



University of Macedonia
Department of Balkan Slavic and Oriental
Studies

Master's Degree

Supervisors: Nikolaos Zaikos, Konstantinos
Tsitselikis

Author: Koutsouras George (mpe17006)

Topic: Kemalist Ideology in Modern Turkey:
Is the secularist state in a process of
change?

Thessaloniki 2018

In the loving memory of my Asia Minor originated grandma, Despina.

To my Black Sea originated grandfather, Panagiotis.

Contents

Acknowledgements	Page 3
1. Prologue	Page 4
2. Transformation of the Ottoman Empire into modern Turkey	Page 6
a. Historical development	Page 6
b. Secularization reforms	Page 11
c. Kemal Ataturk's goal and vision for Turkey	Page 15
d. Kemalist Ideology. Basic characteristics.	Page 17
3. Rise of Political Islam in modern Turkey	Page 21
a. Prior to the appearance of political Islam	Page 21
b. The rise of Political Islam. Necmettin Erbakan	Page 25
c. Political Islam after the 1980 coup	Page 29
d. Political Islam. After the Post-Modern coup to Erdogan's Justice and Development Party	Page 36
4. AKP in power: First years	Page 41
5. Is the secular state in a process of change?	Page 47
a. Erdogan's authoritarian turn.	Page 48
b. Freedom of Press in Turkey	Page 52
c. Turkey and European Union. Is Turkey continuing EU rapprochement and reforms?	Page 55
d. Interference on personal lifestyles	Page 59
e. Diyanet and its importance	Page 65
f. Education and Educational policy during AKP's years	Page 69
g. Alevi community and their rights	Page 82
h. Does Erdogan have an Islamization agenda?	Page 88
6. Conclusions	Page 90
7. Literature	Page 93

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank professors Zaikos and Tsitselikis for their really useful help and comments that helped me complete this research. Stylianos Sotiriou, post-graduate researcher of the University of Macedonia is another person that I need to thank because of his really useful advice and encouragement that he provided me during my studying. Also, I would like to thank the whole teaching staff of the “Politics and Economics” master course because they were really helpful and provided me with the necessary skills and tools for the completion of this research. In addition, I also need to thank mister Paschalis Valsamidis, assistant professor in the department of Language, Literature and Civilization of the Black Sea Countries in the Dimokrition University of Thrace, for his really helpful advice that contributed to the completion of this dissertation. Last but not least, I seriously need to thank my friends, relatives and colleagues for their patience and support that have shown me while I was doing my master in the University of Macedonia.

1. Prologue

When we hear about a secular country, we immediately imagine a country that is modern, tolerant and accepting every ethnic or religious group without any discrimination. In that country, we can see people with different lifestyles, nationalities or even from different religions coexisting peacefully. State officials also don't develop policies that favor any particular group; all citizens are equal before the law and have the exact same treatment. Fine examples of such countries are Western European countries like Germany and the United Kingdom. On the contrary, when we discuss an Islamic country, in other words a country where the official and accepted lifestyle is the Islamic one, then immediately we imagine a country whose society is intolerant and doesn't accept a different lifestyle except the Islamic one, where the Saria Law is everything. Of course, in these states, women have no rights and are like men's possession.

Turkey though is a different case, almost unique. There the official religion is Islam but is a completely different country that has no relation with Islamic countries like Iran or Pakistan. For ages people, including women, dress modernly, women are free to follow a profession, don't have to obey their men and can dress in the way they want and their rights are respected in general. In addition, Turkey participates in the Eurovision singing contest and their women participate in worldwide beauty contests. In other words, at a first glance, it looks like Turkey is a modern country similar to the Western ones. The Western World too believed that Turkey is different than the other countries where the official state religion is Islam.

This difference is thanks to one man, Mustafa Kemal, the one known as Atatürk. After the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, he became the dominant man in the Turkish political scene and proceeded to reform Turkey according to his visions. His reforms transformed the country completely, making it a secular one, where religion is less important and even suppressed and where modernity similar to the Western World is the ideal example to follow.

The big question here though is if these changes got accepted by the population. Did Turkish society accept secularizing reforms or is there a part of the society that feels that their rights are repressed and that they cannot live according to the way they wish? In other words, did a part of the society feel alienated by these changes, felt repressed and wanted to organize politically and change what they feel is wrong by Islamizing the society?

