

# *Electoral Rules, Political Representation and Advocacy Coalition Framework in Turkey*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to understand the impact of the electoral rules on the minority representation in culturally divided societies. The article tries to explore whether the Advocacy Coalition Framework might promote the political participation in decision making process in a restricted party competition. Using data from the Supreme Election Council of Turkey, analyses on elections in Mardin case reveal that issue-based coalitions can lead voters to reflect their ethnic and religious belongings more accurately.

## **Keywords**

Turkey, electoral rules, local elections, minority representation, Advocacy Coalition Framework

## **Öz**

Bu araştırmanın amacı kültürel olarak kırılmaları olan ülkelerde seçim kurallarının azınlıkların siyasal temsiline etkisini anlamaktır. Bu makale Destek Koalisyonu Çerçevesi'nin (DKÇ) siyasi partilerin rekabetçi ortamında karar alma sürecinde siyasi katılımı teşvik etmeye yeterli

olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemektedir. Türkiye Yüksek Seçim Kurulu'nun (YSK) verilerine dayanarak, Mardin örneğinde kısıtlı olarak bulgulanan koalisyonun, seçmenlerin dini ve etnik aidiyetlerini daha isabetli yansıtmasını sağlayıp sağlayamadığını analiz eder.

### **Anahtar Kelimeler**

Türkiye, seçim kuralları, yerel seçimler, azınlıkların temsili, Dava Koalisyonu Çerçevesi

## 1. Introduction

Ensuring political representation of ethnic diversities in national level decision making is one of the important challenges in ethnically divided societies. It has also been intensively studied in the literature<sup>4</sup> because, the ability of democratic institutions to represent ethnic divided society is seen as a key factor of the political stability and the conflictuality. Starting from this point, we hope that the questioning about the opportunities for a better political representation of ethnical and religious divisions in Turkey is important on the way to help solving the terror problem based on the ethnic cleavage in the country. Also, for a country which is seeking accession to the European Union (EU), it has to comply with basic EU standards which include also the protection of minorities and their political representation. The rights and freedoms of all minorities in Turkey are, therefore the essential elements in the country's EU candidacy.

The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) government has made the EU accession process as its priority when it first came into power in 2002. During the first years of its government, many taboos have been broken, especially regarding to the non-Muslim minorities like Armenians, Jews, Greeks and even the Muslim Kurdish community, who have long been treated as a danger to the unity of the state. Taking all of the reforms into consideration, Turkey has taken some significant steps towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria. On the other hand, despite these improvements, there are continuing restrictions led by the existing law and practice.

Observing the Turkish case, this article argues that if the political system is restricted by the law; parties prefer to form an alliance that which is called as "Advocacy Coalition" in a very concentrated and ethnically divided electoral district to the aim to surmount the national threshold. The purpose of this article is to draw and check an analytical

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4 See Horowitz, D. L. (2003). Electoral systems: A primer for decision makers. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(4), 115–127.; Reilly, B. (2002). Democracy in divided societies: Electoral engineering for conflict management. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2).; Norris, P. (2003). *Electoral engineering: Voting rules and political behavior*. New York: Cambridge university press.

view for explaining this process of policy making strategy. And we'll try to do so by using the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). To prove our hypotheses, first, we focus on the legal status and the electoral rules which effect the minority representation in Turkey by analyzing the Constitution of the Turkish Republic and the Political Parties Law (Siyasi Partiler Kanunu, 1983). After reviewing the related texts, we turn to the case of Mardin<sup>5</sup> district which occupied a special example in Turkey in the 2014 local elections. This case is special with its recently elected a Syriac<sup>6</sup> Christian co-mayor for the metropolitan municipality, in this predominantly Muslim habitants by forming a coalition to overcome the national threshold of 10%. In order to show whether the strategy of coalition making did really work, we studied the concerned data where parties offer candidates separately versus the regions where parties run together for the office. Later we'll try to see if the strategy to establish a coalition works as well.

- 5 Mardin is a province and a city located in the Southeastern Turkey and is one of the oldest settled areas in the upper Mesopotamia with a diverse population composed by Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and Assyrian/Syriac people. Assyrian Christians settled here during the 5th century, and then the Arabs occupied the city between the years of 640 and 1104. Afterwards, it had a succession of Seljuk Turkish, Kurdish, Mongol and Persian overlords until the Ottomans. In the early 20th century many of the Assyrian Christians were perished during the troubles, and in the last few decades many have emigrated. The province is divided into ten districts (sub-governorates) and possesses a population of around 750,000. Mardin is renowned for its mixed population of ethnic groups, mainly consisting of Kurds, Arabs, Turks and Syriacs (Syrian Orthodox Christians). Concerning the social and demographic qualities of the population in Mardin, the local authorities supply a structure based to the results of the 14th General census counted in 2000 according to 3 core points: gender, education, and disability. Ethnic and religious qualities are not mentioned in this research.
- 6 Also called Syrian Orthodox Christians or Syriacs, the language and practices of Assyrians originated in early Christianity. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, their historical homeland in Turkey is in the provinces of Mardin and Hakkari in the south-east. A 1995 study estimates the number of remaining Assyrians to be around 15 000, the majority of whom live in Istanbul and around 2000-3000 of whom live in the south-east. Assyrians belong to the same ethnicity and speak the same language (Assyrian). They are divided into four main groups based on differences of theological interpretation and denomination, which are Assyrian, Nestorian, Khaldean and Maronite. The Assyrian Orthodox community in Turkey has four metropolises: Turabdin, Mardin, Adiyaman and Istanbul. Their patriarchate is in Damascus, Syria.

Here the technical problem encountered is the lack of census data in relation to ethnical belongings and native languages; due to the fact that no corresponding questions were posted after the 1965 census and major changes may have occurred since then. Therefore, the existence of minorities living in the districts (rural area) is built upon the derivations from the existence of the churches and the numerical data expressed by the secondary sources (Everi, 2012, p. 189). However, it is clear that the citizens with the Turkish origins constitute the majority in the country, while the largest minority groups are citizens with the Kurdish and Arabic origins. Smaller minorities are the Armenians, Jews, Greeks and several Circassians<sup>7</sup>.

## **2. Conceptual explanations and political background**

Kaya and Baldwin (2004, p. 5) define a minority first, as a group “based on objective criteria and it is not for a particular national government, or national Constitution, in order to state who is the real minority. The key determining factors whether a minority group exists or not are:

- A shared group identity, based on culture, ethnicity, religion, or language.
- Relative lack of power compared with the dominant group.

