

**WHY IS CHP – THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY IN TURKEY –
GIVING MIXED SIGNALS ABOUT EU? THE DOMESTIC
MODERNIZATION DISCOURSE**

by

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Abstract

The basic points that I would like to raise with my thesis are primarily the ambivalent character of the Republican People's Party in Turkey and the "deep state" by and large relevantly with the country's EU perspective examining: i) the argumentation that they make use of, ii) the crisis that Kemalism seems to be going pass through. In my view, another crucial point that deserves our attention and may partly explain the Republican People's Party stance and the crisis of Kemalism, is the emergence of political Islam, its affiliation with the new economic elites and together with the dynamics that this emergence brings about.

List of abbreviations

AKP *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* / Justice and Development Party

CHP *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* / Republican People's Party

EC European Community

ECHR European Court of Human Rights

EEC European Economic Community

EMASYA *Emniyet, Asayiş Yardımlaşma Birlikleri* / Protocol on Cooperation for Security and Public Order

ESI European Stability Initiative

EU European Union

HSYK *Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu* / High Council for Judges and Public Prosecutors

MGSB *Milli Güvenlik Siyaseti Belgesi* / National Security Policy Document

MUSIAD *Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği* / Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association

SMEs Small and Medium Enterprises

TAF Turkish Armed Forces / *Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*

UN United Nations

Introduction

This thesis searches and tries to reach a better comprehension of the ambivalences that permeate Turkey's relations with the European Union (EU). From the beginning of the Republic Turkey, its European trajectory has evolved in ebbs and flows. Periods of "modernization" and growth gave their place to years of economic crisis, political instability and even violence. Since the 1990s, these cyclical trends have unfolded together with its relation with the EU. As Turkey has undergone numerous, difficult, and tremendous changes – walking along the EU accession path – internal economic and political processes have increasingly complicated the state of Turkey – EU ties.

The essay consists of five parts. I will start outlining first the chronology of the country's turbulent path to Europe, drawing some parallel lines to domestic environment but mainly focusing on the last fifteen years of that interesting story with its "ups and downs". In the second part, I will give a description of a relatively recent phenomenon which nevertheless seems to have a serious impact on Turkish reality. Talking about the industrial elite that emerged during the 1980s with the opening up of the economy and nowadays reaches its zenith, there will be references to the characteristics of the "new religious" elite and the special treatment it receives from the government. Likewise, there will be an analysis around the key terms of "Anatolian Tigers" and "Islamic Calvinism".

In the next part of my thesis juxtaposing argumentations, there will be an effort to answer a question that overwhelms many discussions among scholars and politicians. What is the final destination of Europeanization for Turkey? Democratization or islamization? Citing the "theory" of creeping islamization and the arguments that the deep state makes use of in order to support its position and, on the other hand, portraying the stance of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi / AKP) on the headscarf issue and that of Directorate of Religious Affairs, I come to certain conclusions.

The fourth part examines closely the evasive attitude adopted by the main opposition party (Republican People's Party / Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / CHP) vis-a-

vis country's venture to join the EU, developing the main points of the party's criticism. Finally, instead of writing an epilogue, I chose to question whether all the above mean that Kemalism is dead. Of course, the answer cannot be of one word since the particularities and the evolving parameters are many.

The history of Turkey's European journey

Turkey's relations with Europe date back to 1923 when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk decided his new republic would have to emulate Europe considering that option as the only credible for the newborn Turkish Republic after a turbulent period. Relations with Europe and the West were intensified during the Cold War due to the country's vital geo – strategic position. Turks became an indispensable part in securing Europe from the threat of communism, thereupon feel betrayed at the difference in how the EU perceived their application and those from the once Warsaw Pact member states.

Turkey was strongly pro–Europe and pro–US in the 1950s and in 1959 (September 11, 1959)¹ the European Economic Community (EEC) Council of Ministers accepted Ankara's application for associate membership. The Ankara Agreement enters into force (December 1, 1964) but eighteen years later, the European Community (EC) suspends the Agreement because of the 1980 – 1983 military coup d'état. Thereafter, when President Turgut Özal finally applied in 1987 for full membership, the EC voted down Turkey. Instead of accepting Turkey as a member, the Commission proposed the completion of a Customs Union which would offer the Community the chance to associate Turkey more closely with the operation of the single market.

From 1963 – when the Association Agreement is signed – there are many ups and downs in this process. Maybe it should be mentioned indicatively the fact that due to a long tradition of interventionism, at the beginning of the Turkey - EU approach, Turkish politicians and private sector were not very keen on the idea, as they were afraid of the harsh EU competition and the immaturity of domestic market. Apart from that, some ups and downs of the long procedure of Turkey – EU rapprochement

¹ Özgül Erdemli, "Chronology: Turkey's Relations with the EU", Turkish Studies, Volume 4, Issue 1 Spring 2003, pages 4 - 8

should be attributed to Athens's policy. Once it joined the community, Greece used the EU as an instrument to defend its own interests and promote its viewpoints in conflicts with Turkey over Cyprus and the air, sea and continental shelf borders in the Aegean Sea. For instance, it blocked Turkish access to EU funds, the development of the EU – Turkey Association and joint initiatives, and vetoed Ankara's EU candidacy. Greek policy began to change in 1996, under a prime minister, Kostas Simitis. He believed that his country's leverage was greater over a Turkey linked to an EU process, though bilateral crises postponed the implementation for three years, as Greece and Turkey found themselves on the brink of war over the uninhabited Aegean islets Imia in 1996. And in 1997, Turkey threatened war after Cyprus purchased ground - to - air Russian missiles.