The answer to this question is that yes, some people in Turkey got mobilized and gave rise to the Political Islam, wanting to increase the importance of the Islamic religion in Turkish society. Various Islamic Parties have appeared, starting from 1960

but they always failed to bring the changes they wanted in the society. Always, due to interference from military officers and the Kemalist establishment, Islamic parties got banned and dissolved because Kemalists were afraid of their increasing influence that would possibly undermine secularism in Turkey and change the form of the state that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created.

The last 15 years, a new political party appeared in Turkish political field: The Justice and Development Party, which was founded by former Political Islam supporters. Its officials claimed that they are moderate and they don't want to undermine secularism but to correct it, by creating a state where both the pious and the less pious and even the atheists can coexist. In other words, they just wanted to stop the repression of the more conservative and pious part of the society. Their policies follow that direction but, at the same time, AKP politicians state that Islamization of the society, which is contrary to what Kemal Atatürk wanted for Turkey, isn't a part of their agenda. Nevertheless, the secular part of the society feel threatened by AKP policies and accuse them that they want to make Turkey an Islamic state, where the society would be Islamic. Is it so?

The goal of this current research is to try to give an answer to this question. Does Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey's powerful man, have an Islamization agenda? Is the Turkish society changing towards an Islamic one? In order to answer to this question, first, in the first chapter of this dissertation, how the Ottoman Empire transformed into a secular state is explained. What happened, what were the reforms and, most importantly, what was Atatürk's way of thinking that resulted in these major changes. In the latter parts, how Political Islam appeared and the political events that followed and gave rise to the Justice and Development Party are analyzed. In other words, the approach is a historic one, as the focus is on explaining how and why the Turkish society voted for Islamic actors. In the last part, the focus is on Erdoğan, Turkey's current President, and his policies. Justice and Development Party's policies are reviewed regarding the religion and whether there is an Islamization policy of the society is the real objective. Some of the topics that are assessed are if they try to impose the Islamic lifestyle on the Turkish population in general, their education policy and if there are changes in the education system that aim to make the children conservative Muslims, the government's stance towards the Diyanet, which is the state institution that administers mosques, informs society about Islam and is responsible for Islamic education and AKP's stance towards the Alevi, which is the largest religious group in Turkey. If government officials acknowledge Alevi's rights and formulated policies that integrate them into the society, then that means that AKP kept their word and have started to deliver a secular, tolerant society. By assessing the topics above, an answer will be given about secularism, if it withdraws and if AKP and Erdoğan attempt to Islamize the society in general.

2. Transformation of the Ottoman Empire into modern Turkey

a. Historical development

The great leading and military skills of Mustafa Kemal, who would be later named Atatürk, resulted in the military victory of August- September 1922. As a result, he had been granted the title of Gazi and he was the dominant one in the political game. (ZÜRCHER, 2010 , p. 143), (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 229) With the end of war with the Greeks and Western Allies out of the way two political forces remained in Turkey: Grand National Assembly, which had a nationalist character and was enjoying people's support due to military victories and the Sultan. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 257) These two dominant forces' final clash started when the Allied forces, who still recognized Sultan's regime in Istanbul, invited both of them to the Lausanne peace conference. This twofold invitation worried Mustafa Kemal because it could lead to a divided Turkish authority, something that he really wished to avoid. This is why he decided to get rid of the throne and the political power held by the Sultan. Of course, this wasn't an easy task because many, some of them being Kemal's closest associates, were still loyal to the Sultanate. Nevertheless, Mustafa Kemal has reached his decision: The sultanate had to be abolished and the Sultanate and the Caliphate had to be separated. According to his vision, there would be no Sultan, just an Ottoman prince that he would hold the title of Caliph with religious and no political powers. His aim was twofold: On the one hand the personal autocracy of the Sultan would end and on the other hand the opposition would be disarmed and he would remain the dominant one in the political life of Turkey. (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 257-258)

On 31 of October Kemal put his proposals to a meeting of the association for the Defense of Rights. The following day they were submitted to the Grand National Assembly. Long and heated discussions took place. At first, many Assembly members objected to the revolutionary changes that Kemal proposed and raised all kinds of legal and theological questions. Those who disagreed with the radical changes that Kemal Atatürk proposed couldn't even think about an alternative to a constitutional monarchy under the Ottoman dynasty, a tradition that lasted for around 500 years. But some of those conservatives voted for the abolition of the Sultanate and they agreed because they assumed that the caliph would remain the spiritual leader and president of the assembly, in essence remain the one in power. Also, they believed that he would make sure that the holy laws and principles of sharia, which is the legal code of Islam, would not be violated. Kemal Atatürk defended, explained his views and argued in favor of them and in the end he managed to dominate the

assembly. Grand National Assembly decided for the abolition of the Caliphate. (Lewis, 1974, p. 88), (LEWIS, 2001, p. 258), (Ahmad, 1993, p. 52)

