



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Higher Education in Election Manifests of CHP Which is Turkish Example of Social Democracy

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to discuss the views on higher education which were manifested in the election bulletins between 2011 and 2018 by CHP which is the Turkey example of social democracy as a political approach. The subject matter of the study is the views on higher education which were manifested in the election bulletins between 2011 and 2018 by CHP which is the Turkey example of social democracy as a political approach. Data of the research were analyzed using descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods. As a result of the research, in the dimension of academic structure, it is emphasized in all three electoral periods that YÖK will be abolished, and the scientific, administrative and financial autonomy of universities will be secured. In the dimension of academicians and academic development, it is observed that the issues of academic freedom and support to projects are included in the subheading of research support in the bulletins of 2011 and 2015. In the 2018 bulletin, the promise to increase the number and quality of publications through awards and incentives attract attention. The issues of increasing dormitory and accommodation opportunities and free public transportation are prominent in terms of accommodation and transportation for the university students dimension. In the research, it is recommended that new research can be done on the election bulletins of other parties, political formations and movements, especially liberalism and the center-right.

**Keywords:** Academic freedom, bulletin, social democracy, higher education.

## Introduction

Social democracy manifests itself as a political movement which has significant effects both upon the country and the world. Furthermore, social democracy continually remains on the agenda as a much-debated political approach in respect to its theory and practices. Although social democratic movements were originally based on Marxist ideology, they are important political movements which have evolved in the course of historical development. Social democratic parties commonly attract attention as the movements which have led the taming of the capitalist system, originating from the socialist movement, in the central countries. Social democracy, in the light of the debates at the beginning of the twentieth century; is the movement which has offered alternatives to class power, one-party rule, violence, purely classist analysis and purely determinist interpretations (Cem, 2010). Instead of the mentioned concepts, such notions as democracy, humanist understanding, multi-party life and peaceful coexistence have been suggested as anti theses (Kavukcuoğlu, 2003). It is aimed to reach a democratic government through a reformist and evolutionary struggle with democratic elections instead of revolution. In a sense, social democracy has attracted attention with its desire to correct capitalism and its unfair consequences and create a more humanitarian system (Türk, 2003).

The social democratic movement in Turkey, unlike European countries, was shaped by transformation of Kemalist movement in 1960s, which is considered to be the founding ideology. The Kemalist movement, in essence, is considered as the synthesis of lessons which were learned from previous revolutions. The difference in social origin and functioning of the social democratic movement in Turkey has been a matter of debate in general and in terms of its program and implementation (Ecevit, 2011). This fundamental difference appears as a critical variable in all national and global discussions. However, social democracy, with its both power and opposition examples which are contextualized nationally and locally, constantly manifests itself as an effective, critical and determinant political line in Turkey.

It is a controversial issue whether or not the Kemalist movement and social democracy are connected. Two different perspectives can be mentioned on this question. First, Kemalism and CHP are not social democratic movements. It can be claimed that general disagreement is present to this view. Öymen (2020), who focuses on the issue, explains as follows. "It is nonsense to confront Mustafa Kemal with social democracy. The six principles of CHP are progressive elements as republicanism versus monarchy, secularism versus theocracy, revolutionism versus conservatism, nationalism versus panislamism. It is clear that social democracy cannot survive without the principles of the New Republic". Second, CHP may not be a social democratic movement in the beginning. However, the internal development process of the party and specific circumstances in Turkey has transformed it into a social-democratic party in time. Indeed, the principles of populism, revolutionism and statism are the products of the lessons which were learned from the Soviet revolution. On the other hand, nationalism, secularism and republicanism are reflections of the French Revolution (Kışlalı, 2018). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's struggle for national independence and the republican revolution constitute a model of modernization in a country which was in the process of development. Although the party has turned to different perspectives and programs over time, it has identified itself as a social democratic party with the left of the middle movement of İsmet İnönü and Bülent Ecevit in the 1960s (Hürkan, 2010). The

movement has been a member of the European socialist international since the second half of the 1970s. It has defined itself as the democratic left due to its different origin from European social democratic parties (Kuzu, 2014).

It is clear that the principles and matters which should be included in the social democratic party's educational programs and declarations depend on different variables. Although universal values can be introduced first, certain differences exist at national and local level. Although the basic principles of social democracy are generally preserved, it is a fact that specific differences play an important role in the creation, purpose and program of the parties based on the national characteristics of the countries. First of all, democracy is not independent from society and politics from country. Politics is ultimately the art of establishing consensus, power and distribution of resources and use of possibilities (Heywood, 2015). In this respect, history of social democracy in Turkey is developed based on the country's unique historical background, cultural knowledge, economic structure and human capital (Tosun, 2016).

