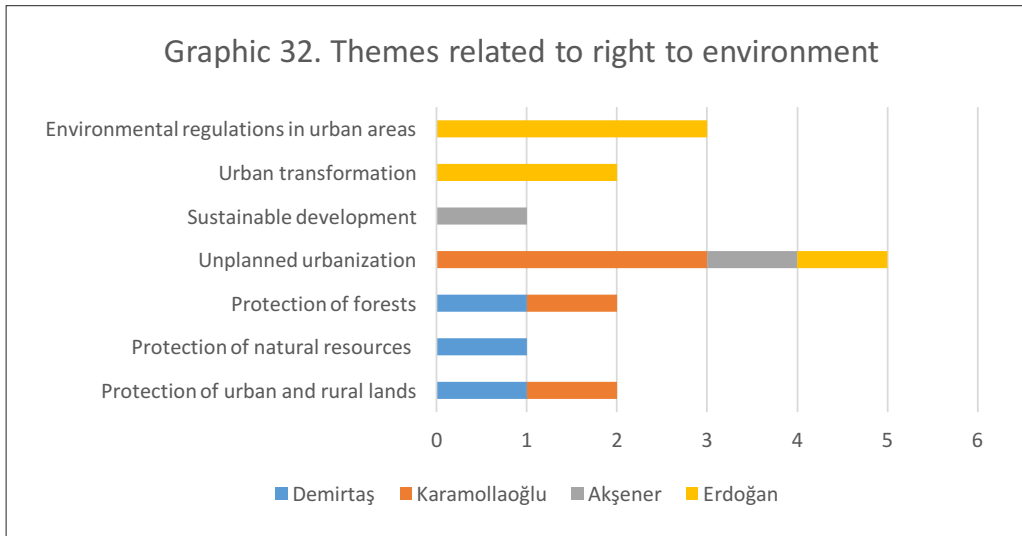
Right to environment

Erdoğan is the leader who covered themes related to right to environment in his speeches. However Erdoğan's perspective on this topic is based on regulations related to urban areas rather than protection of natural resources and environment. The leader promised to set up nation gardens, initiate "construction peace" and continue urban transformation. In one of his speeches Erdoğan covered the issue of unplanned urbanization which is also covered by Akşener as well. Akşener underlined the need of balance between development and protection of environment (sustainable development). Unplanned urbanization has also a considerable weight in Karamollaoğlu's agenda. Interpreting "vertical urbanization" as "towers of arrogance", Karamollaoğlu said he will not allow it when he comes in power. Protection of rural and urban lands and forests is another item related to right to environment of Karamollaoğlu's agenda. Demirtaş differs from other candidates with his perspective on right to environment. Protection of natural resources, forests, rural and urban lands found place in Demirtaş's election agenda.

Neither Perinçek nor İnce covered themes related to right to environment.

Freedom of religion and conscience

Muharrem İnce is the leader who covered themes related to freedom of religion and conscience in his speeches most. İnce touches upon recognition of right to pray in reference to Alevi's demands and removal of compulsory religious courses. Saying "As Sunnis we were not fair to Alevis. We are committing unfairness", İnce not-



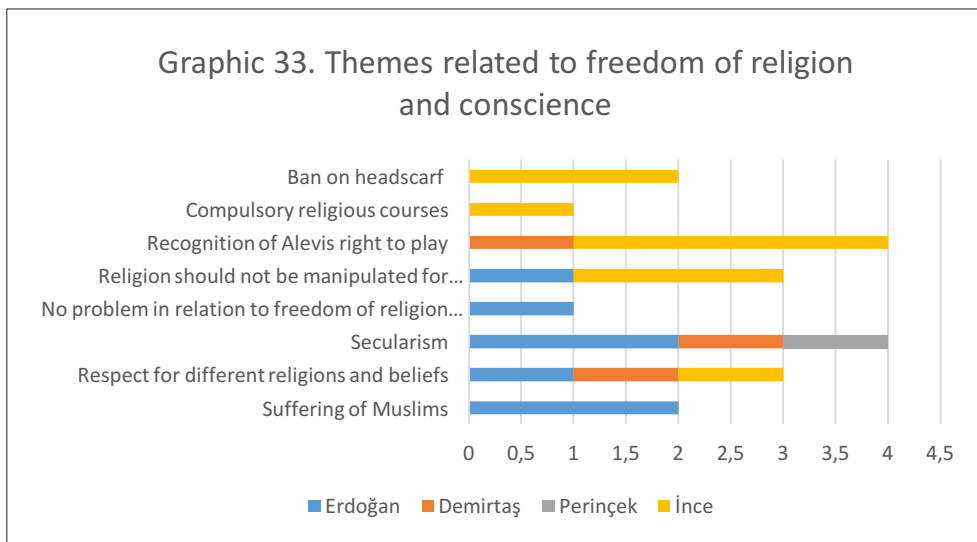
ed that Alevi citizens also pay taxes and become martyrs, and they also pay salaries of imams but the Presidency of Religious Affairs provides services “to us, to Sunnis”. This expression points out that Ince approaches to the issue with a perspective of majority and does not include religious minorities in the definition of “us”. However the leader promised Alevi people –who he defines out of “us”- to entitle djemevis with status of “prayer houses” within 100 days after he gets elected.

