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Democracy in Turkey Press Freedom and Corruption

Turgul TOMGUSEHAN¹, Gokce KECECI²

Abstract

The measurement of democracy and its empiric work is at the beginning of the issues discussed for many years. The democracy index created by the Economist Intelligence Unit group of the Economist magazine, which has long been recognized as a democracy index and a measure of democracy, is the only index that measures the democracy levels of countries with many subcomponents and is recognized by the United Nations. The main aim of this study is to compare the current index with democracy, freedom of the press, and public opinion collected primary data in order to measure whether corruption is consistent with the index in question. At the same time press freedom and the democracy movement in a country like Turkey have moved towards a single man leadership. Turkey claims to be a member of the European Union but it reveals it has bigger problems. Primary data obtained from the aspects of index variable indicates that a parallel way of press freedom in Turkey and the country have moved towards a totalitarian regime by ignoring democracy.

Keywords: Democracy Index, press freedom, corruption, Turkey, fundamental rights, power.

Introduction

Today, the notion of democracy and the phenomenon have succeeded considerably in putting this key concept of modern political science into politics in such a way that it can hardly be challenged. Even so, anti-democracy focusses on it in the language of politics they use; Instead of putting their criticism as anti-democracy, they are pointing to the current manifestation of democracy. When we talk about corruption, decay, or deviation of anything, there are some judgments or thoughts or question marks about the state of being “good” and being “right” in the background of our minds. Aristo questioned in his Republic “The point

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which has to be considered is the origin of this corruption in nature” (Kaufmann & Vicente, 2011). According to Transparency International “corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs” (Shleifer & Vishny, 1993). Ethical, just and virtuous social life is indispensable in state administration and it is the support of all state policies. Criteria that shape and limit the actions of administrations and managers since the period when the phenomenon of government, and therefore the state, first emerged, have become moral values. The democratic parliamentary system in state administration requires the regulation of moral rules that will depend on the three main constituents of the state, legislative, executive and judicial, and to be applied in connection with sanctions (Dahl, 1994). The morality of the administration or of politics is measured by acting in accordance with these regulations and sanctions; the consequences of not complying with these regulations and sanctions are described as political corruption. At this point, the corruption of politics, that is, the existence of political corruption also means the corruption of democracy (Rock, 2009). The fact that political parties, their activities, which is an important element that ensures the continuity of the democratic order, is subject to legal regulation is also the main influence that ensures the continuity of the democratic order.

Nevertheless, there is no equally accepted doctrine of what democracy is. There is also a series of criticisms of the definition of democracy, which are from various angles. These essays often emphasize an element of democracy. For example, popular sovereignty, equality, participation, majority domination, tolerance, limitation of sovereignty, control of sovereignty, fundamental rights, separation of powers, state of law, welfare state, multi-party system, general elections, openness, freedom of thought are some of the elements (Schumpeter, 2010). For this reason various theories of democracy emphasize these elements differently (Cunningham, 2002)

When it comes to measuring democracies, the concept of democracy needs to be operationalized. Operational definition of concepts, that is, making them measurable requires as a principle to be empirical. While there is a possibility to make operational definitions of directly observable phenomena, empirical exploration of concepts that are not directly observable, such as norms, values, beliefs, needs to be made measurable, that is, to be embodied in a sense. Thus, a phenomenon that is conceptually described is determined as a concrete existence, and it can be decided at what extent it exists or not. For this reason, two things must be decided the selection of the indicators and the operationalization of the indicators (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018) (Green & Gallery, 2015). The difficulty of making a democracy acceptable to everyone is increasing in measuring democracy. For this reason, measuring democracy is not easy. Significant attempts have been made and are being made to measure democracy. To do this, there is a need for reliable, robust, standardized measurement tools as far as possible in

the scientific comparison of sovereignty arrangements (Noren-Nilsson, Morrow, & Quinn, 2017).

The Economist magazine, which has international credibility with its works and evaluations, is carrying out studies showing countries' democracy on the basis of Freedom and Democracy, Citizen Freedom, State Functions, Political Participation, Political Culture and values. Democracy Index (DI); "Index of Democracy (IoD) or Democracy Index is an index used by the UK-based company Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to measure the state of democracy in 167 countries. The index is based on 60 indicators grouped in five different categories measuring electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. The five categories are interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole. The condition of having free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is clearly the basic requirement of all definitions" (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018).