There are also subjective criteria. Both the group itself must desire to be seen as an ethnic, religious or linguistic group, and individuals have the right to a free choice as to whether they wish to be part of this group without suffering any detriment based on their choice. In Turkey, the national application of the term “minority”, in breach of international standards, has the effect of rejecting minority nomination to all groups except Armenians, Greeks and Jews. For instance; Syriacs including the Nestorians and Khaldeans have not been accepted as a minority group in the Lausanne Peace Treaty.

At this point, Turkey still refers to the Lausanne Peace Treaty signed in 1923 as the only source for the recognition and protection of minority groups. This treaty itself refers only to non-Muslim minorities apart from Article 39 which refers to minorities more generally. On the other

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<sup>7</sup> The full list of minorities in Turkey is presented in Appendix 1.

hand, the definition of minorities in the Lausanne treaty was not based on an inclusive parameter of “religion”. Had the parameter of religion been accepted, whose religious practices are very different from Sunni Muslims, such as Alevis population formulating a specific community with its own religious practice and culture as well. In the political arena, the centrist parties took an unconvincing position. The Sunni-traditional block is opposed by secular-Alevi constituents. One common factor which links this heterogeneous constituency is their opposition to pro-Islamist parties. The Alevis have a consistent and continued pattern of voting for the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP). As argued by Ciddi (2009, pp. 115–131), Turkey’s Alevi population in the 1990s and present, continues to be its greatest electoral ally for the centre-left because the religiosity component was underestimated by centre-left in particular.

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In addition to religiosity, electors’ predisposition to voting and party choice is also determined by their ethnic self-identification. Such a division exists most clearly in voters’ identifying themselves as Turkish or Kurdish. Having said this, the international system allows us to define a community as a minority which is different from the majority by race, religion or linguistic bias. Considering the Kurdish community in Turkey as a minority has been a complex issue because of the official rhetoric and practice, which has been used to refuse to recognize Kurds as a minority. On the other hand, ethnic tensions in Turkey persist after the PKK’s (Kurdish Workers Party) actions in Southeastern Turkey and it creates crucial problems on the road to democratic consolidation in the country. From an internal perspective, the sharp distinction between Turkish and Kurdish identities became sharper as a conflict in the South East became more acute by 1994. All of the parties formed by the Kurdish people one after another (HEP, HADEP, DEHAP, BDP, HDP<sup>8</sup>) have been regional fortresses in Turkey’s Southeast. They have been instrumental in raising the Kurdish issue, not only as a domestic

8 People’s Labour Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP); People’s Democracy Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HADEP); Democratic People’s Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi, DEHAP); Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP); Peoples’ Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP).

problem relating to minority rights, but also as an international debate, acting as a barometer of how far Turkey has gone down the road towards democratic consolidation (Ciddi, 2009, p. 91).

It should be noted that due to the monolithic concept of nation which was employed in the early days of the Republic and reinforced in Laws written by the subsequent military interventions, these communities are considered as part of the integrity of the nation. In this perspective, the current Turkish Constitution accepted after 1980 coup d'état, does not refer especially to ethnic or religious minorities. The only relevant provision in the Constitution is Article 10 that guarantees all individuals 'equality before the law', without any discrimination, irrespective of language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or other such considerations<sup>9</sup>.

On the other hand, 5 months after the civil rebellion known as Gezi Park Protests, and only 3 months before the 2014 Local Elections, the initiation of the anti-corruption investigation on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013 turned the political agenda upside down in Turkey and it comes naturally before than ethnic minority representation. PM Erdoğan's AKP succeeded in receiving 43.4 percent of the total votes to the CHP's 25.6 percent in the March 2014 local elections by stoking protests, politically utilizing the anti-corruption investigation (Cop, 2016). AKP and Erdoğan defined the Gülen movement followers who were staffed in judicial institutions and security forces as the "parallel state", a "betrayal organization" and a "terrorist group," refusing the charges alleged to them by Gülen movement followers by taking a firm stand and the AKP was able to identify and formulate a new enemy in the eyes of his voters. Anticipations that the allegations of corruption would affect the outcome of the elections turned out to be premature misjudgments. AKP received almost the 45 percent of the votes in the local elections held in March 2014. Due to the politically polarized atmosphere, analyses show that local dynamics did not play a major role in determining the outcome of the 2014 Local Elections. Table 1

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9 See the Article 10, "Equality before the law", Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, 1982.

below shows that local parties failed to increase their votes, and once again Nationalist Action Party's (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) and CHP's votes remained more or less at the same rates<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 1. Results of Recent General and Local Elections<sup>11</sup>**

	General Elections	General Elections	Local Elections	General Elections
Million	Nov. 1st, 2015	June 7th, 2015	March 30th, 2014	Oct. 12 th, 2011
Voters	55.36	54.5	52.7	52.8
Total votes cast	48.52	47.2	46.9	43.9
Valid votes	47.83	45.9	45.1	42.9
Ak Parti	23.66	18.7	20.5	21.3
CHP	12.1	11.4	12.5	11.1
MHP	5.69	7.5	6.9	5.5
HDP/BDP	5.14	6	2.7	2
Other	1.22	2.1	2.4	2.4

In these elections, different fractions of Kurdish politics united to enter the election as a party for the first time under HDP. However, whether HDP could pass the electoral threshold or not was quite critical for the outcome of the election for all parties in the parliament, as it could change the outlook in the political spectrum drastically.

### **2.1. Figure out of the problem: Aspects of Electoral Engineering in Turkey and Its Impact on the Political Representation in Mardin District.**

In the political mechanism, electoral rules have a major impact on the inclusion of minorities in political life (Horowitz, 2003, p. 115). This part of the study highlights the impact of the electoral laws in Turkey and their political consequences on the quality of the minority representation. Our starting point is based on the question of: How

<sup>10</sup> See Elections report prepared by scientific research company (KONDA, 2014).

<sup>11</sup> This table was prepared in light of the official results declared by the Supreme Electoral Council. See the official webpage of the Supreme Electoral Council, <https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/> (last checked on May 19th, 2016).



do electoral rules apply in Turkey affect the representation of ethnic minorities with a specific focus on the diversified population living in a concentrated territory as Mardin?

In order to discuss this, we'll try to examine the impact of the electoral system on the representation of minorities according to two points: concerning the discussion of the first step, we analyze the main instruments of electoral systems that are relevant for the representation of ethnic minorities, and their consequences. This step sheds light on electoral laws if they encourage the election of multiethnic parties. For this, we'll also clarify the SPK and the Constitution of 1982 with a focus on possibilities of the representation of ethnic minorities in the parliament whether these rules give place to a restricted electoral competition requiring an ethnically based identification of voters, parties or candidates.