Besides, Ince underlined the necessity of respect for different beliefs and religions and opposes to headscarf bans of the past. Not covering the theme of secularism in his speeches, Ince emphasized that religion should not be manipulated for political purposes.

Differently from Ince, the theme of secularism is covered in Erdoğan’s speeches. In his İzmir meeting, Erdoğan not-

ed that he sees secularism as a condition of democracy and guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience. Erdoğan also covered the theme of respect for different beliefs and religions and argued that there is no problem in Turkey in terms of freedom of religion and conscience, everybody can freely exercise religious practises and there is no distinction of Alevi-Sunni. Pointing out the sufferings of Muslims in the past, Erdoğan underlined that religion should not be manipulated for political purposes. In Perinçek’s speeches freedom of religion and conscience is covered through the theme of secularism.

In Akşener’s and Temel Karamalloglu’s (the candidate of the Islamist-conservative Felicity Party) speeches any theme on freedom of religion and conscience is not found. Lack of this themes in Karamollaoğlu’s speeches might be explained through his aim to compete for votes





of secular-conservative voters besides his religious potential supporters. However it is important to note that Karamollaoğlu has a political perspective based on "religious fraternity".

Selahattin Demirtaş, in his speeches, promised that all praying places of Alevis will be legally recognized and rights of Alevis, Sunnis and all other people with different beliefs will be secured through the new constitution.

Freedom of expression and press

Freedom of expression and press is among the themes covered in the least number of speeches. Muharrem İnce is the leader who covered the issue in the broadest perspective. Covering the issue in his 4 speeches, İnce touched upon freedom of expression of citizens in general, artists and scientists, government's attempt to create a media under its control and censorship, self-control and monopolization in media. In reference to his criticisms on TRT which did not broadcast his meetings, İnce articulated problem of partisanship in media. Like İnce, Akşener argued that the government has been creating a media under its controlled and complained about the media which did not cover her meetings as well. Like other candidates, Demirtaş covered problem of non-objectivity of media, censorship and self-control and criticized government's attempt to create a media under its control. In his two speeches, Karamollaoğlu mentioned about freedom of expression as a general category.

Stating that articulation of different political demands is a freedom in his Diyarbakır meeting, Erdoğan, differently from other candidates, defines the borders of this freedom with "not being hostile to Islam, hostile to foreigners, racist or sexist" in his election manifesto.

Perinçek did not cover freedom of expression and press in his speeches.