In 1996, Turkey becomes member of the Customs Union and three years later (1999), the EU formally recognizes that Turkey will soon become a candidate for membership.² One could argue that from 1996 to 2005 there is an intensification in Turkey – EU relations, but in 2005 France and Germany begin to oppose Turkey's membership.

The “intensification period” was mainly characterized by an unprecedented wave of reforms sweeping away complexities and structural inflexibilities of the Kemalist state and its intrinsically authoritarian past. Taking as an example the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF)³, which have always been the bastion of deep state, it is fair to assume that the Europeanization reforms contributed to the consolidation of Turkish democracy in part by curbing TAF's power, influence and voice over the political affairs foreground. The civil – military balance shifted in favor of civilians and the TAF were deprived some of their constitutional channels of influence. That is why governments have been able to implement controversial reforms, for example in the field of human rights.⁴ This golden age of Europeanization in Turkey comprises the first (from the end of 2002 to the end of 2005) of two sub-phases during the AKP era, where government vigorously continued previous coalition government's deeds and

²Ibid.

³ See Tuba Unlu Bilgic, *The Military and Europeanization Reforms in Turkey*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5, 803 – 824, September 2009

⁴ See Ergun Ozbudun, *Democratization Reforms in Turkey, 1993 – 2004*, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 179 – 196, June 2007

urged for the country's full membership and the associated package of democratization and economic reforms. On the contrary, the second sub-phase has as a central feature the evident loss of commitment and enthusiasm not only on the part of government but on the part of society as well. Of course, there were a number of factors that brought about this concussive change in to Turkish stance.

Initially, the discussion that started in EU capitals such as Paris and Berlin after the Brussels Summit of 2004 about Turkey's poor European credentials, generated an intense nationalist backlash in Turkey which was visible both within society and in state. Indeed, public support for EU membership decreased from 74% in 2002 to 50% in 2006.⁵

Over and above, Turkish Cypriots did not receive any kind of reward for their spirit of conciliation in the UN - led effort to resolve the Cyprus conflict. The European impotence to deal with this problem following an equal – distance policy denoted that although Cyprus was not critical in itself, though it was being used as a tool for cancellation Turkey's European journey.

On top of the Cyprus issue, major internal factors were also present. Erdogan's leadership lost its determination. Why did this happen? The AKP definitely succeeded in distancing itself from its Islamist roots and in moving to the “center” of Turkish politics. Yet, one could argue that AKP still cannot manage to be fully disengaged from its origins, since “religious freedoms” remain one basic point of the party's political agenda, setting, in this manner, tight limits to the party's transformation and weakening its commitment to the goal of full EU membership.

As Ziya Onis puts it: *“Turkey – EU relations historically move in terms of cycles. At the end of each cycle, Turkey moves closer to and becomes more integrated with the EU”*.⁶ After a period of questioning and Euroscepticism, where negotiations and the Europeanization procedure seemed to come to a dead end with the Turkish foreign policy showing more interest in its neighbors in the Middle East than for the EU, a 180° degree turn recently took place, releasing new dynamics which are expected to perform soundly in the near future. Synoptically, it is about an unexampled and multi – dimensional blitzkrieg by the Islamic government against TAF, focusing first on the

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/public-opinion/index_en.htm.

⁶ Ziya Onis, Turkey – EU Relations: Beyond the Current Stalemate, Insight Turkey, Vol. 10, No.3, pp. 35

abolition of the Protocol on Cooperation for Security and Public Order (EMASYA)⁷ which enables the military to operate and gather intelligence – as if it was police – without parliamentary approval. Secondly, it's the amendment of the National Security Policy Document (MGSB) which is the gnomon for the military in situations of domestic conflict. According to President's Abdullah Gul saying: *"The document is not superior to the Constitution, but was sometimes deemed superior. This is totally wrong. It's not a law"*.⁸ Last comes the abolition of Article 35 of the TAF Internal Service Code. As the Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc stated: *"The TAF Internal Service Code had served as a justification for coup perpetrators"*.⁹ All these issues constituted taboos for Turkish politics and remained untouched for many years. But now AKP militates against mentalities that have existed since the inception of the Republic.

On the same wavelength, last September Turkey fortified its freedoms and its democracy approving of a sweeping package of 26 constitutional amendments with 58 percent of voters, aiming to bring Turkey's Constitution in line with European standards of law and democracy and put an end to the army's interventions with politics. Among the changes, one may discern two categories. The first is related more to the satisfaction of EU demands like the provisions protecting the privacy of personal data, guaranteed new rights for women, children, civil servants, workers, the disabled and the elderly. While the reforms belonging to the second category - such as: i) withdrawing immunity for those responsible for the 1980 coup making thus the military answerable to civilian courts, ii) expanding the jurisdiction of the civilian court over the military one, iii) giving parliament a role in selecting some constitutional court judges and rolling back the unelected establishment's power to vet judicial nominations – apart from having the endorsement of the European Commission, the EU's executive body, conduced to Erdogan's efforts to weaken the two basic pillars of Kemalist elite.