After briefly reviewing the related legislation, we turn to the case of Mardin example and we prefer the local elections in this context since they provide more clues. Mardin is a province located in the Southeast Anatolian region and has a long border with Syria. The province is divided into ten district sub-governorates and possesses a population of around 750,000. Mardin is particularly well-suited to apply our framework, as the city reflects the panorama of many different ethnic and religious minority groups as well. The largest remaining and numerically stable minorities are Arabs and Kurdish residents. Both groups live territorially concentrated in the Mardin metropolitan city. The Arabs mainly live in Nusaybin and Artuklu districts and they are socially better integrated into society. The Syriacs and Yezidi-Kurds are very small in number, live as dispersed in the region and mainly in cities. Originally Kurdish people live mainly in the districts of Nusaybin, Kızıltepe and Midyat and dominate the economic and political life.

In Mardin case, when the last local elections are analyzed, it's observed that ethnical and religious minorities have elected Februniye Akyol and Ahmet Türk from Mardin district as the co-mayors. As a result, in this region where Arabs, Yezidis, Kurds and Soreanics are commonly seen; Februniye Akyol was selected as the first Soreanic

Mayor in Turkish history. In the light of this, the question then has to be answered whether there are common properties about this voting behaviour; such as preventing the ethnical and religious distinctions. If it is seen as an example in voting for the minority representation, then it would be possible to talk about the effect of the ACF as being the subject to a kind of structural outsiderism. We summarize these expectations in two testable hypotheses with focus on the minority representation according to the ethnic homogeneity of the district. Borrowing the hypothesis of Bochsler (2007, p. 153); we understand that if the system is restricted, minorities represent themselves better in a small magnitude. Pursuing this path:

Hypothesis 1: If minority parties are restricted by the system, minorities are doing better when they run with a proper candidate in a small homogenous district.

Hypothesis 2: In ethnically mixed districts, minorities are represented by establishing a coalition and running with a joint candidate to surmount the national threshold.

From this point of view, as expressed by Zollinger and Boschler (2012, p. 611), ethnic homogeneity in this case selected appears as a key variable of our hypotheses. According to them, if minority parties are banned, minorities might either seek access to the mainstream (not ethnically defined) parties and run with non-partisan candidates or give emphasis to local elections and seek to use non-partisan electoral lists of local citizen groups in ethnically homogenous districts.

### **3. Advocacy coalition framework (ACF)**

It's crucial to understand how the advocacy coalition framework is used to analyze the process the policy change regarding the collective action. As showed by Kübler (2001, p. 623), the ACF argues that actors perceive the world and process information according to a variety of cognitive biases which provide heuristic guidance in complex situations. The ACF names several potential 'guidance instruments' which are at the disposal of advocacy coalitions: changing rules to alter budgets and legal objectives, changing the incumbents of various governmental

positions within elected bodies or administrative agencies, affecting public opinion via the media, altering target group behaviour (e.g. via demonstration or boycotts), altering the perceptions of policy-relevant actors by producing knowledge and information (e.g. through research and expertise). Beliefs in the secondary aspects are assumed to be more readily adjusted in the light of new data, experience, or changing strategic considerations.

Within a subsystem, the ACF assumes that actors can be aggregated into a number (usually one) of advocacy coalitions each composed of actors from various governmental and private organizations who both share a set of normative and causal beliefs and engage in a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time. The belief systems of each coalition are organized into a hierarchical, tripartite structure with higher/ broader levels constraining more specific beliefs. At his level, the deep core of the shared belief system includes basic ontological and normative beliefs, such as the relative valuation of individual freedom versus social equality, which operate across all policy domains. The ACF assumes that policy core beliefs are the fundamental glue of coalitions because they represent basic normative and empirical commitments within the domain of specialization of policy élites. Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999, p. 117) had drawn their hypotheses concerning coalitions as well. The ACF defines coalitions as consisting of members who share policy core beliefs and engage in a non-trivial degree of coordination.

Among the assumptions, the ACF explicitly identifies beliefs as the causal driver for political behavior. At the top of the belief system lies deep core beliefs, which are the broadest and most stable among the beliefs and are predominately normative. Examples include liberal and conservative beliefs, and relative concern for the welfare of present versus future generations that are applicable across many subsystems. In the middle of the belief system hierarchy is policy core beliefs, which are of moderate scope and span the substantive and geographic flexibility of a policy subsystem. The subsystem specificity of policy core beliefs makes them ideal for forming coalitions and coordinating

activities among members. Policy core beliefs are resistant to change but are more likely to adjust in response to verification and refutation from new experiences and information than deep core beliefs. At the bottom of the belief system is secondary beliefs. In comparison with the policy core beliefs, secondary beliefs are more substantively and geographically narrow in scope, and more empirically based. The ACF predicts that secondary beliefs, compared to deep core and policy core beliefs, are the most likely to change over time. Based on these premises, the ACF requires that conflicting strategies from various coalitions are normally mediated by third group actors, “here termed “policy brokers”, whose principal concern is to find some reasonable compromise that will reduce intense conflict” (Sabatier, 1998, p. 98).

In this light, it is interesting to use the advocacy coalition framework to understand such a process of policy change, drawing on social movement theory to overcome shortcomings of the ACF regarding collective action. We argue that the recent history in the field of minority representation in Turkey can plausibly be presented as a competition between coalitions advocating belief systems regarding problems and policy.

### **3.1. Mobilization and the political opportunity for a coalition**

Within the belief systems, the ACF of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) considers the policy process as a competition between coalitions of actors who advocate beliefs about policy problems and solutions and this competition identifies three structural categories: a deep core of fundamental normative and ontological axioms that define a vision of the individual, society and the world, a policy core of causal perceptions, basic strategies and policy positions for achieving deep core beliefs in a given policy subsystem, and a set of secondary aspects comprising instrumental considerations on how to implement the policy core. The analysis collaborates the idea that coalition behaviour is strongly framed by the openings in the political opportunity structure. At the highest/ broadest level, the deep core of the shared belief system includes basic ontological and normative beliefs, such as the relative

valuation of individual freedom versus social equality, which operate across virtually all policy domains. It is assumed that these structural categories of belief systems show decreasing resistance to change, with the deep core displaying the most, and the secondary aspects the least, resistance. The ACF argues, from around beliefs, and particularly around core beliefs (Kübler, 2001, p. 623).