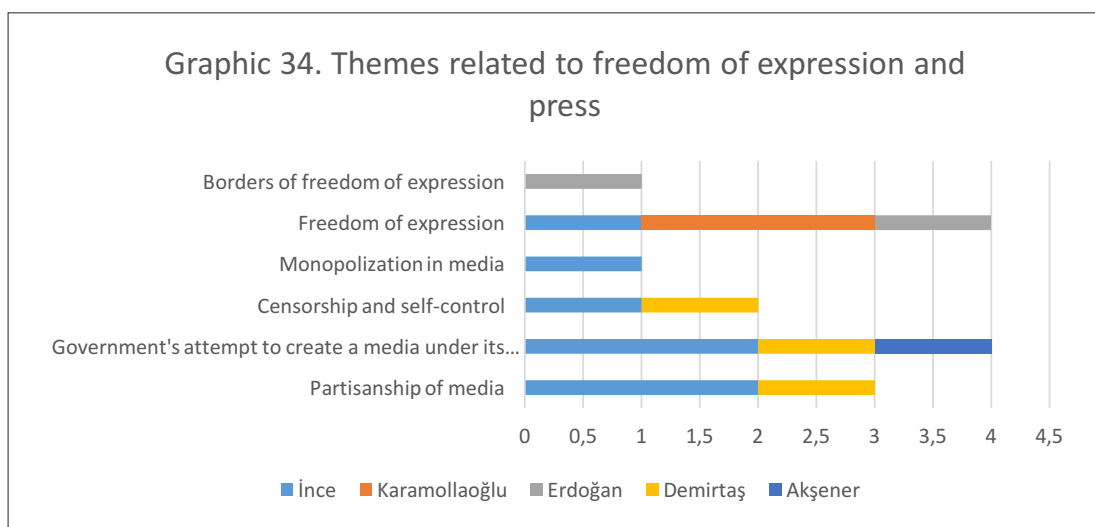
Civil rights

Classified under classical rights in the literature on human rights, civil rights is the least covered human category of human rights in the leader's speeches. Only in 4 speeches, a right in this category is covered. 3 of them are speeches of İnce who promised that telephones will not be wiretapped. Akşener touched upon protection of private life and family life.

Restriction of rights and freedoms

In order to understand how the presidential candidates conceptualize and approach to democracy, analysing whether they define borders of rights and freedoms is as much important as identifying which themes related to basic rights & freedoms and basic democratic rights & values are covered. In that sense, in 10 speeches, expressions on restriction of rights and freedoms are found.

Among the justifications proposed by the leaders to restriction of rights and freedoms, "manipulation of religion for political purposes", that might be considered as a restriction on political rights, ranks at the top. Erdoğan in his 3 speeches and İnce in his 5 speeches said that they will not allow manipulation of religion for political purposes. In his İzmir meeting (April, 28 2018) "We are definitely against manipulation of religion for political purposes but we are also against intimidation and disciplinization of and insulting to persons who want to exercise their beliefs" he said and touched upon their fight against FETO as follows: "We adopted the strongest attitude against those manipulation religious sensitivity of





our people for the interests of their organization". In his election manifesto Ince criticized the governing party in that regards: "We are under domination of a team that manipulates religion for everything".

Fight against terrorism and "indivisible integrity of state and nation" and protection of state's interests are the main justifications to restriction of basic rights proposed by both Erdoğan and Perinçek. In his speeches Erdoğan argued that October 6-8 events were initiated by the order of Demirtaş and stated that Demirtaş and the HDP are serving for the terrorist organization as follows:

My brothers and sisters. Who called people of Diyarbakır to pour into streets? Wasn't he the guy in Edirne prison? 53 brothers and sisters of ours died and martyred in there. Who were the people who lost their lives? Weren't they my Kurdish brothers? Did not they kill our son Yasin Boru? Did not they martyr him? What is the situation now, he is a candidate for Presidency. Now, I see that all of them are visiting that guy in Edirne prison as if they are visiting a tomb (Diyarbakır, June, 3 2018).

In addition, arguing that the CHP "acts like the spokesperson of all terrorist organizations from PKK to PYD which are shooting bullets at our country and nation" (İzmir, April, 28 2018), Erdoğan identified the CHP and HDP and their presidential candidates at out of the legal political sphere and declared political representation of voters of these parties illegitimate.

Perinçek defended closure of the HDP that he associates with terror in reference to this justification:

... By using the authority granted to the cabinet by the 100th article of the Law on Political Parties, we will take a decision in the Council of Ministers and assign the Minister of Justice to start an investigation on the HDP on the ground that it became a centre of activities against integrity of the homeland and unity

of the nation and destructive activities against the republic and in reference to its party program and aims that are against the 68th article of our Constitution and the 81st, 82nd, 83rd and 84th articles of the Law on Political Parties... Turkey can not end terror without closing the HDP. Terrorists are allowed to plant mines, shooting at our soldiers and collect tribute through the HDP. ... enduring these activities of the HDP for freedom is a serious mistake (Election manifesto, May, 20 2018).