All these of course are commonplace in Europe but in Turkish reality it will also need modesty on behalf of country's political leaders so as the new changes not to end

⁷ Erdogan vows to abolish EMASYA protocol, revise security priorities, TODAY'S ZAMAN, 01 February 2010, Monday

⁸ Gul says MGSB not superior to Constitution, asks for revision, TODAY'S ZAMAN, 09 February 2010, Tuesday

⁹ CHP opts for change to article 35 over abolition, TODAY'S ZAMAN, 30 July 2010, Friday

up shifting power too far in the other direction in the absence of respective experience and political tradition. On the one hand, the governing AKP presents the constitutional overhaul as having a double benefit: i) it strengthens Turkey's democracy and ii) helps clear the path towards membership in the EU. On the other hand, opponents of the suggested changes share the view that it is an orchestrated plan to undermine the secular order and give religious conservatives power over the judiciary and military, converting institutions closer to their side and resulting in a system lacking checks and balances.

Both sides ought to understand the sooner the better that the vote of last September was neither a parade of governmental vantage nor a wreck of the opposition. There can be different data readout. The result of the referendum proclaims that the great majority of people are against the meddling of the army and judiciary in civilian politics. In the long run, the reforms will contribute to the democratization of Turkish politics. The demand for democratic politics is a very serious signal that all parties should receive before next elections.

Rise of new economic elites

Since the Ottoman times, there was a lack of middle class in Turkey. In the Republican era, the state attempted to create its middle class through industrialization. The latest industrialization wave gave birth to a new economic elite, "Anatolian tigers" and/or "Islamic Calvinists". Many people question the role of religion in the rise of new industrial centers across Anatolia in recent decades, arguing that religion does not have a role in the growth of the industrial centers in Anatolia; a growth that took place due to the opportunities the Anatolian industrialists took advantage of during the liberalization and privatization periods.

There have been three waves of industrialization in Turkish economic history. The first wave was in 1930s, the second was after the World War II and the third one came during the 1980s with the opening up of the Turkish economy.¹⁰ My emphasis

¹⁰ Pamuk, Sevket, Globalization, industrialization and changing politics in Turkey, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 38, pp. 271, 2008

here will be given on the industrial elite that emerged with the third wave of industrialization.

In the 1960s and 1970s there have been partnership attempts that usually failed by the small and medium - scale industrialists. The 1980s allowed opportunities for this group with the new economic policies and economic restructuring that led to the emergence of new capital in Anatolia. Increase in production and capital accumulation in private hands - due to a decreasing state role in economy - created a new elite. This is how the new and different generation of new elites with green (Islamic) capital appeared in Anatolia.¹¹ The new religious elite distinguished itself with certain characteristics that are not shared by its already established counterparts. Some of their characteristics - related to economic behavior - are being loyal to religious values as well as being open to change, high degree of economic rationality, accumulating capital by using their own sources (acquiring loans from relatives, groups they belong to etc.), being pro-market economy rather than supporting state interventionism, mostly owning SMEs, and having “an outward looking economic philosophy” that focuses on international competition.¹² Some scholars call this new type of elite “Anatolian tigers”.

Today, the AKP government is claimed to be in cooperation with these new elites. The Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association (MÜSİAD), founded by small and medium - scale, religious Anatolian industrialists, has been one of the important supporters of the AKP rule. The government has so far indirectly helped this group of industrialists by turning a blind eye to their informal sector. AKP turned its head to other way when they did not regularly pay their taxes or did not provide social security and health benefits to their workers.¹³ This way, AKP has contributed to the strengthening of the “counter-elite”.¹⁴

According to the German sociologist Max Weber, teachings of Protestant ethic (particularly of Calvinism) was the force behind the birth of capitalism in Northern

¹¹ Demir, Omer, Acar, Mustafa and Toprak, Metin, *Anatolian Tigers or Islamic Capital: Prospects and Challenges*, Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.40, No.6, pp. 168 – 169, 2004

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Pamuk, Sevket, *Globalization, industrialization and changing politics in Turkey*, New Perspectives on Turkey, No. 38, pp. 271 – 272, 2008

¹⁴ Onis, Ziya, *Globalization and Party Transformation: Turkey’s Justice and Development Party in Perspective*, in P. Burnell (eds) *Globalizing Democracy: Party Politics in Emerging Democracies* (London, Routledge) pp 1-27, 2006

Europe. According to Protestant ethic, the believers should prove their devotion by hard work. Very basically, the Calvinists proved their devotion with their work ethic and by investing their gains (as well as giving to charity). Thus, they led to accumulation of wealth, development of trade and eventually the development of capitalism.¹⁵

A report published by European Stability Initiative (ESI) in 2005 has claimed that the work ethic of the Calvinists is now adopted by the traditional Anatolians who have displayed a quick industrial growth. The report thus developed a new concept called “Islamic Calvinism”. It is suggested that “a new cultural outlook that embraces hard work, entrepreneurship and development” has led to a rise of formerly rural societies in Central Anatolia as industrial “tigers”.¹⁶ The report also mentions that considerable number of people in Anatolia has embraced the idea. The businessmen refer to Calvinism and Protestant ethic while talking about the success of their work.¹⁷

Sociologist Hakan Yavuz contributes to the idea by pointing out the teachings of the Nur Movement¹⁸ as one of the strong bases for creation of Islamic Calvinism. He claims that Nur Movement’s principles, which emphasize studying, and employing in Western science and technology, mobilized Muslims and encouraged them towards adopting a pro-active role in economy and society.¹⁹

