

# The Impact of the 2016 Turkish Military Coup on Politics in Turkey

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## ABSTARCT

*On July 15, 2016, a Military Coup took place in Turkey to overthrow President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government. Although the coup failed, certainly not an advantage for Turkey, which is the government trying to increase political, economic and social stability in Turkey. This paper examines the impact of the 2016 Turkish military coup on Turkish politics by focusing on its impact on domestic politics in Turkey. The approach in research uses literature review. The data collection technique of this research is literature study using secondary data with descriptive analysis. The results of this study describe that domestic politics, the coup has an impact on government relations with opposition parties, the democratic climate, political policy and military bureaucracy.*

**Keywords:** Adelet Kalkina Partition (AKP), Turkish Armed Forces, Military Coup, Politics Domestic

## INTRDUCTION

Coup in a democratic perspective is a chronic disease that wants to be eliminated from the political system. Democracy as a political mechanism requires a process of transformation of power carried out through a political process that does not use the instruments of power. So that whatever the reasons behind the coup, both cliches such as for the sake of public welfare, law enforcement and other reasons, were denied. As Nordlinger said, the coup was part of the political process. According to him, the coup was a key for a military officer to be able to take over the power of the country which later the coup event was called a military coup. This is usually done based on the state of the country where the situation is deteriorating in terms of the economy and politics, for example corruption by state officials, separatist actors, rising inflation rates, rising unemployment rates, and others. Usually, this military coup is used when the distrust of the ruling and disobedient government appears again. Most countries have experienced these political events, both successful and unsuccessful. A country that experiences a coup can be said to have the essence of experience and a separate state process compared to other political events.

Likewise with Turkey, the state process experienced by Turkey naturally changes and developments occur a lot. In addition to developments and changes for the sake of change, it is also characterized by turmoil, both in terms of society, the economy, and especially in the political process. Turkey, at least has often experienced coups since Turkey holds the status of a Republic of Turkey which also involved the elite and high-ranking military officers of Turkey (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri / Armed Forces)

On July 15, 2016 there was a military coup attempt aimed at overthrowing the Erdogan regime which was in power. The coup d'état claimed to have fully taken over the administration of the state to restore the constitutional order, human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and public security which was poor under the Erdogan Government. The perpetrators of the coup bombed the buildings of important state institutions, such as the Parliament Building, the Palace Beylerbeyi (Presidential Palace), General Staff Hall, Police headquarters and National Intelligence Organization (MIT) headquarters by helicopter and F-16 aircraft. Along with these institutions of strategic value, 241 civilians who opposed the coup perpetrators were killed and 2,195 injured in the bombings. Likewise in the Istanbul area, tanks blocked traffic on the Bogazici (Bosphorus) bridge and surrounded Attaturk Airport and controlled the airport control tower. Even though the coup failed, of course this event was not an advantage for Turkey amidst the government's efforts to increase political, economic and social stability in Turkey. The purpose of this study is how the impact of the 2016 Turkish Military Coup on politics in Turkey. Also note that the time interval that becomes the research parameter is from 2016-2017.

Keep in mind that the impact on Turkey's politics and economy is not only caused by coups alone. In the sense that at that time Turkey was facing situations such as terrorist attacks, economic embargoes, American trade wars. States and others. The 2016 military coup had an impact on domestic politics in Turkey. First, the coup influenced government relations with opposition parties. After the coup, the Turkish government (in this case Adelet ve Kalkina Partition / AKP) began to gather with the opposing parties, giving them information and considering their suggestions. There is an approach taken between opposing parties (opposition), such as Cumhuriyet Halk Partition (Republican People's Party / CHP), Milliyetci Hareket Partition (Nationalist Movement Party / MHP) and Halkların Demokratik Partition (Democratic Party Partition) People / HDP). Cumhuriyet Halk Partition (Republican People's Party / CHP) opposed the coup through its leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu who openly declared this on the eve of the coup. Kilicdaroglu also participated in the post-coup consolidation on August 7 in Istanbul with more than 5 million participants, and gave a speech. Likewise with the Halkların Demokratik Partition (Party People's Democrats / HDP), the pro-Kurdistan voiced its tough attitude towards the coup. However, the relationship between Adelet ve Kalkina Partition / AKP) and the opposition looks different when the Constitutional Referendum discourse becomes a topic in Turkish government forums. A few months after the coup, the Turkish government approved changes to the constitution that governs the existing government system in Turkey. The main point of the amendment to the constitution is the change in the system of government from the previous parliamentary government system to a presidential system. The purpose of changing the government system is to strengthen the position of the executive body if the domestic political situation is unstable. The effort to change the constitution was then realized in a

constitutional referendum in April 2017. Based on a report compiled from Turkish Radio and Television, the results of the referendum voting 51.41% of voters expressed their approval of the constitutional change.