The following notes can be taken on the basic characteristics of social democracy in general and its recommendations for, purpose and philosophical perspective on education in general and higher education in particular. Social democracy has essentially emphasized the principles of freedom, justice and solidarity since its swerving from Orthodox Marxism. At this point, it is aimed for social democracy to develop libertarian and justice-providing social policies in the field of education in the contexts of program and management (Göze, 2011; Güriz, 2011).

Social democracy is built on dual antagonism, socio-economically and politically. On the one hand, social democracy protests the rigid hierarchical, unwieldy and authoritarian structure of Orthodox Marxism. On the other hand, social democracy is established on the opposition to the liberal capitalist system to create inequality between different social groups due to its unequal development law. It can be said that social democracy is a practice of turning the negativities of these two extreme approaches into positive. At this point, social democracy advocates that education should be publicly owned. It contrasts with the purchase and sale of education in a market which is open to market economy conditions (Volkmar & Wiborg, 2014).

Social democracy is an approach inherited from the "progressive" philosophy of the transition from feudalism and empires to republics and democracies. In this respect, social democracy advocates a progressive-oriented model and decentralization approach in education. Its reflection on higher education can be described as an autonomous and democratic university. University autonomy has three components: financial, administrative and academic autonomy (Bingöl, 2013). It is an obligation for social democrats to support an autonomous and democratic university.

Social democracy aims health, social security and education opportunities to be benefited by people in accordance with the principle of equal opportunity as required by the social state. In this respect, giving primary education to all citizens tends to create opportunities for lower and middle social classes to benefit from higher education opportunities as much as possible. For this purpose, acceptance of public education is selected as the baseline. The United Nations Convention, which regulates economic, social and cultural rights, describes free education and higher education as positive freedom. However, in the face of the fact that the mentioned contract has been signed mostly by those who violate these rights, social democrats aim to acquire, use and expand these rights in their countries (Petring, Busemeyer, Dahm, Flecken, Gombert, Krell, Lambartin, Ognyanova, & Rixen, 2013).

Social democracy is an approach which asserts and advocates that countries be governed by democracy and that this can only be achieved through social interventions. Democracy is not merely about electing and being elected; on the contrary, social democracy argues that it will be attained through social rights and economic arrangements in favor of lower social classes. At this point, social democracy grounds education on being democratic and secular. The theory of social democracy, on the other hand, deals with the basic values of democracy in the context of ensuring social justice with "public interest". In this context, a balance between public utility and individual freedom should be ensured as an answer to the question of which form of democracy is the ideal (Sabancılar Eren, 2019). According to Dewey, democracy aims to raise individuals who are educated and aware of their social duties and responsibilities (Guttek, 2014, p.217). Historically, religions are the components which strengthen social organization, in addition to their function to interpret universe and propose moral rules. Secularism intends to ensure freedom of belief and conscience considering the mistake of using religion as a tool for the pursuit of power (Taşkın, 2016b). In this respect, it is a critical value judgment for some programs and social democrats to defend participation in management in educational institutions and advocate elective courses instead of compulsory religion classes.

Education, for social democrats, is not solely about changing behavior and 'educating' people. Education aims at the upward social mobility of deprived social strata. In this respect, social democrats attribute the function of providing social change to education. In this context, providing positive discrimination to lower social strata and women are important and distinguishing arguments for the social democratic education model. Freedom, equality and solidarity are indispensable for a fair society, and in this context, justice is the supreme concept. The duty of ensuring freedom is fulfilled by education; the social democratic program aims to improve freedom through education (Gombert, Blasius, Boll, Dahm, Egle, Gurgsdies, Herter, Krell, Lee, Neis, Rentzsch, & Timpe, 2010).

Social democracy is a political approach based on the protection of the rights and interests of working social groups. Ultimately, the first labor movements in the core countries were rooted in social democratic workers' parties. In this context, social democrats attach great importance to providing employees with the opportunities to form professional organizations and labor unions (Işıklı, 2005). Social democrats are responsible for supporting strong labor unions and establishing rational relationships with union managements especially in the period of super capitalism and globalization. Unionization is a right for safe and healthy working conditions (Vaut, Mayer, Pascha, Schroeder, Tidow, & Weinkopf, 2014). Professional organizations and unionization are indispensable for social democracy. The reflection of this on higher education can be explained with the support for unionization and democratic dialogue with professional organizations.

Access to education is a dimension which should be considered as an important and critical variable for social democracy. Education is expected to eliminate inequalities, create the better, and provide social mobility in society. It works as an important tool for implementing the goals of the society (Kavrayıcı & Ağaoğlu, 2019). As a matter of fact, the "equality of opportunity" notion started to gain recognition in Germany during the Willy Brandt period when social democrats and liberals formed a coalition. This new focus was interpreted as a sign of a new social structuring and reorientation of politics and a new social understanding. In this sense, the concept of "equality of opportunity" started to have a characteristic feature. This concept was introduced at a time

when a positive approach to the welfare state stabilized the economic situation (Gombert et al., 2014). The aim of such reformist movements is to enable the transition between different social strata by providing access to education and to allow vertical social mobility. In essence, such practices as creating distance learning opportunities in the 1970s, and higher education through letter were the product of social policies for access to education (Akyüz, 2019). Those practices were identified as progressive and revolutionary movements which were put into practice by Bülent Ecevit's government and continued later as the important steps in Turkish higher education (Büyükerşen, 2009).