Nevertheless, there are interconnected problems with the “Anatolian tigers” claim and the “Islamic Calvinism” claim. First of all, the definition of “Anatolian tigers” - compared to the Asian Tigers - is misleading. According to Sevket Pamuk, “tiger” comparison is exaggerated since growth and industrialization in Turkey have not been as rapid as in the Asian economies.²⁰ The ESI report that talks about the rise of economy in Anatolia is a bit too optimistic in this respect. It is therefore odd to

¹⁵ <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WEBER/cover.html>

¹⁶ European Stability Initiative, Islamic Calvinists: Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia, unpublished project report, 2005

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Aras, Bulent and Caha, Omer, Fetullah Gulen and His Liberal “Turkish Islam” Movement, Middle East Review of International Affairs, Vol. 4, No. 4, 2000

¹⁹ European Stability Initiative, Islamic Calvinists: Change and Conservatism in Central Anatolia, unpublished project report, 2005

²⁰ Pamuk, Sevket, Globalization, industrialization and changing politics in Turkey, New Perspectives on Turkey, 38, pp. 269, 2008

compare the Calvinists that paved a way to a new economic and social system with the traditional, small-scale Anatolian industrialists that contributed to a not so great growth of a single country.

It is true that recently emerging Central Anatolian industrial centers have done better (between 1992-2001) than the already established industrial centers in terms of providing employment and in value added and labor productivity growths. However, the higher rate of growth is not due to modified beliefs as claimed by ESI, but due to some comparative advantages the regions had. The most important of these comparative advantages was the low wages. Unlike the already established urban industrial centers, the emerging centers were able to employ workers with low wages and with very little or no social security or health benefits.²¹ Another advantage they had was the remittances they received from the Turkish citizens working in the European countries. The sources SMEs received from their traditional relatives from abroad were a notable source of capital.²² Moreover, the allowance of interest-free special financial corporations was another important contributor to Islamic capital's growth, since Islam forbids interests. These corporations attracted the savings of religious people who do not work with other banks due to their religious beliefs about taking interests. Thus, interest-free corporations took advantage of a new fund that has not been accumulated before. With the new funds, corporations contributed to the development of religious business cycles - which do take loans from banks due to religious beliefs - by providing them with funds. Moreover, since Anatolian SMEs usually borrowed from these corporations, they were not affected by the 2001 crisis that had a negative effect on banking sector. On top of all this, intra-community solidarity within Islamic sects and organizations created additional cooperation between religious businessmen.²³

Finally, Pamuk alleges that to portray a total success story, the performance of the Central Anatolian companies should continue in the years to come. The new industrial regions should not depend on their "hard work ethic". They should focus on

²¹ Ibid. pp.270

²² Demir, Omer, Acar, Mustafa and Toprak, Metin, *Anatolian Tigers or Islamic Capital: Prospects and Challenges*, Middle Eastern Studies, Vol.40, pp. 170, 2004

²³ Ibid. pp. 171

producing goods with higher values, increasing labor productivity and hiring better educated workers if they want to have greater growth.²⁴

According to Pamuk, the rise of the Central Anatolian cities is a typical example of “industrial capitalism emerging in predominantly rural and merchant society”.²⁵ Therefore considering the above-mentioned advantages and the yields of liberalization during the 1980s, there is no reason to look for other reasons for the rise of new industrial centers in Anatolia.

It is very important to underline the fact that the intra-community business ties praised by the ESI report cannot claim to have very positive outcomes for the society. We should consider that these religion-affiliated communities and organizations, such as the Nur Movement, probably have either excluded people who do not share the same values with them or were forced to join them. In that sense, if there is any role of religion in terms of strengthening cooperation in business in Anatolia, it was not positive after all.

Finally, the only suggestion that can be made as to why Islamic Calvinism label was put forward and embraced by the Anatolian elite is the fact that there is a need for legitimization for moneymaking. Demir, Acar and Toprak say that moneymaking needs legitimacy for the Anatolian economic elite since moneymaking as the ultimate natural goal of the businessmen has not been internalized in Turkey.²⁶

Europeanization: democratization or islamization?

Pointedly enough during the last decade and more specifically simultaneously with the advent of AKP on power many scholars observed an emerging debate around the Europeanization process of Turkish Republic and the final destination of that journey. The tormented saga of Turkey – EU relations is likely to continue in the near future and as a consequence there are many different points of view varying from democratization to islamization of Turkey.

²⁴ Pamuk, Sevket, Globalization, industrialization and changing politics in Turkey, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 38, pp. 270, 2008

²⁵ Ibid. pp.271

²⁶ Demir, Omer, Acar, Mustafa and Toprak, Metin, “Anatolian Tigers or Islamic Capital: Prospects and Challenges”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.40, pp. 175, 2004

It is really easy to sail with the populist wind supporting the secular and military establishment's argument about the country's creeping islamization. In light of the above and notwithstanding recurrently made statements by the incumbent party about its commitment to the founding principles of the Republic and its well – rounded schedule of reforms, military and bureaucratic complex insists that the AKP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan dissimulates and that there is a hidden agenda to Islamize the country. Furthermore, they maintain that the government cannot have quit of its Islamist past and worldview within a few years.²⁷ In other words, the secular – bureaucratic elite does not believe AKP leader's repeated statements that the party has transformed into a conservative, democratic party and that he has now abandoned the Islamism of his youth, seeing the EU embrace of the AKP as an orchestrated power grab to threaten their well – established position and curb their powers and prerogatives.