The index was first produced in 2006, with updates for 2008, 2010 and the following years since then. The index is based on 60 indicators grouped in five different categories measuring pluralism, civil liberties and political culture. In addition to a numeric score and a ranking, the index categorises countries as one of four regime types: full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes (The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd., 2011). The main aim of this particular paper is to measure the democracy level, press freedom and corruption in Turkey by using both primary and secondary data. Taking into account the difficulty of measuring the level of fundamental democracy it is more practical to create primary data together to use assessments with more theoretical indexes. The main purpose is to analyse primary and secondary data to compare if they complement each other. For this purpose, the Economist Magazine's evaluation of democracy and press freedom in Turkey was explained briefly and after that, similar questions were asked to the public. Thus, it was aimed to measure and prove findings of the survey and whether the secondary data of the democracy index match each other.

Literature Review

In Plato's Republic, Statesman, or Laws books, the doctrine of transformation was developed on administrations processing in (or movement of government) thought, that it tells us that each administration is condemned to disappear because of the imperfections it carries, and the chain change that an administration gives birth to another while it is destroyed. The aim of Plato is not limited to bringing a historical explanation of the change of administrations. It even repeats the backplane as a secondary narrative. As a political philosopher, he tries to show the reasons for the deterioration of political regimes with an idea that aims to create a right and just state. According to him, as long as man can break his enthusiasm

and his impulses by setting up self-control, he may have the conditions to prevent this corruption. Aristotle confronted the problems of the decline and even the decadence period that the history he lived in the Politics book imposed on other Greek polis, especially the Athens polis; but at the same time challenged them. He carefully examines the constitution of one hundred and fifty-eight Greek policies and classifies them. As such, it makes a distinction between the good and the bad, and develops provisions on which of the right constitutions are deviated or corrupt constitutions. In fact, since the beginning, the idea that every institution which is existed by human beings is doomed to corruption is dominant. The most typical reflection of this for political theory is the cycle of regimes or governments. It follows the stages of birth, growth, development, decay (corruption) and collapse (death) in an uninterrupted fashion (Holmes, 2009; Ambraseys & Bilham, 2011; Harrison, 2007; Olken & Pande, 2012).

Corruption is considered to be one of the most important problems that damage the process of the democratic system, moral values, and social justice, which jeopardize the safety and steady development of societies and threaten to socially and economically develop. In this case, it would not be wrong to say that the level of corruption has an important place in establishing the real capacities of institutions, securing democracy and ensuring the rule of law (Zhao, Kim, & Du, 2003). It is important to note that “corruption” is a name given to a few items of political corruption (mainly bribery, embezzlement and favouritism). Political Corruption, on the other hand, has a broader sense of corruption as we shall see below. In the broadest sense, the actors (voters, politicians, bureaucrats, interests and pressure groups) involved in the political decision-making mechanism must engage in political degeneration or political action to engage in behaviours’ and actions that violate existing legal, religious, moral and cultural norms it is called corruption (Heidenheimer & Johnston, 2002). According to Kaufmann and Vicente, since there is no developed judicial system and transparency in these countries, it is unlikely that the people will be penalized because the capacity for governance participation and management supervision is low (Kaufmann & Vicente, 2011).

The study in *The Economist* provides a measure of the democracy that focuses on five general categories by testing the state of democracy in 167 countries. These categories include; free and fair elections, citizen freedoms, state functions, political participation, and political culture. Studies in the field of comparative political science in democratic measurement efforts, among them the R. A. Dahl’s ground breaking research on “polyarchy” and his research are important. The notion of polyarchy, which Dahl is famous for, describes a state in which the vast majority are dominant and the power centres are diverse. It is also a concept used to describe a political system that is closer to it than any other political system, although it is not a perfect democracy ideal. In short, Dahl means polyarchy with the countries and practices we call democracy today. With the concept of polyarchy, Dahl thinks that both democratic qualities dominate and that democracy exists. According to Dahl, a democratic state government can be understood by two

measures: the degree of participation measured by the participation of the adult population with the right to vote, and the degree of competition in the process of political will and the emergence of political interests.