Social democracy, classically, focuses on the idea of socializing capitalism and performs this function through two main processes in general. It makes provisions and takes decisions in order for the lower income groups to receive a share from the national income. Secondly, it develops the principles and possibilities of democratization in country at institutional level. In this context, it provides opportunities to participate in decisions and management organizationally (Tosun Erdoğan, 2016). Additionally, workers are supposed to participate in organizational decisions in social democratic parties and movements. It is essential that the improvement of governance and self-management processes, particularly with the development of informatics, develop certain opportunities.

According to social democracy, the existence of the social classes must be balanced. While real socialists advocate absolute equality and aim to establish a working-class state on behalf of the proletariat; Social democracy aims to defend the rights of everyone, not only the proletariat. Social democracy is a hybrid political approach which is both inspired by socialism and free market economy, free individual. Social democracy is an attempt to reconcile socialism with liberal politics and capitalist society (Hekimoğlu, 2021). One of the means of this initiative is to achieve the rule of law and to fight for justice (Vaut et al. 2014).

The history of social democracy can be paralleled by the transformation to defending a conciliator identity versus absolute struggle of the working class and ideology; democracy and participation versus rigid socialist ideology. In this context, it is aimed to tame capitalism in a sense. At this point, it is possible to state that social democracy has to use some arguments of classical democracy. According to social democrats, the only acceptable form of government is representative democracy based on the rule of law (Meyer, 2007, p.91). Social democrats express the need to focus on the social development which is verbalized as in the words of J. S. Mill "we need to exercise for mental and moral development." Although they do not ignore difference and conflict, they describe the public sphere as an area of reconciliation (Taşkın, 2016a). In this context, the principle of separation between politics and government in society (Kaya, 1991) aims at the use of the public sphere by every citizen under the rule of justice, rights and law. With the multidimensional perspective of democracy, rationalism, priority of science, pluralism and eclectic approach are the most distinctive features of Republic education (Aybek, 2018 pp.148-149).

Social democracy is a flexible ideology based on humanity. Social democracy has general characteristics associated with different value judgments which are defended or rejected by different interest groups (Erdoğan Tosun, 2106). It is based on the coexistence of differences and their cultural and social development. Social democracy is supposed to produce policies which aim for those who have differences in society to live together under collective identities (Somer,

2016). At this point, it can be claimed that the examination and study of different cultures, beliefs and languages in higher education are within educational purposes.

Social democratic policy regards education as a means of economic development, sustainable development together with social and physical environment. In this respect, it is expected that the programs in schools are designed for this purpose and the graduate-employment balance is established rationally. In this context, social democracy assumes the function of organizing education and political institution relations for growth, social balancing and sustainable development.

One of the main qualities which distinguishes social democracy from classical democracies is to ensure participation in management processes. In this way, it is tried to prevent the emergence of possible oligarchic structures and to create more equitable processes in measurement and evaluation. Accreditation studies can be expressed as social and democratic pursuits with the purposes of planned, principled and fair management.

Social democracy is based on universal principles. It, in essence, aims at internationalization and globalization as well as national independence (Gombert et al., 2010). At this point, social democratic parties are in international solidarity with the socialist international. In this context, international solidarity and harmony as well as using international criteria and principles as base are among the ideals of social democracy in education and particularly in higher education (Petring et al., 2013). Universality is gradually evolving into a more holistic understanding for social democracy, and discussions on demands, wishes and proposals for the welfare state are increasing. Especially with the Covid-19 epidemic, it is observed that the idea of universal basic income has become a current issue in some countries of Europe and the United States of America (Esenlikci & Engin, 2021, p.263).

Social democracy focuses on socialization, increasing the opportunities of the deprived and ensuring the integration of disadvantaged segments into society. In this respect, it is aimed to implement policies targeting directing educational opportunities to lower income groups in order to ensure, with popular discourse, equal opportunities. In this context, it is aimed to protect individuals against unemployment, to provide social security, and to create equal opportunities through the understanding of the social state (Kastning, 2013). Indeed, the social-democratic circles in Turkey have frequently emphasized providing lifelong and equal opportunities in education, raising free individual, ensuring social justice and reaching the goal of information society (Aybek, 2015).