As it is seen, compared to Erdoğan, Perinçek takes one step further and defends closure of political parties which had been discussed a lot in the past and considered as a severe restriction on political rights; he promises to close a legally functioning political party-the HDP in his election manifesto.

Conclusion

As analysed in the first part of this study, The General Parliamentary Election and the Presidential Election dated June, 24 2018 were held under the conditions of state of emergency and severe restrictions on freedom of expression and press and rights to assembly and protest. Besides obstructions on meeting and campaign activities of the political parties and continuation of detention of the candidate of the HDP-Selahattin Demirtaş, restrictions on enjoyment of the rights have been observed throughout the election process. On the other hand use of media and public resources in favour of the governing party, the last minute amendments in the Electoral Law and practices such as merger of ballot stations have been considered as developments harming fairness of election. Despite all these restrictions, it has been seen that, the political parties and candidates run an active election campaigns and used all possible means including social media to communicate their messages to the voters.





All political parties and the candidates which participated in the parliamentary and presidential elections dated June, 24 2018 attributed a meaning beyond than an ordinary election because of the constitutional amendments -that change government system of Turkey- would be fully put into effect after the election of the President. While the opponent parties considered elections as an opportunity of revitalizing the “NO block” after the lost referendum and a mean for re-construction of parliamentary system; the AKP and MHP joined under the “People’s Alliance” saw the election as the final step of transition to the “strong government” which has been strongly desired by the right-wing political tradition of Turkey for 45 years throughout the eras of Erbakan, Turkeş and Özal. Both sides argued that if they won the elections, democracy of Turkey would get stronger. So that, election theme of the AKP was “Strong Parliament, Strong Turkey, Strong Government” and Erdoğan was declaring that 24th June would be a “democracy festival”. The candidate of the CHP, Muharrem İnce was saying that “democracy and will of people were put in pledge” and promising to re-build democracy and state of law⁶⁴. “Bringing democracy, justice and merit back” was the main promise of Meral Akşener. Similarly promises of Selahattin Demirtaş and Temel Karamollaoğlu were including “re-construction of parliamentarian democracy”. So, we have seen that “democracy” has been referred as a “useful” slogan by leaders especially in these elections.

This research showed that, both the ways in which the leaders use the concept of democracy and the basic values, principles, rights and freedoms they associate with this concept, were shaped through specific promises in a framework closely related with the electoral agenda. In that context, it has been identified that Erdoğan, in order to consolidate his supporters and persuade indecisive voters, aimed at producing a sense of “us” associated with historical, religious bounds and common national values and categorizing his rivals in a sense of “them” defined as enemies and pushed out of political arena, throughout his whole campaign. It has also been observed that Erdoğan’s antagonistic discourse had a determinative effect on speeches of other candidates, mainly on Muharrem İnce’s. A “perception of threat” which is mediated by a nationalist and hostile discourse equipped with religiosity lies at the centre of the “us” and “them”

64 <https://www.dw.com/tr/chpnin-cumhurba%C5%9Fkan%C4%B1-aday%C4%B1-muharrem-ince/a-43651015>

antagonism set by Erdoğan in his speeches and Erdoğan points out his political identity and party as the single power that can deal with this threat. As a result, Erdoğan declares all kinds of politics that are not compatible with his national, religious and political preferences illegitimate and hence constrains sphere of democratic politics to the extent that political plurality is totally abolished and no room is left for legal opposition.

It has also been observed that, Perinçek, like Erdoğan, formed “perception of threat” through discourse on unity and survival of the country and presented his future government as the single possible solution to this threat. So that, Perinçek marginalized Selahattin Demirtaş and the HDP, associated them with terror and in turn constrained sphere of legal politics and formed a framework that restricts political rights of voters of this party as well.