In Dahl's 1971 study, the classification of countries is based on indicators of the share of those who have the right to vote in the adult population, the possibility of opposition and the possibility of government to be removed from office (Dahl, 1971). The issue of the opposition and the removal of the government from the office is mainly based on the following criteria: (1) The measure of freedom of publication; (2) The status of the regime according to the constitution (constitutional, authoritarian, totalitarian); (3) The level of competitiveness of the electoral system; (4) The level of freedom of opposition groups; (5) The level of interest recruited by the associations; (6) The level of interest being taken up by political parties; (7) Recovery of interests by legislative assemblies; (8) The quantitative aspect of the Party system; (9) Horizontal distribution of power; (10) The status of the legislative assembly, whether it is effective or not (Schmidt, 2002).

The following questions are at the core of the study. Civil rights consist of the following four questions:

A. Freedom of expression and belief: (1) Is media free and free from censorship? (2) Is there freedom of religious expression in private and public spaces with free religious institutions?

B. Corporate and organizational rights: Is there freedom of organization, assembly and demonstration? (2) Are political parties and civil organizations free? (3) Is there free enterprise, free trade associations and effective collective bargaining?

C. Supremacy of law and human rights: (1) Is the judiciary independent? (2) Are they dominated by law, civil and criminal matters? (3) Are the citizens equal to the law before the law? (4) Are the police subject to the civil authority? (5) Is there protection from political terror, arbitrary detention, exile and torture? (6) Is there excessive government indifference and corruption?

D. Personal autonomy and economic rights: (1) Is there an open and free private discussion in-blood? (2) Is there personal autonomy; does it control the state, travel, residential choice or job choice? (3) Are property rights secured; do the citizens have the right to establish private business? (4) Is there a right to choose equality between men and women? (5) Is there equality of opportunity?

On the political rights scale, the following questions are being investigated: (1) Has the president of the state and / or government been elected with a free, fair election? (2) Are the legislators elected by a free election? (3) Is there a fair electoral law, equal opportunity in the electoral struggle; Are the votes counted

correctly? (4) Is the electoral preference reflected in the formation of power? (5) Is there a multi-party system in which citizens can freely participate? (6) Is there an opposition that really has the possibility of being elected by power? (7) Are the people free from the dominion of the military, foreign powers, totalitarian parties, religious hierarchies, economic oligarchs and other oppressive groups? (8) Do the citizens have autonomy and are they free from military and other sovereignty, including sovereignty of economic oligarchs? (9) Are there cultural, ethnic, religious and other minority groups' informal consensuses in the process of determining their own future to be acceptable, self-governance, autonomy, or participation in the decision-making process?

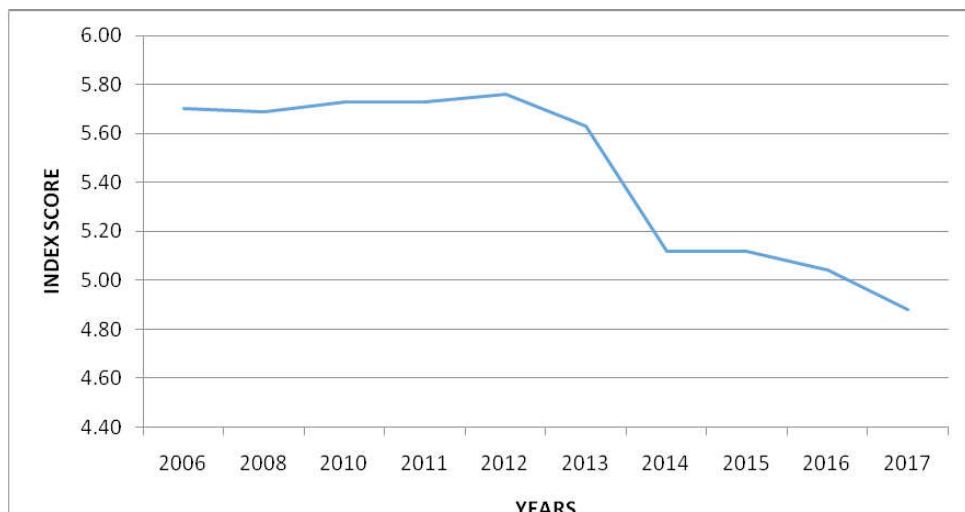
In addition, two additional questions are used in the checklist of political rights: (1) Is the system consulted by the people in the traditional monarchies, which have no parties or elections; encouraging debate in policy-making and assuring the right to appeal to governments? (2) Does the authority holding the government or the power consciously destroy the ethnic structure of the country, destroy the cult, or disrupt the political balance in favour of other groups? (Hogstrom, 2012; Alexander, Inglehart, & Welzel, 2012; Coppedge *et al.*, 2011; Munck & Verkuilen, 2002; Green & Gallery, 2015).