Considering criticisms to social democracy, it is observed that they are mostly directed from liberal, socialist and nationalist political lines. The criticisms from the liberal line can be expressed as follows. According to liberals, a free market economy is a necessity for the development of the economy, freedoms and justice. Liberalism, based on the doctrine of natural rights, is the ideology of the political philosophy of western civilization (Raico, 2011: 75). In this context, liberalism based on such fundamental values as individualism, freedom, tolerance, consent-based management, constitutional rule, the right to resist oppression, and spontaneous order has an organic relationship with the idea of democracy. Liberals do not approve the interventionist approach of social democracy. In this respect, they advocate the view that social democrats who support intervention in the market cannot solve the problems (Yayla, 2014).

Socialists define social democracy as an ideology within capitalism (Özğday, 2001). They also claim that social democrats are revisionists who have abandoned working class ideology. According to the socialists, it is a historical delusion and a transformation from socialism to a reformist movement that social democrats adopt the marketist perspective. In fact, 'social state' and similar reforms by social democracy as a respond to the victory of socialism in the Soviets are examples of nostalgia after the Second World War (Koşar, 2020). Social democracy also suffers from alternating between socialism and capitalism as well as liberalism. According to Akkad (1991) social democrats in Turkey cannot be international and remain national. On the other hand, socialists criticize social democracy for not struggling enough against globalization and imperialism; and not defending democracy effectively.

Nationalists criticize social democracy and its followers for not being national and advocating non-national international views. The relation between nationalism and socialism or social democracy is indeed controversial in the context of political science and ideologies. In Turkey, the discourse of nationalist conservatives and socialists on social democracy and nationalism is a "whole" of ideological conflicts which include rights and wrongs. It can be stated that politics is different from the practices of ideologies and is beyond them. Ecevit (2011) explains this suggesting "we embrace a national democratic left thought, which has passed the filter of reason and practice in constant change".

As social institutions, politics and education are in a continuous and interactive relationship. At this point, all lines of the political world intend to shape education and to raise individuals who have acquired desired behaviors according to the mentioned political lines. Political institutions or parties assume the duty and responsibility of making legal regulations regarding education, providing the education service, and maintaining academic success. When Turkey's political history is viewed political parties, which defines itself as a social democratic in the party statute, are seen they sometimes assume the roles of government or sometimes opposition. In Turkey's politics CHP, this has the highest percentages of votes among the social democratic parties, has become the most powerful figure as the figure of Turkish example of social democracy. In this respect, CHP has assumed the main opposition role since 2000s. The main opposition parties constitute the alternative to the current system or program. In a sense, the government functions as thesis, and the opposition functions as antithesis. In democratic systems, the opposition parties are possible candidates for governance, as well as being the stabilizer of the ruling parties. In this respect, as a social democratic party that functions as the main opposition, it is a necessity to analyze CHP's views on higher education from an academic perspective.

In this context, the following observations can be made on the importance of the study: First of all, it is clear that it is necessary to examine political theory and practice scientifically. It is expected that the study will contribute to this need to a certain extent. It will ensure related individuals and institutions to benefit from the analysis of perspectives and promises on higher education in election bulletins in the recent electoral period, considering educational science and politics, in Turkey example of social democracy. It is intended that students and researchers from the fields of political science, public administration and educational science who study on education-politics relations will benefit from the study.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discuss the views on higher education which were manifested in the election bulletins between 2011 and 2018 by CHP which is the Turkey example of social democracy as a political approach. In line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the promises on higher education which were manifested by CHP in the election bulletins of 2011, 2015 and 2018, regarding?
  - a. University management,
  - b. Academicians and academic development
  - c. University students?
2. What kinds of changes are observed regarding the promises made in the bulletins?

## Methodology

The study is a document analysis type of research. Document analysis is a qualitative research method used to diligently and systematically analyze the content of written documents (Wach, 2013). Documents are resources which must be taken into account in qualitative research as a great convenience which enables access to information without the need for observation or interviews (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, p. 187). The documents are also important as they allow comprehensive evaluations depending on the problem of the study. As a matter of fact, the document analysis method is used as a central method in the whole of the research in social sciences, including educational sciences (Karasar, 2013, p.183). In addition, the documents will shed light on the past or historical process of the research subject (Baş & Akturan, 2008, p.117). As with other methods used in qualitative research, document analysis requires inferring from the data, establishing an understanding of the subject matter under study, examining the data and interpreting the data in order to develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

## Scope of the Study and Procedure

Considering the party constitution, it is observed that the CHP defines itself as a political approach in the line of social democracy (CHP constitution, 2018, p.9). The subject matter of the study is the views on higher education which were manifested in the election bulletins between 2011 and 2018 by CHP which is the Turkey example of social democracy as a political approach.