But before trying to examine AKP's camp it should not escape our detection the stance that secular Turkish state adopted during precedent decades. It would not be unrealistic to say that the deep state strengthened the power of Sunni Islam. The fact that the Kemalist elite opposed religion did not imply lack of state interest in the use of religion for political expediencies. Sunni Islam acted as a glue keeping together centrifugal forces and thus forging the one and only Turkish national identity. Halil M. Karaveli writes: *“Although the Kemalist revolution dismantled the power of religion over law and – initially – over education, it nevertheless implicitly postulated that Islam was going to be an integral part of the national identity that was constructed. The nominally secularist Turkish state has built more mosques than any other state in the Muslim world, relentlessly expanded the scope of religious education since the 1970's, and has always privileged conservative Sunni Islam as a de facto state religion, promoted by the state directorate of religious affairs, at the expense of the Alevi creed.”*²⁸

Thus the accusations that the head of government and the President of Turkish Republic – Abdullah Gul – confront periodically and according to which these two and many members of the AKP party were communicants of religious education during their school age are not very much sound and stable since the Republican

²⁷ Turkey and Europe: The Way Ahead, Crisis Group Europe Report, No 184, 17 August 2007, pp. 21

²⁸ Halil M. Karaveli, An Unfulfilled Promise of Enlightenment: Kemalism and its Liberal Critics, Turkish Studies, Vol.11, No.1, March 2010, pp. 97

People's Party, with the policies that followed during the years of its domination, contributed – maybe unintentionally but the result is same – to the creation of the alleged present time threat of islamization.

On the other hand, the tremendous shift made by the AKP, transforming it from a traditional Islam - rooted party into an ardent supporter of Turkey's EU integration, should not be interpreted one-sidedly. Of course, there is no denying the fact that AKP with its subtle maneuvers managed to challenge the monopoly which the Kemalist elite enjoyed as the representative of the Western value system. Nevertheless, the AKP shows selective determination in applying generally accepted liberal principles.

First of all, many people argue that the political ferment that took place and affected so effectively political Islam in Turkey was not desirable but imperative. After the 1997 “soft” coup and because: a) of the omnipotent / omnipresent military, b) of the absence of grounds of any islamization program able to win hearts and minds, it became explicit that any aspiration about the implementation of the Islamic law was absolutely groundless. Consequently, a transformation was more than necessary.

In addition, in terms of the headscarf issue, even though the government uses an apparently different rhetoric than that of its “antecessors”, this, however, by no means implies that it lost its interest in issues of religious freedom. According to Ioannis N. Grigoriadis the AKP – era is characterized by: *“reference to the idea of ‘universal human rights’ embodied in international human rights conventions, and Islamic law was no more seen as the sole manifestation of justice. The right to education, the principle of non-discrimination, the freedom of religion as protected by the ECHR and other international human rights treaties were quoted in defence of the right of women to wear the headscarf. Even the solution suggested for the problem, based on a ‘social consensus’, was borrowed from Western liberal thought.”*²⁹ Regardless of the will of its voters, the AKP government chose not to escalate relationships with the Kemalist establishment shunning bring up for discussion the headscarf issue and waiting for the decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Unfortunately, the ECHR's decision did not help the materialization of their strategy.

²⁹ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, Islam and Democratization in Turkey: secularism and trust in a divided society, Democratization, Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 1202, December 2009

AKP's stance becomes even more problematic when it comes to the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Under its rule, the Directorate increased substantially its budget while there was also an expansion of its activities weakening the basic principle of secularism since Directorate's discriminatory policies at the expense of other religious groups concluded to underpin Sunni Islam. Human rights organizations, in an effort to armor secularism, put forward two possible solutions: a) exclusive control of the Directorate by the religious communities, b) state control of the Directorate where transparency ensures the proportional representation of all religious groups, as well as their proportionate access to the Directorate budgetary funds.³⁰ While these adjustments would have been greeted with open arms, the AKP government did not share the passion that had demonstrated in the case of free profession of the Islamic faith in public space.³¹ Thus, it is plausible for many people in Turkey to support that Erdogan's Sunni background exerts important influence on his decision – making, rendering partiality one of his disadvantages.

Despite the fact that it seems difficult to attempt to conclude on a situation that is deemed to develop greatly in the future, I think that islamization is not the case for Turkey. EU anchoring and the dynamic presence of new elites – benefited by EU / globalization – constitute the best kind of safety valves in order for country to take right steps to the right direction.

The Republicans: navigating between the deep state and Europe

In an attempt to give a first answer to the above-mentioned “dilemma” it seems necessary to have a closer look and follow the way of CHP focusing on its fundamental principles and also on the magnitude of influence that Kemalism had on the formation and further development of CHP.

It is easy to identify a certain paradox in the case of Turkey which is able to explain up to a great extent why Kemal Kilicdaroglu's party gives from time to time

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

mixed signals about the European Union. First of all, the CHP embodies Kemalism according to which Turkey could be characterized as national and nationalist but simultaneously western and secular, modern and progressive, state-centric and centralized. In addition, there is no attachment to old institutions, as for example the status of Islam, as the official religion. Consequently, it is perceptible that the Turkish army, which was the progenitor of CHP and constituted the most modernized institution of the Ottoman Empire, was actually the carrier of modernization and westernization. As a matter of fact, it is quite reasonable for the CHP to be influenced by its past.