The interesting point regarding Turkey, while in the category of free countries before 1980 Turkey partially took place among free nations after 1980. Turkey's score based on the 2016 Democracy Index fell to 5.04. In the category of "personal freedoms", it is behind the 32 countries called "authoritarian regime". Lowest Note in Turkey's Democracy Index is "Civil Liberties". The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2016, according to Turkey's score dropped to 5.04. This score was 5.12 in 2015. The index shows that the world democracy index also declines. Democracy Index covers examining election process and pluralism, personal liberties, government functioning, political participation and political culture in 165 countries and two regions. According to points, countries are classified under four names: full democracy, imperfect democracy, mixed regime, authoritarian regime. According to the 2017 democracy index 4.88 points turkey is a country with a mixed regime. Civil liberty is the lowest point of the country as index score.(EIU Democracy Index 2017; 2018)

The number of countries with "full democracy" fell from 20 in 2015 to 19 in 2016. This decline was experienced by the transition of the United States to "imperfect democracy" called "full democracy". 57 are "defective democracy", 40 are "mixed regime", and 51 are "authoritarian regime". Norway is at the top of the list of democracy index, and North Korea is the last. Turkey, in 165 countries and two regions ranked at 97th order and is the sole country which does not have democracy among the 21 Western Europe countries. Turkey has lowest mark 2.65 in the category of "personal freedoms". Within the "Mixed regimes" Turkey has the lowest index valued country in the category of personal freedom classification. "Authoritarian regimes" in 32 out of 51 countries identified as "personal freedom" category points higher than in Turkey. Turkey scores in the categories are as

follows: The functioning of government: 6.07, electoral process and pluralism: 5.83, Political culture: 5.63, Political participation: 5.00, personal freedoms: 2.65 (EIU Democracy Index 2017, 2018) (The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd., 2011).

Figure 1. Turkey Democracy Score



Source: (EIU Democracy Index 2017, 2018)/ Produced by the Authors

While Turkey the index of democracy in 2006 was 5.70, index declined to 4.88 in 2017. The first five countries of the “full democracy” classification are Norway, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Denmark. In the classification of “imperfect democracy”, the first five of this order are Japan, USA, Italy, Cabo Verde, France, and South Korea. Turkey is also among them that the “mixed regimes” at the beginning of the classification of Zambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Albania and Ecuador. The countries that rank authoritarian regimes are Mauritania, Jordan, Niger, Armenia and Kuwait. The study of The Economist, which has been adopted and endorsed by the United Nations, measures the democracy of countries, their democracy and their progress (EIU Democracy Index 2017, 2018).

At the mixed regime (hybrid-hybrid democracy), which is mostly in the state or government monopoly, where there is intense pressures on the media and journalists, the understanding of the rule of law is not yet established, corruption is widespread and a large part of the population lives under the poverty line. The 55 countries were divided into two groups, one in which the country was governed by the decisions taken by one person, the democracy was without rights and freedoms, the elections were never made or shown, the people did not participate

in the administration, the media were under state control and journalists were under great pressure, and the vast majority are the countries under the authoritarian regime that live below the hunger limit (Bogaards, 2009; Rocha Menocal, Fritz, & Rakner, 2008).

Combined with the regime (hybrid-hybrid democracy) has already been incomplete and inadequate management of Turkey Erdogan ruled by democracy in 8 years 2007-2015 decreased by 1.5 each year and reached rank 18. Its place among the 167 countries dropped from the 88th place to 97th (EIU Democracy Index 2017, 2018). Turkey has taken the lead rapidly towards authoritarian regimes. After the amendment of the Constitution, when Erdogan has become the president, authoritarian regime has started in a very short time (Gunter, 2016).

Methodology

In order to perform the research, 5 scales Likert test questionnaire was used. Questions were derived from the Economic Working Groups democracy index survey questions. A questionnaire was applied to total of 350 people aged 18 years and over who constituted the sample group of the universe and cross tabulations were prepared by analysing the obtained results. SPSS-20 was used to derive cross tabulation tables. The importance of the methodology is to measure and evaluate the secondary data published by the Economist Intelligent Unit through confirmation with the primary data we gathered.