Another contributor to Sabatier's proposition, Schlager (1995, p. 243) defined the ACF as 'people from various governmental and private organizations who both (1) share a set of normative and causal beliefs and (2) engage in a non-trivial degree of coordinated activity over time'. Therefore, Schlager hypothesizes that to emerge an advocacy coalition and for its persistence, the coalition's members must have addressed collective actions problems that are the distribution of costs involved in a strategy and the prevention of free-riding.

#### **4. Electoral participation and the partisan system in Turkey**

According to the election system in Turkey defined by the Constitution of 1982, elections are theoretically held according to a proportional representation system in a single stage in accordance with the principles of general, equal, secret and direct voting, universal suffrage of the votes<sup>12</sup>. There are 81 provinces in Turkey. Each province constitutes an electoral district due to its large population (Cop, 2016, p. 213).

Horowitz (2003, p. 115) mentioned that the nature of an electoral system is to aggregate preferences and to convert them into electoral results, so every electoral system has biases built into its mechanisms of decision, which then feed back into the structure of choices confronting voters, constraining and changing choices that they might have made under other systems. Consequently, not only is there imperfect reflection of voter preferences in the first instance, but voter preferences

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12 The Turkish Assembly is made up of 550 seats, with seats distributed to electoral districts according to population. Istanbul, which is divided into three electoral districts, gets 85 seats, while Ankara, the capital, receives 31. Seats are awarded on the basis of proportional representation, with each party gaining a number of seats in each district based on its share of the local vote. The d'Hont formula applies for the distribution of deputies among the parties according to the election results.

themselves are shaped by the electoral system. Preferences do not and cannot exist independently. Legal bans or *de facto* obstacles against parties or organizations might occur also liberal democracies, for instance if national legal thresholds are so high that a minority group could impossibly pass. There are explicit or implicit administrative obstacles for all kinds of minorities to form their own parties and to run and campaign in elections (Bogaards, Basedau, & Hartmann, 2010, p. 599; Moroff, 2010, p. 618).

In Turkey, a 10% nationwide threshold is practiced in elections. Those political parties failing to receive at least 10% of the valid votes throughout the country in general elections, and throughout an electoral milieu in by-elections, cannot be represented in the parliament.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, neither national nor local threshold applies to independent candidates. After failing to clear the 10 percent threshold in the 1995, 1999 and 2002 elections, pro-Kurdish parties eventually decided to show independent candidates. As a result, 23 and 35 pro-Kurdish independent candidates were elected in 2007 and 2011 respectively, and they formed their party's parliamentary group afterwards (Cop, 2016, p. 224). Bacık (2008, p. 356) defined that small parties have developed different strategies to overcome the hurdle of the 10% threshold. One is to nominate independent candidates. Another way is to negotiate electoral coalitions or party mergers to counterbalance the AKP. The Democratic Leftist Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP), for example, concluded a coalition agreement with the CHP such that the

13 As mentioned by Türk (1993, p. 16), the constituency threshold has an interesting history in Turkey. It was introduced for the first time in 1961, as the Constituent Assembly which drafted the Constitution of 1961 adopted the system of proportional representation. Four years later, it was abolished in favor of the national remainder system pooling the waste votes at national level to make the countrywide results of the elections more proportional. In 1968 it was reintroduced, while the system of national remainder dropped. But this time Constitutional Court declared the constituency threshold is actually unconstitutional and void, as being incompatible with principles of free elections and multi-party democracy. Twelve years later, as a reaction to the longstanding government crises which occurred frequently during the period of the Constitution of 1961, the constituency threshold has been reintroduced again, together with the new Election Law of 1983 which is one of the pillars of the political order regulated by the Constitution of 1982.

DSP did not participate in the election in 2007. An attempted electoral coalition between The True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP) and the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) ultimately failed.

### **5. Political inclusion of minorities through competitive elections**

Schedler (2006, p. 3) defines that democracies allowing some political plurality but ban or limit parties of ethnic minorities are manifested as a result of the restricted party competition called as a hybrid regime. In this kind of system, for all parties in the scale, personal network is relevant to obtain political power than the party structure. The countrywide threshold is designed to hinder the entry of very small and marginal parties into parliament. The strength of the parties has to reach a certain degree of intensity at the country. Such a restriction might be the result of spatial rules of party registration (a party, in order to be registered, needs to have a considerable number of members in several or most provinces of a country), of high national legal thresholds in the electoral law, or spatial electoral thresholds which require a party to win votes from several regions. Even if it's difficult to talk about a polarized pluralism; but there is a kind of moderate pluralism in terms of Sartori<sup>14</sup>. As a mass party in Turkey, the AKP in this point prevent

<sup>14</sup> Polarized pluralism is a description applied to a two-party or multi-party political system which is seen as overly polarized and therefore as dysfunctional. It was originally described by Sartori to define a system where moderate views are replaced by polarized views. Sartori thought that both the one-party and the multi-party categories were more complex than Duverger had at first realized. Sartori went on to improve Duverger's taxonomy. He did so by breaking down the one-party category into three subcategories (one-party system, hegemonic party system and predominant party system) and by breaking down the multiparty system category into two subcategories (moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism) (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2004, p. 53). Sartori (2005, p. 230) refined the multiparty category because he had realized, contra Duverger, that not all multiparty systems are alike. Some multiparty system (moderate pluralism) function like two party systems (and this is why they are said to have a bipolar dynamics), while other multiparty systems function very differently from the two-party dynamics and it was true in the case of polarized pluralism. He broke down the one-party category into three sub-categories: the one-party category, the hegemonic party category and the predominant party category. Having said this, a party system is 'one-party' if only one party exists and is allowed to exist. Sartori (2005, p. 41) noted that 'one-party systems' could be then characterized as totalitarian, authoritarian or pragmatic

to total slide to ethnical based parties and the ethnic homogeneity is gradually transformed by the socio-economic traits<sup>15</sup>. There was an also frequent irregularity in the electoral process, for example registering and running of the Turkish citizens living in other countries. Due to the last modifications in 2008, they are granted the right of voting in Turkish embassies and consulates beginning from the 2014 presidential election (Umit, 2015).