But what happens when Turkey is to follow the EU's path? Why the power structure that till now overtly has been declaring its support to western orientation of the country, now steps back or, even worse, opposes this process? Moreover, the deep state and its loyal political representative – the CHP party –, despite the fact that they consider Turkey's accession as a fundamental prerequisite for the completion of a revolution which started some decades ago with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, both conceptualize the accession talks in a different way than that of EU's. They speculate that the strict implementation of reforms will have as a result the loss of their uniquely powerful voice in politics and their role as the ultimate guarantor of the political system. Thus it wouldn't be an exaggeration to maintain that the CHP obstructs the European way of Turkey. This exact statement was used on February of 2009 by Brussels. In particular, Brussels, giving as an example the party's opposition to the liberalization of Turkish law regarding the right of minorities, accused the CHP of affiliating a reactionary nationalism which unfortunately leads to a dead end. Onur Oymen (Vice President of CHP from November 5, 2003 to May 23, 2010) has a totally different point of view and argues that his party has always been in favor of Turkish membership adding that it is not their fault if Turkey's accession is often used by foreign politicians in an improper way, as an internal political matter in order to rally voters. The creation of negative climate abroad has serious impact on Turkish society which quite expectedly turns inwards and adopts cautious attitude towards Europe.³²

The main pillars upon which the CHP has built the hard core of its criticism are two. The first dimension is related to the stance that EU holds against Turkey, while

³² <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/96143.php>

the second one has to do with the drawing and making of EU policy on behalf of the AKP which first came to power nationally in November 2002 - under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan who managed to produce two consecutive electorate victories, increasing his popular party and defeating the powerful Turkish army, when the army opposed the election of Abdullah Gul as the 11th President of Turkey – remaining still in office.

In other words, even though Kemal Kilicdaroglu's party expresses its willingness for Turkey to join the EU, at the same time, it doesn't hesitate to criticize both sides – the AKP and the EU – arguing that, with their practices and decisions, they actually diminish the country's chances to obtain full membership. In what has to do with the dissent against governmental EU policy, the CHP initially argues that Recep Tayyip Erdogan pretends that it is reasonable and maybe helpful to liberalize the fundamental principle of the Turkish Republic (secularism) due to the process of EU harmonization, and goes even further trying to favor the prevalence of Islam over society. Secondly, the eagerness of the AKP for Turkey to join the EU family is so great that doesn't often allow an in – depth observation of the EU documents, putting thus interests of crucial importance at stake.³³

More specifically the primary concerns of CHP are linked in a direct way with the EU Commission's Progress Report and particularly with the structure of the document and the included terms which according to the official view of the party are making discriminations at Turkey's detriment.

For instance, the expression of an “open – ended” process (Brussels, Summit on December 17, 2004) and the likelihood of suspension of negotiations was interpreted by the main opposition party as a message that Turkish – EU accession talks might result in a special status rather than a full membership. Furthermore, the European planning not to provide Turkey with the “right of free movement of the people” and “agricultural guarantee funds” insinuated a special, new and absolutely different set of standards for the case of Turkey.³⁴ More analytically, the clause on “*the possibility of permanent safeguards on full labor mobility following Turkey's accession to the EU*”

³³ S.B. Gulmez, “The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party: An inquiry on the opposition and Euro-scepticism in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol.9, 2008, pp. 423-36

³⁴ “Kisitlamalar Kalici mi degil mi?” *Milliyet*, December 19, 2004

as a full member”³⁵ was followed by a harsh criticism made even by the ardent devotees of Turkey’s EU membership, let alone the CHP deputies. By and large, a temporary safeguard on labor mobility – exactly as the seven year transition period on the newcomers of Eastern Europe - was justifiable, but the imposition of a permanent safeguard was illegitimate, ranking Turkey in a secluded sub-category. Additionally, the term “minority” constituted another battlefield as Deniz Baykal (former leader of the CHP) characterized the whole issue as unacceptable. Supporting his argument to the “Ottoman past” and the imperial legacy that was bequeathed to the Republic of Turkey, maintained that the recognition of minorities is just unattainable.³⁶ Accordingly, the Kemalist elite (i.e. the military), which finds its political representation and expression mostly through the CHP, articulated serious concerns as some aspects of the EU accession procedure – such as the issue of “religious and ethnic minorities in Turkey”, which is consistently mentioned in the reports prepared by the European Commission and the European Parliament – are threatening the concrete character and the identity of the state.³⁷

Adding to that, another point of contention concerning the recommendation document of the Commission’s Progress Report, which gave rise to intense worries on the part of CHP, was the capacity of the EU to absorb a new member state like Turkey – which doesn’t belong to the Christendom and has such a large population with a poor human rights record. The absorption capacity could be a very useful tool in order to put a break or even a final stop to the Turkish candidacy, regardless of the fact that the criteria are fulfilled. Baykal’s argumentation makes a point of an obvious unfairness as the absorption capacity comes in full contradiction with the provisions of the Helsinki Summit.³⁸

Moreover the French and Dutch referendum on the EU constitution in the spring of 2005 could also be interpreted by the CHP as a signal conveying a negative message about the European future of Turkey. Discrimination is also discerned