Findings

Empirical research in the field of social sciences has been criticized and analysed in various ways. These criticisms are arguable as it is not easy to measure democracy (Ruppert, 2013). Indeed, research on comparative empirical democracy in the effort to measure democracy has been criticized in terms of the techniques and demonstrations that were used. These criticisms have contributed to draw attention to finding more reliable measurement tools in each new study (Archibugi, Koenig-Archibugi, & Marchetti, 2011). It is also necessary not to look at the results of empirical investigations as definitive results. When looking at democracy-measuring research in general, it is seen that they generally give similar results, with some differences between the indicators they use and the findings they obtain. As a result, these empirical findings, the context of the debate on democracy in Turkey, shape, size; it can be said that it overlaps with the constitutional arrangements that are tried to be made and the problems faced by the democracy.

Demographic distribution of the survey sample was given below *Table 1*. Sample group is highly consisting of male and female, young (80%) and educated (96%) individuals.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Sample Group

Gender	%	Age Distribution	%	Literacy	%
Male	49	18-28	39	illiterate	2
Female	51	29-39-	31	Primary School	12
		40-50	17	High School	39
		51-above	13	University	43
				Post Graduate	4

Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 below shows the responds of the survey group according to their gender, age and literacy distribution respectively.

Table 2. Responses According to Gender

Questions: Do you believe that;	Scale	Male	Female
Democracy exists in Turkey?	Absolutely I agree	3%	6%
	I agree	6%	9%
	no idea	8%	4%
	I do not agree	9%	3%
	I strongly disagree	74%	78%
Democracy was better before 2002 than after it?	Absolutely I agree	65%	67%
	I agree	14%	15%
	no idea	10%	7%
	I do not agree	7%	6%
	I strongly disagree	4%	5%
Democracy gets worse every year after 2002?	Absolutely I agree	65%	68%
	I agree	15%	16%
	no idea	9%	3%
	I do not agree	8%	9%
	I strongly disagree	3%	4%
There is a freedom of the press at Turkey?	Absolutely I agree	4%	4%
	I agree	6%	1%
	no idea	2%	1%
	I do not agree	7%	5%
	I strongly disagree	81%	89%
The lack of democracy limits the freedom of press?	Absolutely I agree	78%	81%
	I agree	7%	9%
	no idea	5%	4%
	I do not agree	6%	5%
	I strongly disagree	4%	1%
The lack of democracy causes corruption?	Absolutely I agree	2%	6%
	I agree	6%	6%
	no idea	18%	19%
	I do not agree	14%	15%
	I strongly disagree	60%	54%

Table 3. Results Summary of the Questionnaire According to Age Distribution

Questions: Do you believe that	Scale	18-28	29-39	40-50	51-above
Democracy exists in Turkey?	Absolutely I agree	4%	6%	7%	9%
	I agree	5%	6%	9%	10%
	no idea	7%	4%	2%	3%
	I do not agree	8%	9%	10%	4%
	I strongly disagree	76%	73%	72%	74%
Democracy was better before 2002 than after it?	Absolutely I agree	3%	6%	9%	11%
	I agree	4%	6%	7%	9%
	no idea	8%	6%	2%	3%
	I do not agree	8%	5%	8%	7%
	I strongly disagree	77%	74%	74%	70%
Democracy gets worse every year after 2002?	Absolutely I agree	5%	4%	8%	8%
	I agree	4%	5%	8%	9%
	no idea	8%	5%	3%	4%
	I do not agree	9%	9%	9%	2%
	I strongly disagree	74%	77%	78%	77%
There is a freedom of the press at Turkey?	Absolutely I agree	4%	7%	9%	9%
	I agree	6%	7%	10%	11%
	no idea	3%	2%	4%	4%
	I do not agree	11%	11%	11%	7%
	I strongly disagree	76%	74%	69%	69%
The lack of democracy limits the freedom of press?	Absolutely I agree	5%	7%	7%	8%
	I agree	6%	7%	8%	10%
	no idea	1%	2%	4%	4%
	I do not agree	11%	12%	10%	7%
	I strongly disagree	77%	72%	71%	71%
The lack of democracy causes corruption?	Absolutely I agree	7%	7%	7%	6%
	I agree	5%	5%	8%	8%
	no idea	11%	11%	12%	14%
	I do not agree	11%	13%	9%	8%
	I strongly disagree	66%	64%	74%	67%