The right to the association and a peaceful assembly are guaranteed by the Turkish Constitution. However, the Association Law includes a restrictive clause, which has also implications in practice. Article 5 of the law states that an association cannot be established to carry out activities against the national security, public order and general security, public good, general morals and the protection of general health; or destroy the national and territorial indivisible integrity of the state<sup>16</sup>. In January 2003, the provision which prohibited founding an association aiming: “to protect, develop or expand languages or cultures other than the Turkish language or culture or to claim that they are minorities based on racial, religious, sectarian, cultural or linguistic differences” was removed according to the Copenhagen Criteria including the political criteria based on the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities<sup>17</sup>.

Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution guarantees all individuals' equality without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief,

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depending on the party's ideological connotation. Sartori formulated the asymmetry in power between the hegemonic party and its satellites A party system should be considered as 'hegemonic' if the party in power does not allow real competition and the “other parties are permitted to exist but as second class, licensed parties”.

15 It should be noted that for Sartori, it was quite clear that neither 'one-party systems' nor 'hegemonic party systems' were consistent with competitive, democratic politics. However, Sartori (2005, p. 175) added that 'predominant party systems' are instead competitive party systems and they are consistent with democratic politics.

16 See Article 5 of the 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey.

17 For further information, see also European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.



religion and sect, or any such considerations. The article states that: ‘No privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class. State organs and administrative authorities shall act in compliance with the principle of equality before the law in all their proceedings’<sup>18</sup>. Article 40 of the Lausanne Treaty requires the same treatment and security in law and guarantees: ‘the equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein’<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand, the Article 81 of the SPK on the ‘Prevention of the Creation of Minorities’ prohibits political parties from claiming: ‘that minorities exist in the Turkish Republic based on national, religious, confessional, racial or language differences’. The SPK attempts to prevent the use of minority language in politics. Article 81(b) of the Law prohibits using a language other than Turkish: ‘in writing and printing party statutes or programs; at congresses; at meetings in open air or indoor gatherings; at meetings and in propaganda; in placards, picture, phonograph records, voice and visual tapes, brochures and statements’<sup>20</sup>.

Consequently, if the system is restricted by electoral law and political parties law, minorities might either access mainstream (not ethnically defined) parties, run with non-partisan candidates, or in local elections occasionally also with non-partisan electoral lists of local citizen groups (Zollinger & Bochsler, 2012, p. 617). Not all conditions are equally favourable for these forms of minority representation. As expressed by Schedler (2006, p. 37) there are different ways how elections (in semi-democracies) can be restricted. These kinds of regimes play the game of multiparty elections by holding regular elections for the chief executive and a national legislative assembly. In ethnically divided

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18 See Article 10 of the 1982 Constitution of the Republic of Turkey.

19 See Article 40 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, “Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as other Turkish nationals (....)”.

20 See Article 81 of the Political Parties Law (Siyasi Partiler Kanunu, 1983), On the prevention of the creation of minorities.

dominant-power systems, restrictions often affect the participation or the political representation of minority groups. Limited suffrage for some ethnic groups restricts the political rights of minorities most directly, but other restrictions are more frequent, and keep the façade of pluralistic elections). In this situation, this is called the “Restricted party competition of ethnic minorities” (Zollinger & Bochsler, 2012, p. 630).

Bochsler (2007, p. 154) stresses that, even the parties are under the national threshold, if they were spread homogenously in a small district as a potential, then they will get a serious majority of votes. Parties of ethnic minorities (usually) subject to the same electoral rules as other small parties, but they often have the advantage that their electorate is concentrated in a small territory. This makes a crucial difference. In this case, the party wins (almost) all its votes in one or a few electoral districts. Even if the party’s national vote share is low, the party’s voting potential is large in a few districts, and it might even win a majority of the votes in the districts in which its voters reside. This allows parties with a territorially concentrated electorate to win seats even in restrictive electoral systems, such as plurality or majority vote or the proportional representation with small districts. Returning to the hypothesis provided by Bochsler (2007, p. 157) ; if the system is restrictive, ethnic communities are better represented with independent candidates in small heterogeneous regions.

Norris (2003, p. 7) detailed that the PR with large district magnitude aims to develop the power-sharing on representation in plural societies allowing political parties of minorities to gain access to parliament. On the other hand, the majoritarian or preference-ranked voting systems are also proposed for the inter-ethnic cooperation. Electoral systems that produce proportional results may or may not foster interethnic conciliation (Horowitz, 2003, p. 127). In this point, one way to think about electoral systems and interethnic conciliation is to ask whether a given system provides politicians with electoral inducements for moderate behavior, that is, for compromises with members of other ethnic groups for the sake of electoral success. Reilly (2002, p. 28)

examines the use of preferential option that encourages politicians in divided societies to campaign not just for first-preference votes from their own community, but for the second-choice votes from other groups as well providing parties and candidates with an incentive to “pool votes” across ethnic lines. The picture is refined by the argument plurality or majority parliament, similar as PR with large districts, if their electorate is clustered in a small area. This literature, however, largely relies on the assumption of an unrestricted party system, where minority parties can be created, and they succeed in elections if the voters want so and the structure of the electoral districts allows it.

Where minorities can only access parliaments through mainstream parties, they rely on the willingness of the mainstream party leadership to recruit minority members on the electoral lists. On the other hand, in ethnically homogenous electoral districts, plurality or majority voting systems offered minorities the possibility to run with independent candidates (Zollinger & Bochsler, 2012, p. 641). If elections are competitive and if several mainstream parties try to get the minority votes, then the best ‘offer’ can be selected by the ethnic minorities: Voters who are keen to increase the representation of the ethnic minority can vote for the party with most minority candidates on the most promising list positions, and with the most minority-friendly program. This is not the case if competition is limited, and due to the lack of any reliable alternative, the mainstream party can easily favor members of the ethnic majority in the recruitment process. This might leave the minority being represented symbolically at best, with candidates on low-ranked places of the electoral ballot or in small numbers.

Under a restrictive system, such as plurality or majority vote (“winner takes it all”), only large parties can survive, and the party system usually consists only of two (or very few) parties (Bochsler, 2007, p. 158). Many of the contributors<sup>21</sup> on the consequences of electoral systems for ethnic minorities and their parties have relied on the distinction between more restrictive and more permissive systems. That’s why, the proportional representation system brings a less restrictive system in comparison  
21 (Horowitz, 2000, pp. 291–333; Norris, 2003; Reilly, 2002).

to the majoritarian system in terms of the participation of minorities in the political life. In light of this, minorities are better represented in homogeneous electoral districts, this implies that small electoral districts might be more favourable to the minority than large ones.