The resolution that passed on 1 November 1922 contains two articles. According to the first article, the form of government in Istanbul resting on the sovereignty of an individual has ceased to exist and passed into history. The second article recognized that the Caliphate belonged to the Ottoman house but made clear that the former rested on the Turkish state and that the Caliph would be chosen among the members of the Ottoman house by the National Grand Assembly. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 259) Mehmet VI Vahideddin, the last Sultan, didn't wait for the Assembly's final decision. On 17 November he had slipped out of the palace, boarded a British warship and fled to Malta. Because of this development, Grand National Assembly declared him deposed and elected his cousin, Abdulmecid, as Caliph. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 259)

Mustafa Kemal in 6 December 1922 announced to the press the creation of a new party, its name was People's Party and invited intellectuals and educated people to exchange opinions about the new country. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 259) This party was the only one active inside the Grand National Assembly but there were some other groups and people that they didn't belong to it. (Lewis, 1974, p. 89) Those who supported Kemal and shared his ideas were a minority in the Assembly in 1923. However, the prestige that Kemal held at the time because of his great victories gave the "Kemalists" a great advantage. When he and his supporters understood that their political opponents inside the Assembly, mainly Islamists and liberal Westerners, were trying to persuade the other members to restore the Sultanate in a new form they acted quickly and had the Assembly dissolve, an event that led to elections. They were held in June and gave the Kemalists a slim majority. The new chamber began its works on 11 August and Mustafa Kemal was elected president of the Assembly. On 23 August 1923 the New Assembly ratified the Treaty of Lausanne and, as a result, this event led to the international recognition of the new state. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 53) Ratification of this Treaty was the first important political act of the newly elected Assembly. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 260)

In October 1923, Ismet (Inönü), who was to become soon Prime Minister and later succeed Mustafa Kemal as president of the country, had a revolutionary proposal: To make Ankara the seat of the government of the new Turkish state. The party accepted his proposal and later was voted by the Assembly. This was of course a major political defeat for the more conservative ones and a blow to their morale since for them Istanbul was the center of the old Sultanate. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 53) The fact that Kemal refused to visit Istanbul (he did so later, in 1928) shows the bitterness that existed between Kemalists and conservatives. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 54) This shift had an important symbolic meaning: The fact that Turkey broke with its

past and turns a new page starting anew. (Lewis, 1974, p. 89) In fact, the new state that got rid of its past wasn't based on a dynasty, an empire or on an Islamic faith but on the nation, which was based in Ankara, the heart of the Turkish homeland. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 261)

The next change that Kemal had in mind was the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. The abolition of the Sultanate and the continuation of a separate Caliphate had created an ambiguity in the headship of the state which, according to Kemal, was dangerous. Many people, many of them were being members of the Assembly, still considered the Caliph to be the legitimate sovereign and head of the state despite the recent changes brought. So, he decided to act. At the beginning of October rumors began to circulate that Kemal was planning to proclaim a Republic, which resulted in impassioned discussion. At the end of October Kemal came to the Chamber and proposed some Constitutional amendments which, according to him, would remove the current ambiguities in Turkey's political system. In the draft amendment it was clearly stated that the form of government of Turkey is a republic, the President is elected from the Grand National Assembly members and is the head of the state. Also, according to the draft, Prime Minister is being appointed by the President from the Grand National Assembly members. In addition, all the other ministers are chosen by the Prime Minister among the other GNA members. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 261), (Lewis, 1974, p. 91)

After many hours of heated discussions and debate, the resolution was carried with 158 among 287 members voting yes. Also, Mustafa Kemal was elected the first President of the Republic. He, in turn, appointed Ismet Inonu as his first Prime Minister. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 262)

Those who voted against the proclamation of the Republic were mostly conservative people that felt that it would sever the links of the Turkish people with their Islamic and Imperial past as well as the whole Muslim world. They continued to view the Caliph and the Caliphate as a counter-force to the President and the new Republic. So, these forces of tradition would gather around the Caliph. Mustafa Kemal was well aware of this possible development and decided to act by breaking that link of the Caliphate with the past and with Islam. He and his supporters knew that as long as The Caliphate and the traditional Islamic institutions continued to exist the supporters of the old regime would always be able to oppose them and undermine their efforts to reform Turkey. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 263), (Ahmad, 1993, p. 54)