Table 4. Results Summary of the Questionnaire According to Literacy

Satisfaction	Very dissatisfied (1 Point)	Dissatisfied (2 Points)	General (3 Points)	Satisfied (4 Points)	Very satisfied (5 Points)	Average
speed of distribution	6 (3.49%)	7 (4.07%)	45(26.16%)	65 (37.79%)	49 (28.49%)	3.84
Attitude of distribution personnel	5 (2.91%)	10 (5.81%)	45(26.16%)	68 (39.53%)	44 (25.58%)	3.79
Integrity of food	4 (2.33%)	17 (9.88%)	41(23.84%)	66 (38.37%)	44 (25.58%)	3.75
Convenience of taking meals	6 (3.49%)	5 (2.91%)	41(23.84%)	78 (45.35%)	42 (24.42%)	3.84
configuration of distribution equipment	4 (2.33%)	10 (5.81%)	46(26.74%)	71 (41.28%)	41 (23.84%)	3.78
Subtotal	25 (2.91%)	49 (5.7%)	218(25.35%)	348 (40.47%)	220 (25.58%)	3.8

According to the cross tabulation analysis male and female believe that there is no democracy in Turkey (82%). Much more female participants (78%) strongly do not believe that there is a democracy in Turkey compared to the male (74%) participants. The reason of this could be the women’s rights which are constantly decreasing. Especially those young, well-educated individuals support that democracy plunged after the governance of the AKP (81%). Majority of the participants believe that there is no freedom of the press in Turkey (87%). At the same time 86% of them believe that the lack of democracy limits the freedom of press and 75% believe that the lack of democracy causes corruption.

The questions asked by participants who participated in the survey were derived from the index questions and it was seen that the results of the index are related to the freedom of press, freedom of democracy and the corruption in parallel. According to the index and to the results of this study it seems that values of democracy are away from Turkey’s citizens and media as majority of the participants revealed their disturbance and disappointment with democracy turning into a mixed regime; democracy and totalitarianism. Steps are consistently taken and these steps are moving away from democracy, made actions are disjointed approach from the law attracted to down Turkey’s democracy score in terms of both macro index components who emphasized that they shared a large majority, the same concerns of both citizens. Many writers, thinkers, artists and academics are imprisoned without concrete indictments, and freedom of press freedom, personal rights and freedoms are limited, and a totalitarian regime is rapidly being created if a corrupt media society follows.

It has been explored that democratic measurements of independent rating and evaluation institutions, which the government has consistently called external

powers, and that their internal dynamics parallel democracy has been trampled in the last fifteen years. The results obtained also show that the study group of the economist magazine by the collection of the secondary data and the results of the primary data compiled from the study questions derived from the same dynamics from this study support each other.

Conclusion

Freedom of the press from democracy and its indispensable elements constitutes one of the most fundamental causes of corruption in institutions and people as well as the democratic legacy of an individual. For more than 15 years in power, the AKP government in Turkey have been taking steps to remove the country from democracy and its supporters and institutions have been instruments for this corruption. Numerous journalists or writers spend a great deal of time in prison or in court, while those who are not under any detention are unable to express their ideas freely on any kind of media. It is another fact that Turkey will be governed by a single man with the constitutional amendment and presidential system. This process will be accelerated even more and the distance between democracy and monophonic press will increase even more day by day. In such an environment where there is no criticism, corruption is inevitable. Since corruption will bring a single man and a single voice, it will inevitably fall into the trappings of a distant democracy. The current ruling country, which has set its course with the European Union goal, but whose discourses and actions are not parallel, has already led to a level of democracy that is already less than perfect. And so, compared with the European Union countries which are the target, it seems that they are left behind in the matters of democracy, freedom of the press and corruption. It has become the only European candidate country without democracy in its geography.

Research findings show that as education levels increase, there is little or no belief in country governance among young people and, at a minimum, among female citizens. In this case, it is expected that the government will show more attitudes that are marginalizing and democratic. Harassment, repression and threats to journalists who are already opposing to the journalists are signals that this situation has started to become chronic. The corruption of the powers that have lost their credibility both from abroad and from within the country has begun from the press and the media first, and then spread to all sections. This vicious cycle looks like a bomb with a terrible future pitched together with the economic troubles that the living leader and his supporters are experiencing and are expected to deepen, and the social trauma and destruction they will create afterwards.

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