Having enough scientific data to confirm such a belief, in Turkish case, it's observed that minorities are better represented in heterogeneous districts when independent candidates are supported through the collaboration. In Mardin case, several minorities create an alliance between them to cross the threshold of 10% and also counterbalance the AKP in the government. In homogeneous regions, each minority presented its own candidate and in homogeneous regions, minorities have nominated a common candidate to run for the offices. During the local elections held on March 2014, the co-mayor elected supported by minorities had 52,2% in opposition of the AKP in the government which gained 32% of the votes by the two main parties of the central opposition; the MHP gained 9% and the CHP 9% of the votes. For many voters and parties alike, this election was a clear forecast for the presidential election to follow in five months' time (Umit, 2015, p. 173).

In mixed-ethnic environments, in line with political and economic inequalities, local elites consist mainly of the ethnic majority. In clientelistic systems, this reinforces the tendency that in multi-ethnic electoral districts, minorities have lower chances of getting elected within the mainstream party. While parties might renounce to present local candidates, and run instead with candidates from other regions, we believe that this is difficult in ethnically homogeneous districts, especially if outside candidates do not speak the minority language.

Political rights of ethnic minorities are restricted when some political parties are banned, and since there are problems in the conduct of elections in minority regions. The mixed electoral system applied for local elections offer the needed variation to test our hypotheses, while holding the political context stable. As Kaya and Baldwin (2004, p. 30) mentioned as in south-eastern Turkey, about 3 million people abandoned their homes and some were forcibly removed because they rejected becoming 'village guards'. Return to most of the villages is still

banned and the Turkish state has not developed a stable policy, or the social and economic conditions to facilitate their return. Additionally, even where the authorities have permitted people to do so, they have been prevented from returning by village guards who have been controlling and benefiting from the evacuated properties. The village-city (köy-kent) project of the state to return the villagers to specially created ‘villages’ has been criticized for not granting people the right to return to their own homes.

### **5.1. The local vote**

Ninety-eight percent of 52.6 million voters; joined to the local elections done in 30th March 2014<sup>22</sup>. As a result; the highest rate of participation occurred for the last 20 years time. The most important reason for this participation is; the highest tension in election campaign between the Government and opposition parties; and therefore, election turning into a matter of consideration.

Plurality and majority systems and proportional representation with small districts are considered as restrictive, because they reduce the number of serious competitors to two or very few parties within electoral districts. In a plurality or majority system, a party needs up to half of the votes in order to win a seat. In PR systems with small districts, only the largest parties have a chance to win seats. As a consequence, such restrictive electoral rules exclude small social groups and their parties, which do not have enough supporters to pass the de facto threshold of up to half the votes, from parliamentary representation (Bochsler, 2007, p. 172).

Our analysis focuses on the second level of administration in Mardin, which means the municipalities. In Mardin, there is a metropolitan municipality and 10 district municipalities within the metropolitan area. Some modifications in Law have been done according to the harmonization with the European Charter of Local Self-Government<sup>23</sup>.

22 <https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/module/.jsf>, Last checked on 28th of January 2018.

23 The Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 date 10.7.2004; the Special Provincial Administration Act based on the Law No. 5302 date 22.02.2005 and the Municipal Law No. 5393 date 03.07.2005 were enacted.

Due to these modifications, Artuklu Municipality has been created as a new district municipality within the newly established Mardin Metropolitan Municipality and replaced the former central settlement of the Province. A recently issued act <sup>24</sup> has enlarged the metropolitan boundaries up to the provincial boundaries of the related cities in 2013 by changing the status of the villages to the quarters of the related district and metropolitan municipalities. Therefore, the people living in even the most remote villages have gained the right of voting and demanding services from both of the related district and metropolitan mayors.

Observing 2014 local elections figures for the four most populated district municipalities of Mardin and the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality (Artuklu, Kızıltepe, Midyat, and Nusaybin) the results indicate that the centre-right vote share in Midyat district is relatively high in comparison to the pro-Kurdish line of parties. In other words, it is apparent that voters who are the most sensitive to socio-cultural change have shown an increasing preference for pro-Kurdish line of parties. This is a clear indication of voter de-alignment, where the last advantaged of Turkish rural society in Southeast fail to identify with centrist parties. The Table 1 is indicative of a voting pattern that is highly unstable. A new party titled as Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – BDP) is deliberately formed for the 2014 local elections in Turkey and has gained most of the municipalities in the southeastern region, in terms of mayors and the members of the municipal assemblies. BDP appealing especially for Kurdish voters; entered to the 2014 local elections as; HDP in the West, BDP in the East and with independent candidates in Mardin. As it is seen generally in Turkey, the hope of getting particular increase in votes; with the help of this peace period couldn't become real. It only got stronger as a regional party, in the East side of southeastern Anatolia and in the south cities of Eastern Anatolia.

Moreover, the idea of co-mayor has been introduced in the region by

24 Metropolitan Municipalities Law (The Law No. 6360), dissolves the legal entity of villages and special provincial administrations in 13 cities and establishes 26 new boroughs. For related articles of Law, see Articles No: 21 and 22.

the BDP where the co-mayors should be of different genders. Also, in Mardin, the BDP candidates entered the local elections by campaigning to promote local initiatives and demanded (and obtained) votes from all the people living in the province, indifference of the ethnic origins. As a result, currently the names of the municipalities are written in four languages (Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and Armenian) on the faces of the Municipal buildings. The Table 1 shows that, the BDP candidates have won the elections in the districts where overwhelmingly the non-Muslim population is settled. Whereas some of the minorities are represented in the mainstream parties, like the case of Midyat. Midyat is a town which accommodates the largest Syriac population in the province, but its mayor is from AKP. The table shows that Artuklu and Mardin Metropolitan Municipalities have been gained by the BDP candidates with tiny differences, which can be attributed to the people with Kurdish and Arabic origins living in their rural areas.

By analyzing the maps and the number of churches active in them, Nusaybin, Savur and Dargeçit districts are interpreted as originally the non-Muslim settlements<sup>25</sup>. Small groups of Syriacs are still living there. Through cooperating with the other ethnic groups living in the rural areas BDP candidates has won the elections.

As it is seen from the Table 2, if the minorities form a group in a district, then the political representation through a mainline party prevails. Otherwise, where the group formation lacks, and co-habitation exists then the people choose to elect an independent candidate.

According to Law No. 5216 Metropolitan Municipalities Act, citizens have to vote separately for the mayors of the metropolitan and district municipalities during the local elections<sup>26</sup>. Table 2 shows that 8 out of 10 districts in Mardin the BDP candidates have won the local elections and became mayors. In the metropolitan municipality, official results showed that an independent candidate has gained the elections.