On 1 March 1924 Mustafa Kemal, in the Assembly, emphasized three main points: The need to safeguard and stabilize the Republic, the creation of a unified system of education and the need to "cleanse and elevate the Islamic faith by rescuing it from the position of a political instrument, to which it has been for

centuries.” The meaning of his third point was explained the following day. So, Kemal’s proposals were discussed in the Assembly and they reached a decision which was announced on 3 March 1924. They decided the deposition of the Caliph, the abolition of the Caliphate and the banishment of all Ottoman house members from Turkish territory. The next day the last Caliph, Abulmecid, was exiled. The abolition of the Caliphate was Kemal’s first open assault against the Islamic Orthodoxy and its supporters. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 264)

Initially, Kemalists didn’t want to abolish the Caliphate. Instead, they wished to just neutralize Islam politically and accommodate it. But, when they realized that conservatives would be a danger to their plans they decided to act and moved on with the abolition of Caliphate. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 54)

Kemal and his people didn’t stop with the abolition but they also stripped the power of ulemas. (They were the authorized defenders of the Islamic faith) Despite their authority being greatly reduced since the begging of the Ottoman reforms, they retained great power and influence. Actually, they were controlling a large part of the educational facilities as well as the code they administered was the dominant one regarding family and personal matters. After the disappearance of the Sultanate they remained the only ones in Turkey that had the authority to challenge the new regime of Mustafa Kemal. The latter didn’t want them hinder his revolutionary work. So, he abolished the ancient office of Seyh-ul-Islam and the Ministry of Seriat. Also, he closed the religious schools and colleges and he abolished the Seriat courts in which judges were taking decisions based on the Holy Law of Islam. The new order was confirmed in the new, republican constitution, adopted by the Grand National Assembly on 20 April 1924. In the same constitution the legislative authority of the Assembly was confirmed. In addition, according to the constitution, judicial function would be reserved for independent courts, acting in the name of the nation and not religious ones. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 265)

According to the new constitution, power is derived by the Big National Assembly which expressed the Nation’s will. Decisions would be reached by the majority of the Grand National Assembly members. Those who didn’t vote yes had to accept the majority’s decision though. In essence, this meant that the result of each voting procedure was decisive and couldn’t be changed. In particular, government just announced and explained their decisions. Sometimes, if the matter discussed wasn’t too sensitive, government changed or amended their decisions but in general, government officials did whatever they wished without opposition. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 242) The Constitution comprised 105 articles and a unicameral parliament with a mixed system, partly presidential and partly parliamentary was established. It also enshrined fundamental rights of citizens.

The Constitution's articles regarding the state and Islam relations didn't remain the same through the years, reflecting the big changes in Islam's role for the Turkish nationalism. Initially, Islam was considered to be the official religion of the republic of Turkey and an important part of the Turkish national identity. Despite this fact, during the next years, Turkey was subjected to a top-down secularization process that changed society completely. The aim of the authorities, mainly Mustafa Kemal, was to modernize the country. So, Islam in public affairs was decreasing gradually because of these changes and the religion was rejected as a component of national identity. This process began before the promulgation of the new Constitution on 1924 with the abolishment of the Caliphate and the Ministry of Religious affairs. (Saleem, 2017, p. 38)

Nevertheless, despite these changes, Islam wasn't rejected by the Constitution. In the Article 2 stated:

The religion of the Turkish state is Islam. The official language is Turkish. The seat of government is Ankara.

As Mustafa Kemal himself stated, his goal was to decrease Islam's role and modernize the country, not to ban the practice of the Islamic religion. In addition, besides the second article, there were other references to Islam too in the Constitution. For instance, in article 26 is stated that the Grand National Assembly would execute the Shariah itself and not religious scholars. Also, the oath of the Assembly members started with "I swear to God". Therefore, Islam may be less important for the new Turkish Republic but it remains an important part of Turkish society and everyday life. (Saleem, 2017, p. 39)