On the other hand, it is possible to say that, both Muharrem İnce, Meral Akşener and to some extent Selahattin Demirtaş reproduced Erdoğan’s antagonising discourse –that they criticized in their election speeches- through individualization. The leaders associated the problem of democracy that Turkey is facing with Erdoğan’s personality to a great extent and promised voters a politics in which Erdoğan does not exist or a politics different from Erdoğan’s. In that context, İnce and Akşener based their speeches on anti-Erdoğanism and criticism of Erdoğan and therefore they could not provide a road-map on how they will realize their promises on democracy in their speeches at arenas of election despite the relatively broader perspective on democracy that they presented in their election manifestos. For example, having promises on “basic rights and freedoms, social peace, pluralism, participation and free peace” under the title of “democracy” in his election manifesto, Muharrem İnce manifested a leader-centric and over-personalized understanding of politics in his election speeches and presented Erdoğan’s government as the main threat and himself the “saviour”. In turn, the antagonism İnce set through anti-Erdoğanism reduced politics to competition between leaders and since he reduced solution of problems to replacement of Erdoğan by himself as the president, he constrained sphere of democratic politics.

In her election speeches, Akşener set the main antagonism between the cadre composed of herself and her friends that she calls “statesperson”, and Erdoğan and the AKP. She accused her rivals of prioritizing not state’s survival but their own political interests. In that per-



spective, the relation set between state and citizen in Akşener's speeches reflects –rather than a relation borders of which are identified by rights and freedoms- an understanding of politics that prioritizes survival of the “state”, defines voters not as citizens but members of the nation and offers them affectionate arms of the state. As a result, the democracy promise and themes related to basic rights and freedoms had a limited place in the leader's election speeches.

Although Temel Karamollaoğlu did not prefer an antagonist discourse to deliver his promises and messages, he defined the main form of political relationship between citizens not through democratic citizenship equipped with rights but through a claim of homogeneity based on religiosity.

The leader who delivered promise of democracy in the broadest perspective was Selahattin Demirtaş who was deprived of having face-to-face interaction with voters. Although he used an antagonist discourse shaped through anti-Erdoğanism and criticisms at Erdoğan in his speeches and texts time to time; he delivered his promises and opinions on basic rights and freedoms in his all speeches and texts and he related demands for rights of different sections of the society with the demand on advancing political participation and representation.

In conclusion, it has been seen that democracy discourses of the candidates of June, 24 2018 Presidential Election were shaped around three main variables which played an important role in identification of borders of democracy discourse. First one was holding of elections under the conditions of the state of emergency which was declared after the coup attempt of July, 15. In that regards, anti-coup politics and demand of termination of state of emergency had a significant weight in the leader's election agenda. However the leaders were not successful at putting adequate effort to formulate their promises on rights and freedoms around these issues and offering concrete proposals. The second variable was related to June, 24 elections as the cornerstone of transition from the parliamentary system to the presidential one. In that framework; the promise of using the powers and opportunities provided by the presidential system for re-construction of the parliamentary system was the common ground for opposition parties but on the contrary President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan argued that the presidential system would be strengthening democracy. Since the discussions related to basic democratic values and principles such as rule of law and indepen-

dence of judiciary was squeezed in this agenda, the leaders fell short in developing concrete policy proposals on this matter. The third variable determining the democracy discourse of the leaders was political polarization and individualization of the competition among leaders which constrained political sphere. As a result of it, the social sections -who are categorized as “them”, seen as threat and declared illegitimate- were pushed out of political sphere; social and political problems -that are also related to political culture- were reduced to personalities of rival leaders, remained unsolved and pushed out of politics.