³⁵ For a good discussion of the negotiating framework and its limitations from a Turkish point of view, see Kemal Kirisci, “The December 2004 European Council Decision on Turkey: Is it a Historic Turning Point?” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 4, December 2004

³⁶ Onur Oymen’s speech in the seminar, “Turkey and the European Union”, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Ankara, November 1, 2004

³⁷ “Turkish Chief of Staff Buyukanit’s Speech,” *Hurriyet*, April 12, 2007

³⁸ Oymen, speech in EU seminar, Union of Turkish Parliamentarians

according to CHP officials since the referendum was not the case in the accession procedures of Bulgaria and Romania.³⁹

Last but not least, another concern of Kilicdaroglu's party relating to the Progress Report has to do with the issue of water in the Middle East. EU declares: "*A key issue in the region is access to water for development and irrigation. Water in Middle East will increasingly become a strategic issue in the years to come, and with Turkey's accession, one could expect international management of water resources and infrastructures to become a major issue.*"⁴⁰ The above statement came to fuel CHP's anxieties about international management and intervention in the specific region which might result in the undesirable pull off sovereignty.⁴¹ Besides, in the party program the country's full membership is encouraged only as much as Turkish interests are ensured.

Indicatively they cite the articles 10 and 11 of the negotiating framework, because both hived CHP's arguments. In particular, the main opposition party maintains that, through article 10, the EU reveals its intentions to tie down Turkey with recommendations and resolutions which are not legally binding. In relation to article 11, CHP's position is that it constitutes a mere threat for Turkey as it implies the "revision" of Lausanne Treaty which is the backbone of the Turkish Republic.⁴²

In a more fundamental sense, immediately after the September 12 (2010) referendum, another confrontation field made its appearance. The CHP leader claims that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan avoids working on a new constitution, after the main opposition party's affirmation to AKP's proposition to start drafting a new constitution for the country. Kemal Kilicdaroglu claims that, despite Erdogan's proclamations that dialogue and consensus would be the fundamental principles during the process of making a new constitution and the eagerness for hard work on a new draft, a few days after the referendum, the AKP falls back alleging that the government should not devote time and political capital on a new constitution or establish a relevant commission before the forthcoming elections. Kemal Kilicdaroglu

³⁹ S.B. Gulmez, "The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party: An inquiry on the opposition and Euro-scepticism in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.9, 2008, pp. 423-36

⁴⁰ Oymen, speech in EU seminar, Union of Turkish Parliamentarians

⁴¹ S.B. Gulmez, "The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party: An inquiry on the opposition and Euro-scepticism in Turkey", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.9, 2008, pp. 423-36

⁴² Ibid.

supports that the Prime Minister's words and actions are at odds with each other as the change of mind Erdogan is displaying about quickly getting to work on the new constitution is because of his expectation that the CHP would object to such an initiative enforcing; thus his arguments according to which the CHP represents an anachronistic and retrogressive political expression of Turkey's political foreground.

More to the point, the opposition has claimed that the implications deriving from the amended article about the Constitutional Court will increase the power of the president, as he will be able to select the court members since he has on his side the parliamentary support for the time being. However, the devil is, as so often, in the details. In the original constitutional package the nominations from the different judicial bodies, three per constitutional court member, were to be put forward in a way where the members of the different judicial bodies could only vote for one candidate and where the candidates with most votes were nominated. The Constitutional Court, however, revoked this part of the package and the nominees are now to be elected through a procedure whereby all of the nominees put forward must have a majority of votes behind them in the judicial body that elects them. This should significantly reduce the fear of the president deliberately choosing members with political views other than the nominating body electing him.

Further criticisms have been raised toward changing the term for which a constitutional court member should serve, from "until the age of 65" to a period of twelve years. The current fifteen members, who continue serving, however may serve until they reach the age of 65, no matter how long they have previously served. Since nine of the current members are under the age of 60 this means that it will take at least five years until even a third of the new seventeen members of the Court are chosen according to the new procedure. Combined with the procedure whereby the nominees put forward will be reflecting the judicial bodies' political views, the reform can be presumed to be harmless but also less effective depending on which political standpoint one has.

The issue that has been of the highest concern to the opposition parties, the CHP in particular, is the restructuring of the High Council for Judges and Public Prosecutors (HSYK). This body was given important functions in the 1982 constitution that was the work of the military junta then in power. Following the old

constitutional structure, the appointment of higher judiciary staff was a closed system whereby the judicial bodies appointed the nominees for the HSYK and the HSYK appointed who would serve in the higher judicial bodies. The system has been under severe critique from the EU as well as from the Council of Europe. The judiciary of Turkey has been seen as too dependent of HSYK, since the High Council has the power to decide upon individual judges and prosecutors' future careers. The HSYK has often chosen to replace prosecutors who have put forward sensitive cases, notably involving the military, which is problematic especially since the HSYK decisions have not been subject to judicial review.

The overall conclusion one can draw from the above analysis is that the contradictable signals that the CHP sends from time to time can be read not only as the concern about the right serving and ensuring of vital national interests but also can be read as the apprehension of an inevitable change - Europeanization process – which will probably result to the impoverishment and marginalization of the main opposition party, since together with the Europeanization process, the strengthening of political Islam in Turkey is more than a fact.