On the 8th of February 1925 a Kurdish revolution erupted. Because of this sudden crisis, a new law was voted that aimed to stabilize the regime and Turkey in general. This law, which is called the Law for the Maintenance of Order, gave the government superpowers. In practice, Kemalists were able to do whatever they pleased without any opposition. Mustafa Kemal and his people took advantage of these increased powers in order to move on with the radical reforms for the country that they had in mind. Should this law didn't give them this authority their work would be much harder because opposing political forces and the mass people would surely protest to these reforms they had in mind. So, unchallenged and unopposed by anyone, Mustafa Kemal, Ismet Inonu and his other supporters, over the next years, changed the image of Turkey by introducing many reforms and producing legislation that altered the legal face of Turkey. Their goal, as stated earlier, was to create a modern and secular country. (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 58, 62)

b. Secularization reforms

Republican People's Party, the party that Mustafa Kemal controlled, was the dominant one in the Turkish political life. Kemalists were controlling everything in the country and had the authority to do whatever they wished. So, they took advantage of the increased powers they were given and proceeded reforming the country.

As stated in previous pages, the first secular reforms were the abolition of Sultanate, Ministry of Seriat and Caliphate and the stripping of power of Ulemas and Seyh-ul-Islam. In their place, two new institutions were found in 1924, the Diyanet işleri müdürlüğü (Presidency of Religious Affairs) and Evkaf ümüm müdürlüğü (Directorate-General of Pious Foundations). The head of Presidency of Religious Affairs was nominated by the Prime Minister and the duties of this institution were the administration of mosques, the appointment and the dismissal of imams and other religious staff the supervision of the muftis in general. The Directorate of the Pious Foundations was responsible for the administration of the pious foundations that had been taken over by the state. Suffice it to say, the formation of new religious organizations is now forbidden. These changes are really important because they show the aim of Republican People's Party. They wished to gain control of the religion and not just abolish it by making it illegal. That's why they found two new institutions controlled by the state instead of just abolishing the older ones. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 254), (LEWIS, 2001, p. 413)

Reformers paid special attention to education. Their goal was for an education system that would create a modern and secular society as they believed that education is the means in order to achieve this goal. That way, Turkey will become a part of the modern, civilized world. In 1924, with the new Law of Unification of Instruction, education becomes unified, and is now completely secular. This means that that there isn't a dichotomy between religious and secular education. Of course, there aren't separate institutions for providing secular or religious education and the multiplicity of educational authority among Muslims, non-Muslims and foreigners is no more. Medrese schools and religious colleges are abolished and, according to the new law, are forbidden. In their place, new religious schools are found, the Imam Hatips, whose purpose was the training of preachers and imams as well as one new Theological Department in Istanbul's University. Also, in 1928, after the second article that claimed that the official state religion is Islam was deleted from the Constitutions, classes about Islamic religion were dropped from schools. Teaching of the Arabic and Persian language also stops, the aim now is to focus on the national language, Turkish. Now, according to the new educational policy, all children have to receive secular education. Suffice it to say, education now is controlled by the government and religious officials have no influence regarding

education. (Lewis, 1974, p. 94), . (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 254), (BERKES, 1998, pp. 476-477), (Akpınar, 2007, p. 161)

Because of the secularizing reforms of 1924, Ulemas were stripped of their authority and influence. But they weren't the only ones that could pose a threat to Mustafa Kemal's plans. These changes didn't affect the dervishes at all. The latter remained part of the people and they had great influence and prestige. So, they had the potential to oppose Kemal's plans, as in the past they were able to penetrate into the apparatus of government and instigate religious or social revolt. (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 406,409) As a result, Kemal was quick to act. During the Independence tribunal that took place on 29 June 1925, immediately after the Kurdish revolt, along with the passing of death sentence to the leaders of the revolution the judgment ordered the closing of the dervish convents in Kurdistan. This was the first blow that dervishes suffered from the regime. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 410) Soon, Kemal stripped them of their influence. After a series of speeches that took place in the August of 1925, during which Kemal criticized the superstitions, beliefs and practices of dervishes, on the 1st of September he announced a series of new decrees. By these decrees, which were confirmed by laws voted from the Assembly, the dervish brotherhoods are dissolved and banned, their assets impounded, their convents and sanctuaries closed and their prayer meetings and ceremonies prohibited. Therefore, as Mustafa Kemal envisioned, Turkey is now free of feyhs, dervishes, dedes, felebis, habas, emirs, fortune-tellers, magicians and witch doctors as well as their services and practices. Of course, many disagreed and resisted to these new secularizing measures but Mustafa Kemal's and his Party's decisions were absolute. In some regions dervishes and other religious people tried to mobilize the public against the reforms and the regime but they were swiftly punished. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 411)