The views of CHP in the election bulletins are studied in the **university management dimension**; a) *academic structure*, b) *autonomy*, c) *accountability*, d) *coordination and accreditation* e) *other sub-dimensions*. **Academicians and the academic development dimension**; a) *research support*, b) *personnel and assignment* sub-dimensions. Finally, **the university students dimension**; a) *accommodation*, b) *participatory management*, c) *scholarships and supports*, d) *access and participation* sub-dimensions.



In the selection of the bulletins of 2011, 2015 and 2018, which are subject to the study, it is taken as a criterion that they were published after the CHP Ordinary Meeting of 2010 where the last general president was changed.

Document analysis process is a process which must be conducted systematically. Document analysis process includes a five-step process: accessing documents, checking the originality of the documents, obtaining permission to use, understanding the documents and using the data. With this plan, documents were first accessed during the document analysis process and the pre-control of the documents was performed. Since the documents subject to the study are anonymous and are disclosed to the public, permission for use was not sought. Then, readings were made on the documents and finally, the data obtained as a result of detailed examination were used.

## **Data Analysis**

Analyzing data is critical to research. As a matter of fact, the analysis phase of the data requires the researcher to interpret the content of the documents and express them verbally (Baş & Akturan, 2008, p.121). Qualitative data analysis can be classified as collecting data, showing data, and inference and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative data analysis methods, has been used in the study. Descriptive analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis which includes summarizing and interpreting data obtained through various data collection techniques based on predetermined themes (Özdemir, 2010, p. 336). According to Dawson (2009), descriptive analysis covers a four-phase process. Accordingly, in the first phase, the general framework is presented by the researcher by including the research questions and the literature. In this phase, under which themes the data are organized and presented is decided by bringing the data together in a meaningful and rational manner. Data are read, edited and digitized based on the research design created previously. In the last phase, the researcher defines the data they have organized before.

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, the categories have been designed by the deductive method which is used in the classification of existing data in qualitative research. The coding key was created together with the researcher and a field expert. The expert and the researcher independently formed the descriptive index. After the researcher and the expert marked the appropriate theme for each purpose in the coding key based on the descriptive indexes which they formed, the comparison of the coding and the reliability study started. In the comparison and reliability phase of the coding, the numbers of "agreement" and "disagreement" from markings of the researcher and expert were obtained. Research reliability was calculated using the formula;  $\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{consensus}}{\text{consensus} + \text{disagreement}}$  (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.64). According to this calculation, the reliability was found to be 0.78.

## **Findings and Interpretation**

Findings of the research have been considered in the dimensions of university management, academicians and academic development, and university students in the election bulletins of 2011, 2015 and 2018.

## Findings about the University Management

In the context of the university management, the issues included in the bulletins have been collected under academic structure, autonomy, accountability, coordination accreditation and other current sub-headings, and the issues and promises which were included in the bulletins are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *University management*

	2011	2015	2018
Academic Structure	Abolition of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK)	Abolition of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) The supreme board is authorized in the academic structure and transition from secondary education to higher education.	Abolition of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK)
Autonomy	Scientific, administrative and financial autonomy Freedom of thought and expression	Scientific, administrative and financial autonomy - a new supreme board for coordination. The State respecting the autonomy and academic freedom of the political authority and the university, determining and evaluating general goals	Ensuring the scientific, administrative and financial autonomy of universities Eliminating political interference from TÜBA and TÜBİTAK and gaining their former dignity and functionality. Election of university rectors and deans by faculty members
Accountability		Including the principles of transparency, accountability and participation	Making a transparent, accountable and participatory management approach prevailing in universities
Coordination and accreditation	Encouraging interdisciplinary research centers and institutes School-industry collaboration - a suitable environment for researches to be conducted	Increasing foreign education opportunities Conducting accreditation processes in care of an autonomous structure	An independent institution to perform accreditation studies Higher Education Coordination and Planning Board, which will implement planning and coordination tasks
Other – current	Universality in teaching, research and social services		Increasing financial support Abolition of the division of universities

Examining the table, it is observed that, in the dimension of academic structure, YÖK is intended to be abolished in all three electoral periods. However, it is stated that the supreme board will be authorized in the academic structure and transition from secondary education to higher education.

In the dimension of autonomy, it is emphasized that the scientific, administrative and financial autonomy of universities will be guaranteed in all three election manifestos. In the context of autonomy, every declaration draws attention to the importance of freedom of expression, keeping the university separate from active politics and respecting the academy. In addition, the bulletins of 2015 and 2018 included the establishment of a supreme board for academic planning and coordination. This can be interpreted as a new method suggested

responding to the opposition and criticism made by non-governmental organizations towards YÖK. As a matter of fact, the promise in the 2018 declaration that rectors and deans would be elected by the faculty members as well as the promise of the supreme board can be interpreted as the steps to be taken in the name of democratization at the university. In this context, another goal is to eliminate political intervention from TÜBA and TÜBİTAK and restore their former dignity and functionality. This can be interpreted as a reflection of widely –discussed issues by public such as high-ranking assignments and rotations in TÜBA and TÜBİTAK shortly before 2018.