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25 One of the available maps signing the non-Muslim places, monasteries, Christian sites are not mentioned and abandoned or ruined monasteries, is collected by Hollerweger (1999, pp. 56–57).

26 Law No: 5216, Metropolitan Municipal Law, Article 3 and Article 6 on the Participation of the Greater City Municipality, Date on enactment: 2004.

Table 2 also shows that; the highest minority votes have appeared in Nusaybin (79.67%) and Derik (64.42%). Nusaybin district is located at the south and the Nusaybin town is adjacent to the Syrian border facing to the Syrian city of Kamışlı. It is the center of an area of rich cultural aspects such as historical mosques, churches, monasteries, and other shrines. Local people expresses that its population is composed of Muslims, Christians and Yezidis of possibly Arab origins. The highest voting percentage in Nusaybin can be interpreted as a success of a pro-Kurdish party's convincing its policies to the other minority groups in the region. On the other hand, Derik is located at the western edge of the province of Mardin and in a mountainous environment. Therefore, as a district and town it is less accessible and less developed in comparison to Mardin's other districts. Although the Armenians were in majority before 1930's, today most of the population are known as of Kurdish origin which has been reflected as the second highest score on the local elections.

Following remarkable votes are seen in Mazıdağı (61.71%) and Kızıltepe (61.27%), Mazıdağı is another least developed district of Mardin due to its topographical disadvantages and location far from the major roads. It is reasonable to come up with votes against the mainstream parties in the local elections. Whereas, Kızıltepe appears to be the most developed district of Mardin in terms of industry, services, and urbanization. Located in the middle of a vast plain and on the junction of major transportation routes it has a population higher than the metropolitan centre i.e. Artuklu. Because of its economic vitality it has attracted some migration from Mardin's hinterland and has mixed population of Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic origins, some locals expressed the Kurdish weight.

Artuklu is the newly established district name for the previous Mardin Municipality and it currently shares the same building facilities with Mardin Metropolitan Municipality. It stands for the Mardin central settlement with a mixed population of all ethnicities and religions valid in the Province. Electoral results present a very incremental gain of BDP (35.84%) against the governing party of AKP (35.02 %). Quite high



score of the third party i.e. Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) with 24.81 % explicitly shows how high the election campaign was preceded on religious bases. Dargeçit (60.74%), Savur (53.03%) and Ömerli (41.52%) are the historical settlements in the Tur Abdin region of the Syriac culture. Currently they are small towns as the centres of their districts.

Tablo 2 also shows that the AKP which has formed the cabinet had won two municipalities in Mardin at the 2014 local elections, namely Midyat and Yeşilli with 43.58% and 66.90% respectively. The result is surprising for Midyat due to its well-known town of Syriac culture. Currently, a considerable non-Muslim population is still living in the district with a number of active churches. The district also holds some churches (active or vacant) and a large monastery. Whereas Yeşilli is a district located at the outskirts of Mardin city centre and a recently established district and town by connecting a number of villages. Such a score of 66.90 % for the AKP should be attributed to the lack of an historical background and the personal effectiveness in small settlements. On the other hand, it is thought that, on small settlement units, the acts of the chief of the family and the chairman of the tribe has an effect over the regional voting behavior.

As stated above, voting for the mayor of the Mardin Metropolitan Municipality was implemented parallel to the related district mayor and an independent candidate has won the seat. However, it is also mentioned that such an independent outlook was due to some delicate arrangements and the winning party has been the BDP with the 52.07% of votes. Table 2 also presents the determined implementation of the co-mayors among the BDP gained municipalities with one of them would be woman.

Distribution of the municipal assembly members among the parties might have given a clearer idea. But unfortunately, the party distribution of the municipal assembly members is not available in the web pages of municipalities. Secondly, it should be noted that unlike the separately elected metropolitan mayor, its assembly members are designated by the districts' municipal assemblies according to population weights of the districts within the metropolitan area and also the party distribution of

the members. Moreover, all of the district mayors are legally considered as the natural members of the metropolitan assembly. It is quite hard to trace their ethnic identities and it would be misleading without any face-to-face survey. However, in the absence of available data, it is still possible to assume that a somehow fair minority representation has been reflected to the municipalities in Mardin through independent candidates.

**Table 2. Party performance and electoral results of the 11 municipalities in 2014 local elections**

Parties <sup>1</sup>	Candidates	Total Vote	Vote Share
<b>Mardin Metropolitan Municipality</b>			
Independent candidate	Februniye Akyol & Ahmet Türk	167.483	%52.07
AKP	Mehmet Vejdi Kahraman	120.755	%37.54
SP		8.642	%2.68
HUDAPAR		6.456	%2.00
BTP		4.671	%1.45
BBP		3.144	%0.97
<b>Artuklu</b>			
BDP	Emin Irmak & Sevinc Bozan	25.895	%35.84
AKP	Serdal Yay	25.306	%35.02
SP	Şakir Nuhoğlu	17.927	%24.81
HUDAPAR		1.026	%1.42
CHP		728	%1.00
BBP		484	%0.66
<b>Dargeçit</b>			
BDP	Zeynep Sipçik & Sinan Akan	7.184	%60.74
AKP	Mehmet Dursun	3.961	%33.49
HUDAPAR		499	%4.21
CHP		66	%0.55
MHP		65	%0.54
SP		52	%0.43
<b>Derik</b>			

BDP	Sabahat Çetinkaya & Abdülkerim Erdem	18.086	%64.42
AKP	Hasip Necimoğlu	9.137	%32.54
HUDAPAR		370	%1.31
CHP		207	%0.73
MHP		92	%0.32
BBP		62	%0.22
<b>Kızıltepe</b>			
BDP	İsmail Ası & Leyla Salman	62.464	%61.27
AKP	Cibrail Dinler	32.479	%31.85
HUDAPAR		2.272	%2.22
BGMZ1 <sup>2</sup>		1.473	%1.44
CHP		1.004	%0.98
BBP		827	%0.81
<b>Mazıdağı</b>			
BDP	Necla Yıldırım & Ali özkan	8.790	%61.71
AKP	Abdurrahman Önen	3.809	%26.74
HUDAPAR		1.243	%8.72
CHP		208	%1.46
MHP		91	%0.63
HAKPAR		64	%0.44
<b>Midyat</b>			
AKP	Şehmus Nasıroğlu	19.178	%43.58
BDP	İlhan Bayar	13.820	%31.41
SP		9.853	%22.39
HUDAPAR		732	%1.66
MHP		202	%0.45
DYP		112	%0.25
<b>Nusaybin</b>			
BDP	Sara Kaya & Cengiz Kök	37.493	%79.67
AKP	Mehmet Ali Tekin	7.366	%15.65
HUDAPAR		1.010	%2.14
MHP		349	%0.74
CHP		322	%0.68