Some parties who oppose the change in the constitution are mainly the opposition represented by the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / CHP) and the Partition Democratic Halkların Partisi (People's Democratic Party / HDP) of the ethnic Kurds. According to the opposition, a change in the constitution in this case the government system will result in an ongoing government leading to an authoritarian system. This is due to the points in the new constitution which are considered to give the president a privilege to have full authority in running the government. Secondly, the coup has a good influence on Turkish democracy. Based on the previous information, the existence of consolidation and so on August 7, 2016 reflects the value of solidarity from every element of Turkish politics. It is this solidarity that played a crucial role in the failure of the coup and contributed to strengthening Turkey's democratic political culture. The reason is that civil society, both politicians and the people in general, have had a coup experience before, so that they will easily and courageously fight those who try to damage the democratic climate. Of course, with this experience, they have more knowledge about how to fight a coup with or without weapons. Military coup 15 July 2016, also improves culture and behavior in society. There is a difference between opposing the ruling government and against Turkey. The perpetrators of the coup not only oppose the government, in this case the perpetrators of the coup also oppose Turkey. Most Turkish people are still on alert to prevent further efforts from the coup. The unity of the Turkish people and all political parties against the coup and the decision of President Erdogan to invite the opposition parties is a good development for the Turkish state which has been highly polarized in recent years. It seems clear that sensitivity to democracy in the community strengthened after the coup.

Third, the coup also greatly influenced the political policies imposed by the Turkish government. In the aftermath of the coup, Turkey is in a state of Emergency for three months. This policy implies that during an emergency, the government, especially the President, has the power in parliament to enact new laws and limit or deny the people's rights and freedoms. Not only in the central government, but also the provincial government. Including ending the military's role in politics. Another policy implemented by President Erdogan and Adelet ve Kalkina Partisi (AKP) after the coup was to take a number of steps to take action against the perpetrators of the coup and the various parties involved. It could be said that the purge policy undertaken by the government raises questions regarding the effect of this purge. In the last few weeks after the coup, tens of thousands of people were detained or lost their jobs due to their alleged affiliation with the Gulen Movement. However, because

the organizational structure of the movement is still considered unclear, it is not easy to determine who is a Gulenist from who is not.

According to Turkish Ministry of Interior data, it suspended 8,777 officials, including 7,899 police officers, 30 governors 614 Gendarmerie officers (Public Forces responsible for public order) and 47 district governors. A total of 2,745 judges and 5 members of the Turkish Supreme Court (Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu / HSYK) were dismissed by the relevant authorities, while 2,836 members of the military including high-ranking officers were detained on July 16, 2016, 7,543 people were arrested for allegedly playing a role in a coup consisting of 100 police, 6,038 soldiers, 755 judges and 650 civilians. In addition, in the education sector there were 15,200 Ministry of Education staff who were fired and 21,000 teachers were withdrawn from their teaching permits. The number continues to increase until December 9, 2016, when it was noted that:

1. More than 125,000 workers were fired
2. A total of 92,607 legal cases were processed, 39,378 of which had been detained;
3. A total of 3,673 judges and prosecutors were dismissed and 2,700 others
4. Around 1,800 organizations / foundations were closed
5. Around 2,100 schools, dormitories and universities were closed

Although the opposition agreed to policy after policy adopted by the government at the time, the opposition was worried that the purge and emergency status could turn into arrests targeting all elements including critics who were not part of the coup related. However, the government claims that the policy will only be used to capture Gulenist within the state bureaucracy. and arrest has penetrated into other important institutions. The most crowded is cleaning in national security institutions. Thousands of military officials including generals and police were arrested. This cleansing will create a vacancy in the institution. Procedures for discipline and national affairs in the country and in the privacy of military judges region. Therefore, in the months the following month, the appointment had been transferred to filling vacant positions in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the state bureaucracy and the Turkish apparatus. Security, the government conducts 6. The Supreme Military Council restructuring its intansi (Supreme Military Council). In the end it appeared that President Erdogan decided on an extreme policy towards the military to return the military context to barracks. A German civil-military relations expert Lars Haugom said that there was an increase in civilian government control over the Turkish Armed Forces (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetler / TSK) after the coup occurred. Even positioned the Military institution under the Ministry of the Interior. Turkey. If the military considers it is no longer an independent institution as before. The head of

Turkey's National Defense is directly appointed by the president and the General Staff will be transferred to the Ministry of Defense.

In addition, the president will be able to give direct orders to the commander of Turkey's land, air and sea forces without having to go through surveillance or other authorities. This happened in the case of the appointment of General Hulusi Root for the post of Minister of National Defense (Cengiz, 2018). Apart from this, the military education system also experienced major changes. The military school was closed, and the military academy became the new National Defense University under the Ministry of National Defense. The rationale was to change the Turkish Armed Forces (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri / TSK). become a more managed and controlled defense agency that is able to handle security challenges. Turkey today and in the future, without being a threat to the civilian government. However, in the long run the institution (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri / TSK) risks becoming an institution that tends to be politicized going forward. Then, as well as the position of the Gendarmerie (General Forces responsible for the maintenance of public order and safety) and Coast Guardian Command, were completely transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. It seems clear that the Government of Adelet ve Kalkina Partition (AKP) is trying to improve civilian control and supervision of the Force Armed Turkey.

## CONCLUSION

The results of an analysis of the impact of the 2016 Turkish military coup on domestic politics describe that the coup had four impacts on politics in Turkey. First, the Government's relations with the opposition parties. Second, Turkey's democratic political culture. Third, domestic political policy and fourth, military bureaucracy.

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