In accountability dimension, it is observed that the concepts of transparency, accountability and participation are included in the election bulletins of 2015 and 2018. Including these issues in the bulletins can be interpreted as addressing the public about favoritism, nepotism and cronyism in appointments, which were increasingly expressed in universities, especially in the 2010s.

In terms of coordination and accreditation, interdisciplinary coordination and school-industry cooperation attract attention in the election bulletin of 2015, while accreditation is highlighted in the 2015 and 2018 elections. Indeed, universities are highly debated, particularly in terms of the employment of their graduates and the effect of diploma scores in postgraduate education; disputes persist about the qualifications of the programs and their graduates. In this context, the expectation of accreditation can be explained by the fact that universities have been dispersed to considerably different levels in terms of quality. In this respect, accreditation may be considered as a solution proposal for these problems. In addition, it is stated that instead of the widely discussed YÖK, a board called the Higher Education Coordination and Planning Board would be established in order to perform planning and coordination tasks. In the face of the fact that YÖK has been criticized frequently for years, it can be said that building a top council formed by bottom-up elections is essentially compatible with the participation and democratization principles of social democracy.

### **Findings about Academicians and Academic Development**

The issues included in the bulletins in the context of academicians and academic development are gathered under the heading of research support, personnel and assignment, and the issues and promises included in the papers are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Academicians and academic development*

	2011	2015	2018
Research Support	Freedom for scientific research R&D studies Support for international research projects	Support for scientific research R&D studies	Allocating more resources to scientific research and R&D studies Increasing the number and quality of publications by establishing an award and incentive mechanism
Personnel and Assignment		Salary improvement Increasing the number of doctoral staff	Terminating doctoral faculty members' contractual position and recruiting them as permanent staff in appointments and promotions. Increasing academicians unionization rate

In the dimension of academicians and academic development, it is observed that the issues of academic freedom and support to projects are included in the subheading of research support in the bulletins of 2011 and 2015. In the 2018 bulletin, the promise to increase the number and quality of publications through awards and incentives attract attention. Improving standard salaries in terms of personnel and assignment and freedom of unionization are the remarkable issues. In this context, internationalization, scientific, research and development issues are highlighted.

Other promises made in the bulletins can be summarized as follows: In the context of research support, the issue of allocating more resources to scientific research and R&D studies is included in all three election bulletins with small differences. However, it is observed that the 2018 election bulletin emphasizes the issue of incentives for academic publications. In the context of personnel and appointment salary improvement and increasing the number of staff with doctorate degrees were included in 2015, while in 2018, the promises of terminating doctoral faculty members' contractual position and recruiting them as permanent staff removing, ensuring the standardization in appointments and promotions and increasing the unionization rate of the academicians are included.

### Findings about University Students

In the study, the subjects included in the election bulletin in the context of university students are gathered under the sub-headings of accommodation, participatory management, scholarship and financial support, access and participation, and the subjects and promises included in the bulletins are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *University students*

	2011	2015	2018
Accommodation and transportation	Increasing the accommodation opportunities		Free public transportation for all students
Participatory management	Participation in university management	Students' participation in management	
Scholarship and financial support	Student loan		
Access and participation	Benefiting from open education, reducing the cost of vocational certificate Distance education opportunities Focusing on master's and doctoral programs	Lowering the costs , benefiting from open education programs	

The study highlights the issues of increasing the dormitory and accommodation facilities and free public transportation in terms of accommodation and transportation in the university students dimension. In addition, it is observed that scholarships and financial support are promised to students. In the context of access and participation, it is observed that increasing the opportunities to benefit from open education, decreasing the cost and improving the distance education opportunities are aimed for. In this context, it is seen that the promises which have been made generally focus on the arguments of social democracy such as solidarity and the support of lower income groups. It can be stated that these promises and approaches, as Ecevit (2011), Cem (2010)

and Erdoğan Tosun (2016) expressed, are the examples of putting solidarity into practice which is one of the principles of social democracy.