SP		171	%0.36
<b>Ömerli</b>			
BDP	Süleyman Tekin & Ipek Günes	2.914	%41.52
AKP	Yılmaz Altındağ	2.504	%35.67
SP		1.366	%19.46
CHP		95	%1.35
HUDAPAR		73	%1.04
MHP		35	%0.49
<b>Savur</b>			
BDP	Mehmet Aydın Alökmen & Gurbet Tekin	6.492	%53.03
AKP	Nezir Yıldız	4.813	%39.31
CHP	Seyfettin Hamidi	624	%5.09
HUDAPAR		219	%1.78
SP		47	%0.38
MHP		45	%0.36
<b>Yeşilli</b>			
AKP	Hayrettin Demir	4.786	%66.90
BDP	Nilüfer Elik Yılmaz	2.071	%28.95
HUDAPAR		140	%1.95
MHP		56	%0.78
SP		40	%0.55
CHP		32	%0.44

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

Political power often relies on some ethnic groups, while other ethnic groups (usually the numeric minorities) are not equally represented. Ethnic party bans do not fully exclude minorities out of the representation process as there are alternative ways of minority representation. If there is not any other reliable alternative, the mainstream party can easily favor members of the ethnic majority in the recruitment process and this might leave the minority being represented symbolically at best, with candidates on low-ranked places of the electoral ballot or in small numbers (Zollinger & Bochslers, 2012, p. 640). It means that in multi-

ethnic big cities, minorities have lower chances of getting elected within the mainstream party.

The results of the 11 municipalities where elections were held allow us to test our two hypotheses on policy making process put forward by the ACF: we expect that if minority parties are restricted by the system, minorities are doing better in ethnically homogenous districts. (Hypothesis 1): If minority parties are restricted by the system, minorities are doing better when they run with a proper candidate. And secondly, our results confirm the importance the democratic procedures: In ethnically mixed districts, minorities are represented by establishing a coalition and running with a common candidate to surmount the national threshold.

In the light to the case analyzed here, it becomes clear that consequence of outsiderism feeling provides the political opportunity to create the dynamics of coalition (Hypothesis 2). Observing 2014 local elections figures in Mardin indicate that minorities have decided to create alliances in search of the general interest. We are able to identify one major coalition policy that became strongly influenced by the principle of outsiderism that entered into the public policy subsystem in search of the general interests. Based on ACF model, we tried to understand the possibilities of the participation of representatives of all significant communal groups in the political decision-making process. The independent candidate strategy worked well, especially for the ethnically homogenous districts. On the other hand, the independence strategy and the electoral coalitions showed that the 10% threshold designed to keep the minority representatives out of the system, no longer works.

The fact that the Parliament is composed by four political parties after 2007 and 2011 elections doesn't mean that the electoral rule doesn't force the bi party system. Therefore, one of these four parties, the BDP had participated to the elections by forming an independent candidate strategy because of the national threshold. On the other side, the Kurdish issue as the existence reason of the BDP has a mirror effect on the vote of the MHP to promote its vote share and reinforces the

representation of the MHP in the Parliament. Briefly, although the electoral rule reinforces a bi party system; four parties are represented in the Parliament with a locked electorate because of the coercion in mind and the volatility become more difficult. We can anticipate that the main party of the opposition CHP received a lower share of the votes in Mardin in comparison with the total number of voters in the region. The real focus of the centre-left's electoral problem lies in its failure to adapt and change in a non-democratic fashion to accommodate voting determinants when it comes to evaluating cultural cleavages. In this point, the AKP seems to have achieved what the main opposition parties could not: to propose an ethical ideological front in Kurdish issue (Ciddi, 2009, p. 147). This is based on the government admission that Turkey's real agenda is to solve the rising terrorism within the logic of building a consensus for sustainable development. On the other hand, accepting the fact that the sincerity of the BDP's democratic opening plan has yet to be confirmed, it's still the case that in terms of policy implementation, the analyzed results show us that the BDP has broken ties within the past after the 2014 local elections.

## Appendix 1. Minorities in Turkey

Ethnic group	Religion	Stream	Location	Problems	Size
Armenians	Christian	Mainly Orthodox, about 4,000 Catholics, 3,000-4,000 Protestants	Istanbul	1. Legal status of Patriarchate 2. Religious training institutions 3. Properties 4. Educational establishments 5. Election of the Patriarch	50,000-93,000
Greeks	Christian	Orthodox	Istanbul and the two islands of Imroz and Tenedos, off the western entrance to the Dardanelles	1. Legal status of Patriarchate 2. Religious training institutions 3. Properties 4. Educational establishments 5. Election of the Patriarch	3500
Assyrians	Christian	Assyro-Chaldean	Istanbul, southeastern Turkey (vicinity of Mardin and Midyat)	1. Not recognized as minority under the Lausanne Treaty 2. Have no legal status as a community 3. Denied the right to their own social and charitable institutions	25000
(Have Patriarche)					
Balkan immigrants (Pomaks)	Muslim	Sunni/Alevi (minority)	Western provinces and Edirne		75000

Sunni Arabs	Muslim		Provinces of Urfa, Mardin, Siirt, Hatay (Alexandretta)	To use Arabic outside of private sphere, e.g. in schools	
Alevi Arabs or Nusayri	Muslim	Alevis (Alawi or Alawite)	Hatay	Turkicization	200000
Christian Arabs (Nasrani)	Christian	Orthodox and Melkite	Hatay	Turkicization	10000
Georgians	Christian	Orthodox	Artvin province (northeast)		10000
Georgians	Muslim	Sunni	Artvin province (northeast)		80000
Azeri Turks	Muslim	Ithna'ashria Shi'i	Northeast border area around Kars, Ardahan and Artvin		75000

(Source: Karimova & Deverell, 2001)



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### (Footnotes)

- 1 Party names in Table 2 are; Free Cause Party (Hür Dava Partisi – HÜDAPAR), Independent Turkey Party (Bağımsız Türkiye Partisi – BTP), Grand Unity Party (Büyük Birlik Partisi - BBP) and Rights and Freedoms Party (Hak ve Özgürlükler Partisi – HAKPAR)
- 2 BGMZ1 is used for “one independent candidate”.