References

- AKPM İzleme Heyeti, Pace Monitoring Committee Statement, 24 Nisan 2018, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=7036&lang=2&cat=3>
- AGİT Demokratik Kurumlar ve İnsan Hakları Ofisi (ODIHR) Seçim Gözlem Heyeti ara raporu, 15 Haziran 2018, <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihhr/elections/turkey/384858?download=true>
- AGİT Demokratik Kurumlar ve İnsan Hakları Ofisi (ODIHR) Seçim Gözlem Heyeti Ön Raporu, 25 Haziran 2018, <https://www.osce.org/tr/odihhr/elections/turkey/385698?download=true>
- Avrupa Birliği Türkiye İlerleme Raporu, 17 Nisan 2018, <https://www.ab-ilan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/20180417-turkey-report.pdf>
- Bağımsız Seçim İzleme Platformu, 24 Haziran 2018 Seçimi Ara Rapor <http://www.esithaklar.org/yayinlarimiz/raporlar/>
- BM İnsan Hakları Yüksek Komiserliği 9 Mayıs 2018 tarihli bildirisi: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/05/1009232>
- Doğanay, Ülkü, Halise Karaaslan Şanlı ve İnan Özdemir Taştan, Seçimlik demokrasi: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Devlet Bahçeli ve Selahattin Demirtaş'ın Demokrasi Söylemi, Ankara, İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 2017.
- Eres, Benan ve Hakan Yüksel, AKP Döneminde Türkiye'de Değişen Medya Sermayesi, <http://halagazeteci.yiz.net/2018/05/10/akp-doneminde-turkiyede-degisen-medya-sermayesi/>
- Front Line Defenders 2017 Yıllık Raporu, https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/annual_report_digital.pdf
- HDP, Cumhurbaşkanlığı ve Milletvekili Seçim Sürecinde Yaşanan Hak İhlalleri Raporu, <http://www.hdp.org.tr/tr/raporlar/hdp-raporlari/24-haziran-secim-CC%27im-i-CC%27hlalleri-raporumuz/12219>
- Göztepe, Ece ve Dinçer Demirken, "Ece Göztepe: Demokratik bir Anayasa Toplumsal Vasatın Üstüne Çıkmak Zorunda", *Ayrıntı Dergi*, ayrintidergi.com.tr/ece-goztepe-demokratik-bir-anayasa-toplumsal-vasatin-ustune-cikmak-zorunda/
- İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu OHAL Güncellenmiş Durum Raporu, 20 Mart 2018, <https://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/196221-ohal-raporu-20-mart-2018-guncellemesi>
- Kaboğlu, İbrahim, "Kaboğlu, Ne cumhurbaşkanlığı ne başkanlık; bunun adı monokrasi" 13 Temmuz 2018, <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/politika/2018/07/13/ne-cumhurbaskanligi-ne-baskanlik-bunun-adi-monokrasi/>
- Mülkiyeliler Birliği, Seçim Adaleti ve Güvenliği Raporu <http://mulkiye.org.tr/secim-adaleti-ve-guvenligi-raporu/>
- Sarı, Mehmet Şafak, Cumhurbaşkanlığı Yarışı Haritası, 20 Haziran 2018, <https://msafaksari.com/2018/05/15/2018-cumhurbaskanligi-yarisi-haritasi/>
- Van Dijk Teun A., What is Political Discourse Analysis, *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, 11, 1-52, 1997.
- Venedik Komisyonu Görüşü, "110th PLENARY - Turkey - Proposed constitutional amendments "dangerous step backwards" for democracy" 10 Mart 2017, <http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/events/?id=2369>
- Yokuş, Sevtap, "Türkiye'de 2017 Anayasa Değişiklikleri", www.democraticprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Sevtap-Yokus-TURKIYEDE-2017-ANAYASA-DEGISIKLIKLERI-VE-COZUM-SURECI.pdf



About the Author

After receiving her BA from Ankara University Faculty of Communication in 1993, Ülkü Doğanay received master's degree in Political Science from the Middle East Technical University and a PhD from Ankara University, Department of Political Science and Public Administration. During her Ph.D. studies, upon gaining a scholarship from Turkish Academy of Sciences she worked at the French Press Institute of Paris II University for nearly a year. In 2009, she became Associate Professor in the field of Political Life and Institutions, and in 2014 she is appointed as a full professor at the Faculty of Communication of Ankara University where she worked between 1994 and 2017. In February 2017 she is dismissed from public service with a decree of law, for signing the Peace Petition.

Beside several papers on political communication, democracy and discrimination she is also the author of the book Rethinking Democratic Procedures which was published from Imge Publishing House in 2003: and among the co-authors of the books "I am not a Racist but: Discourses of Racism and Discrimination in the Press" (2011, Human Rights Joint Platform Publication), Elective Democracy (2017, Imge Publishing House), Faces of Discrimination (editor, 2018, Human Rights Joint Platform). Currently she is working as survey coordinator and tutor at the Human Rights School and writing columns at Gazete Duvar.

Translation

Ülkü Doğanay, Onur Bakır.

Imprint

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Cihannüma Mahallesi Mehmet Ali Bey Sk. 12/D5
34353 Beşiktaş-Istanbul
Türkiye
Tel: +90 212 310 82 37
contact@festr.org
www.festr.org

Sorumlu: Dr. Felix Schmidt
© FES Türkiye, 2019

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung or the organization for which the author works.