Considering Table 3, the issues included in the election bulletins are as follows: In the accommodation dimension, it is stated in the 2011's election bulletin that the dormitory and accommodation problems would be solved. However, the issue of free public transportation is mentioned in the 2018 election manifesto. In the participatory management dimension, although the issue of participation in management was included in 2011 and 2015, no article on this issue was included in 2018. While the issue of student loans in the dimension of scholarship and financial support was especially emphasized in the 2011's bulletin, it is observed that this issue was not included in the election bulletins of 2015 and 2018. In terms of access and participation, it is noteworthy that the bulletins of 2011 and 2015 specifically included the issue of expanding open education and improving opportunities to benefit from open education. In addition, while the 2011's bulletin emphasizes the issue of focusing on doctoral and master's programs, it is observed that in 2015, reducing the costs of the distance education programs are underlined.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The results and discussions in the university management dimension of the study can be summarized as follows: It is observed that the abolition of YÖK in the context of academic structure is included in all three election bulletins. This attracts attention as an issue which is frequently reflected by the left, social democratic wings of the political spectrum. YÖK is generally described by these wings as an anti-democratic institution and a hindrance to university autonomy. Based on this determination, it can be claimed that it is natural for this issue to be frequently emphasized in the declaration. In addition, it can also be said that this opposition is in line with social democrat's basic ideals such as democracy and freedom as stated by Cem (2010), Güriz (2011), Petring, (2013) and Emre et al. (2017).

In the contexts of autonomy and accountability, it is clear that the issues of freedom, decentralization and academic ethics are highlighted in the bulletins. All these findings can be interpreted as a reflection of the adherence to the principles of democratization, freedom and rule of law which are specific to social democrats as stated by Vaut et al. (2014), Meyer (2007) and Gombert (2010). The authorization of the supreme board for academic structure and in the transition from secondary education to higher education included in the election bulletins indicate that the discussion of vocational high schools and imam hatip schools, which has been very controversial since the 1990s, tends to be left to the supreme board.

It can be said that the election of university rectors and deans by faculty members, which is insistently emphasized in the context of university management, is a reflection of the understanding of "administrative autonomy" in terms of university autonomy. In addition, the issue of the establishment of the Higher Education Coordination and Planning Board, which is included in the bulletin, literally implies the acceptance of the need for a coordination board for universities. It can be suggested that this promise is relatively in conflict with the previous statements. However, it is possible to interpret the emphasis that the council would be formed with a bottom-up participation by university representatives as a consequence of the classical

principles of social democracy. In this context, it is another fact that the active political representatives of the Turkish social democratic movement are to make the difficult choices.

It can be said to be a current reflection of the power-opposition struggle that the contrariness to the division of universities is particularly emphasized in the declaration. On the other hand, this can be interpreted as the opposition to the government's view of "value distribution, apportion of the slices of the cake" (Dursun, 2012) as a natural function of politics. It is an important improvement in terms of both the quality of the institution and the relative decreasing of the differences between institutions to emphasize that accreditation studies will especially be included. This can be interpreted as an examples of putting the principles of "justice, relative equality" into practice which are important conditions of social democracy as stated by Ecevit (2011), Cem (2010) and Erdogan Tosun (2016).

Including teaching, research and universality in the bulletins can be interpreted as the reflection of scientificity, universality and rationalism, which is another principle of social democracy. This emphasis shows parallelism with Petring et al. (2013) and Esenlikci and Engin's (2021) emphasis on universality.

Considering the dimension of university administration in general, it is observed that the themes of autonomy, democratization, decentralization, politics and administration are highlighted in the bulletins.

It can be seen that academic freedom and support to projects are included in the subheading t of research support in the dimension of academicians and academic development in 2011 and 2015's election bulletins. In the bulletin of 2018, promises to increase the number and quality of publications through awards and incentives attract attention. Standardization, improvement of salaries and freedom of unionization are the promises which attract attention in the dimension of personnel and assignment. In this context, the dimensions of internationalization, scientific, research and development are highlighted. The claim of universality is one of the basic characteristics of social democracy, and this emphasis in the bulletins is one of the main arguments included in the studies of Gombert et al. and Emre et al. (2017). The promise of salary improvement by terminating contractual positions and recruiting academic members as permanent staff can be interpreted as the reflection of certain basic principles of social democracy such as "social state", "employees' freedom of organization " and "job security" on the field of education as stated by Petring et al. (2013), Kasting (2103), Gombert et al. (2013) and Ayttek's (2015).

The issues of increasing dormitory and accommodation opportunities and free public transportation are prominent in terms of accommodation and transportation for the university students dimension. In addition, it is stated that scholarships and financial support will be given to students. In terms of access and participation, it is aimed to increase the opportunities to benefit from open education, to reduce the costs of participation in open education and to improve the opportunities of distance education. Considering promises made in this context, it is observed that social democracy's arguments of solidarity and support of lower income groups are predominant.

The results of the research are given in Figure 1, in the context of the reflection of general principles of social democracy, which are derived from socialism and liberalism.