Nevertheless, despite the adoption of the reform packages and the unprecedented amendment to fundamental rights and freedoms, many steps remain to be taken in order for the implementation of the reforms to reach at a desired level. Turkey's biggest problem is not at Brussels but at home. The absence of a healthy political environment seems to play a negative role that's why it is necessary more than ever to be understood that cooperation between the two parties – which entails the retreat of the conservative bureaucracy and the CHP's resistance to reform – will bring Turkey closer to its EU goal.

In lieu of conclusion – Is Kemalism dead?

Many people in Turkey and the West would probably answer yes since the country seems to distance itself from the basic principle of Kemalism – that Turkey should be secular and Western – and that, simultaneously, the AKP is socially and politically bringing the country in line with its Middle East neighbors.

The transformations in Turkish politics are obvious more than ever. Ergenekon trial constitutes an unparalleled case of Kemalist's purge from public institutions,

vouching not only for the dynamics of political Islam enabling it to clash with the old power structure, but also vouching for the commitment and determination for change. In parallel with the above, a developing religious bourgeoisie is starting to overpower in crucial sectors such as finance, manufacturing, energy and the media. In what has to do with foreign policy, Turkey makes an attempt of “rapprochement” with Syria and Iran and puts some distance between itself and Israel.

Nevertheless, a more careful observation reveals that the great majority of Erdogan’s policies are not contradictory to Kemalism. In reality, the great paradox of Turkey today is that the AKP – a conservative political party – reflects in the most credible way the identical vision that the founder of Turkish Republic had.

The version of military Kemalism has been the substructural concept of Turkish politics for many decades. A strictly defined group of military officials - with the support, contribution and cooperation of bureaucracy and juristocracy – perceived itself as the ultimate guardian of European values in their society. Unfortunately, the version of military Kemalism is nothing more than a distortion of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s original idea. In the beginning, Kemalists were convinced that the new state should be affiliated with European practices and standards. However, the real conditions and needs of Turks were dictating a different blend of policies. Thus, military officials embarked on a period of guardianship, during which the government would set the basic lines for transformation.

There was no intention to offer a leading role in this process to the armed forces. A justification to this is that Ataturk threw over his military tasks as soon as he became head of state (1923). The elite oversight over the country’s political and economic systems was to be temporary, answering to the demands of a specific time period and lasting only until people were able to keep up with the Western model. Afterwards, the guarantors of the regime would accept the adoption of modern, liberal economics, provide their citizens with even more rights and of course establish multi – party elections.

Unluckily, expectations had nothing to do with reality. With the advent of Ismet Inonu on power and his increasingly autocratic rule, civilian Kemalism deformed into military Kemalism seeing that Inonu relied on the military to apply his policies. It is generally acceptable that even after his presidency, the TAF remained the most

powerful actor in the existed power structure. The end of the Cold War called TAF for concocting a new doctrine and the creeping islamization of Turkish society offered the best environment for that kind of indoctrination. Correspondingly, in 1997, there was a “soft” military coup since the then elected government was supposed to follow an Islamic agenda. The military working in admirable cooperation with companions from the bureaucratic – judicial complex managed to decelerate the momentum that political Islam had gain. That deceleration was impermanent as many of the AKP’s choices comprise pivotal and conducive parts in consolidating Ataturk’s notion of Kemalism. The vagueness around Westernization is now replaced by the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession. Further development of the free market, improvement of minority rights, promotion of civilian control over the military, are some tangible indications that governmental efforts are to the right direction.

The rise of new economic elites – most of which are claimed to have very close relations with the current political leadership – actually fulfills Ataturk’s vision. These new economic elites, having an outward looking economic philosophy allowing them to see the benefits flowing from their country’s venture to join EU, no longer want a state, paternalistic behavior obstructive for their further enlargement and prosperity.

Instead of being solicitous about the AKP and its orientation, the West should welcome it. Undoubtedly, a democratic and stable Turkey with zero – problems foreign policy and without any guilt of its Islamic identity is the best choice not only for itself and its neighbors but for the EU as well. Not to mention the high importance that United States attaches to Turkey as a viable and successful example of the so – called “moderate Islam”. On the other way round, this does not predicate that the AKP is completely virtuous and spotless as there are many statements made by its leader which do not promote relaxation. To put it differently, the overall performance leaves much to be desired. At the same time, these new economic elites can secure that Turkey will keep on its way toward norms and standards set by Western democracies. This class, without forgetting its linkages with the AKP, will not share extremist policies that put at stake its economic interests and its optimistic perspectives for the future.

Taking all the above into serious consideration and after the sweeping package of constitutional reforms (September 2010) approved by a wide margin, a possible

scenario – as Guven Sak⁴³ cites – is to have a long pre – election period in view of the crucial parliamentary elections of June 2011. Unequivocally, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has the upper hand and probably will be the winner of the showdown. The wave of reforms will continue including constitutional amendment in order to establish presidential republic, enhancing the role and powers of the president. Finally, he will be candidate for presidency in 2012 walking on a bumpy road that started with his turbulent tenure as a mayor in Istanbul. That is why it would be better for the opposition to hail some essential points of the AKP’s political platform, such as market reform, civilian control of the military, and the extension of greater cultural rights to the Kurdish minority, instead of opposing uncritically and arguing that Kemalism is dead due to the emergence of political Islam. Their opponent is not political Islam but their anti – Western, leftist – nationalist interpretation of Kemalism.

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