



The Parliamentarism in front of Erdogan, Trump and May

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“Erdogan to absolute power in Turkey”, “America’s choice of populism brings Trump to the White House”, “UK to leave Europe after referendum”, among others, are the headlines after the referendums in the UK and Turkey and the American presidential elections. The problem is that all of them are truth and lies at the same time.

Truth, because they have shown the latest results from the polls, which were transferred later on to practical law: the start of Brexit, Trump’s presidential inauguration and the entry into force of the Turkish constitutional reform. Lies, because they attribute to a country as a whole a decision which has been endorsed by an exiguous majority of voters in the two referendums, or even by a minority of electors in the American presidential elections’ case.

However, they are lies because the bare minimum result in ballots or delegates is translated into a decision of all citizens, making a clean sweep of what is an almost equal division in all cases. That is, the facts are analyzed in a simplistic manner until it becomes a faith dogma, thus supporting the black and white interpretation of the winners, being Boris Johnson, Trump or Erdogan.

Some one would say: that’s what democracy means, where one wins by just one vote! My answer is: that is not democracy but at most the old-school democratic centralism of the Stalinist parties.

In a democracy, all decisions should be adopted by respecting the totality of the polling results, in other words, the majorities and the minorities. If the minorities are almost the same as the majorities, the consensus (even if tilting to the winning side) must be broad. And even if the distance between the majority and the minority is vast, seeking agreements to apply the policies of the former is inexcusable.

Otherwise, the social breakdown in the short or medium term is ensured. Only bad rulers can be so irresponsible as to turn a blind eye to that danger and its consequences. Regrettably, Trump, May and Erdogan are examples of that lack of democratic culture which ends up poisoning the politic dynamic and, in the name of democracy, perverts it until bringing it closer to an authoritarianism of the majority over the minority.

We should not forget either that in a democracy, no decision is irrevocable. It is not about voting over the same issue every Sunday, but about taking into account the consequences of the options to be adopted finally or the variations of the context, in order to determine if the electorate has changed their opinion. The paradigmatic case is the British referendum,

in which the conservative government refuses to submit for consultation, or at least for a parliamentary vote, the results of the exit process from the UE decided in a previous consultation, considering it a sacred cow in an absolute lack of democratic coherence, according to their own logic.

To recap, my conclusion is clear: the parliamentary way continues being the best democratic form of decision because it avoids all-or-nothing bets, forces to take into consideration the existing majorities and minorities, allows rectification on the fly, and moreover, it has enough mechanisms to vote again if needed (motion of censure, motion of confidence). Its advantages in front of presidentialism and referendum are so clear that they represent every day a true antidote against populism. That is one of the strong points of our country in the current turbulent moment of the international arena.