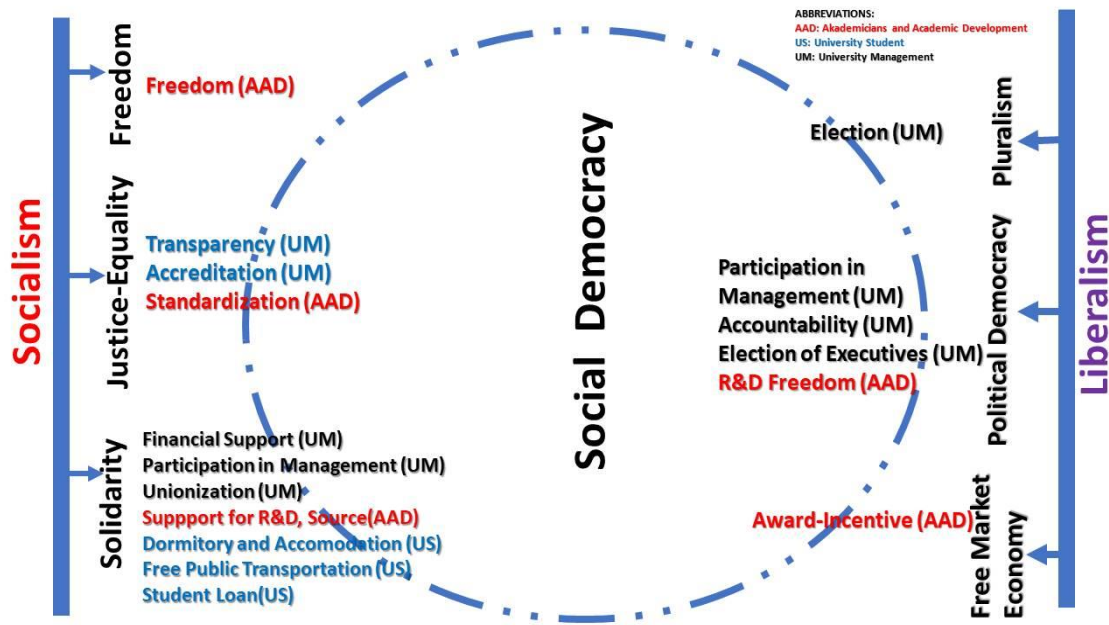


Figure 1. General principles of social democracy and their reflection on the bulletins

Examining Figure 1, it can be seen that the general principles of social democracy are reflected on the declarations as follows: in general, the following points are noticed in the promises in the election bulletins of 2011, 2015 and 2018, in which CHP, the prominent representative and organization focus of the Turkish social democratic movement in the 2010s, manifested the decision framework for higher education policies: Universally, the social democratic movement has two pillars, socialism and liberalism. In the socialist dimension of these pillars, the principles of freedom, justice-equality and solidarity appear as universal principles of social democracy. On the other hand, social democracy has also internalized the principles of democracy and pluralism with the market economy originating from liberalism. In this context, the following conclusions have been reached, based on the socialist view of the promises stated in the declarations, which is one of the pillars of social democracy:

On the freedom dimension, university autonomy and ensuring academic freedom are included in all of the declarations. Ensuring standardization in the context of justice and equality, transparency and accreditation principles and practices are included in the context of academics and academic development.

In the context of solidarity, participation in the university management and financial support are included. On the other hand, it is aimed to provide unionization opportunities and support research and development in the dimension of academicians and academic development. As for the dimension of university students, promises are made to decrease the cost of open education, to increase and expand the amount of student loans, to improve dormitory and accommodation opportunities and free public transportation.

The following conclusions based on liberalism, which is one of the pillars of social democracy, have been reached: It is observed that in the dimension of pluralism, the selection of executives within the context of the management of the university is included. In the dimension of

political democracy, accountability, commitments to participate in the management and to elect the executives are included in the context of the university management. In this context, it is another phenomenon to include the freedom of research and development. It is stated that incentives and rewards will be provided in the context of academicians and academic development in the dimension of free market economy.

Evidence of the concern to stay up-to-date, in the historical process, is another phenomenon observed in the bulletins. In essence, the opposition to the division of universities is interpreted as an act of creating another base of voters by paying attention to the traditionalist aspirations of existing academicians in response to the attempts of the government to divide universities, create a political base and gain votes in the elections of 2018. As a matter of fact, it can be suggested that these attitudes stem from the necessity of creating policies in accordance with the reality of value and interest distribution (Dursun, 2012), which is one of the functions of politics in political practice.

## Suggestions

The study has discussed the perspective on higher education in the election bulletins of CHP in the Turkey example of social democracy.

New research can be done on the election bulletins of other parties, political formations and movements, especially liberalism and the center-right.

It may be suggested to conduct other studies utilizing qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to further develop the results obtained with document analysis.

The reasons for including the subjects in the bulletins can be studied. Studies aiming to determine the reasons for abolishing the Council of Higher Education, supporting autonomous and democratic universities, students, electing university rectors and deans by faculty members, terminating the practice of division of universities, standardization in assignments and promotions, increasing the unionization rate of academics, solving the dormitory and accommodation problem, participation of students in the management, support for open education may be conducted.

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