The next step towards secularization and modernization was the ban of traditional Islamic and religious clothing. First, Mustafa Kemal, in a series of speeches, he attacked these traditional Islamic garments, calling them wasteful, uncomfortable, and, above all, barbarous-unworthy of a civilized people. Then, he proceeded with the ban. On 2nd of September, with a new decree he banned the fez and religious garments and insignia for persons not holding a religious office. Instead, civil servants had to start wearing the costume, which is 'common to the civilized nations of the world'. These religious clothes can now be worn only inside mosques and religious sites. Initially, ordinary citizens were free to dress as they wished but on 25th of November a new law obliged everyone to start wearing the costume and the hat. Suffice it to say, Kemal's speeches contributed to the disappearance of the veil in big cities. Many people believe that he outlawed it but he never did. Religious garments were considered to be an Ottoman symbol and that is precisely why Kemal wanted their abolition. In addition, according to the leader of the Republican People's Party, banning of religious garments symbolizes that the

secular identity of the state is superior and more important than the religion and that state has the monopoly of power. What's more, abandonment of the fez and traditional religious clothing in general meant that distinctions based on social and religious criteria no longer exist. Of course, many people were against these changes. The strange thing is that many Turks welcomed the abolishment of the Caliphate but reacted furiously when their favorite fez was banned. Thousands of them got prosecuted and punished, since Kemal's people, due to the Law for preserving order being active, had the authority to do so. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, pp. 237,254), (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 268,269), (Lewis, 1974, p. 104), (Ahmad, 1993, p. 79)

One important step forward for Turkey was the adaptation of the Swiss civil code. The final and complete code was voted by the Assembly on the 17th of February 1926 and entered into force on 4th of October of the same year. This development was really important for Turkey because this is the first time that a reformer had dared to produce legislation that challenges and attacks head-on the Islamic Holy Law and has to do with matters of religious and family life. Earlier reforms, during the Tanzimat period, were about administrative, commercial and criminal law. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 272) The changes brought by the new Turkish civil code were groundbreaking for such a conservative society. Polygamy and the concepts of dignity of women and ancient bars to the freedom were abolished. Also, civil marriage and divorce come to their place with the law providing equal rights for both man and woman. In addition, the marriage of a Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man now is legally possible, something that came as a shock to the Turkish society. Another shocking reform was the right for all adults to change their religion at will. Of course, the voting of this new civil code didn't transform the country immediately. In towns and villages near the main roads and railway lines these new laws were enforced. But, in many villages that are more secluded, the old ways survived. But the citadel had been breached, the country is under a process of reform and the conservative ones were forced into a clandestine resistance. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 273)

Another symbol of the past to be abolished was the old calendar used during the Ottoman period. On the 26th of December it was abolished and in its place the Gregorian calendar was adopted. At the same time, the twenty-four international clock was confirmed as the only legal way of measuring time. (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 270-271)

One of the most important reforms was the adoption of the Latin alphabet. Initially, during the Ottoman period, the alphabet used was a mixed one, consisting of both Arabic and Persian characters. Since 1923, there have been talks about the alphabet change but it was fiercely opposed by religious conservative cycles. But, after 1925 and the Law for the maintenance of order, opposition is silenced. So,

during the August of 1928 the President announced the replacement of the old alphabet with the Latin one. Since the 1st January on the next year it would be used obligatory. The reason why Kemal and his followers promoted this change is because they wanted to sever ties with the Ottoman past and to approach the civilized west. Also, they believed that it would be a very effective way to tackle illiteracy-the majority of the population wasn't able to read or write. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 255), (Ahmad, 1993, p. 81)

Reforms continue during the following years. In 1928 western numbers are adopted as well as the western weight and measures system in 1931. Also, in 1928, the second article from the Constitution that stated that the official religion is Islam was removed. In 1934, with a new law every citizen was obliged to use a surname, exactly like is done in western countries. Mustafa Kemal adopted the surname Atatürk, which means in Turkish the father of the Turks. Only he and his siblings are allowed to use this surname. Also, women gain the right to vote and get elected. In 1935 for the first time women are elected as Grand National Assembly members. They also are able now to work and follow a career like men do. Professions like drivers, pilots, singers and beauty queens are now open, at least in theory, for women in Turkey. In addition, after 1934 the titles pasha, effendi, bey and hanım, which were used before are being replaced by Bay and Bayan. (In Turkish: sir and madam respectively) After 1935 the official off-day is Sunday, like most of the western countries. All of these changes have a strong symbolic meaning. Reformers aimed to make Turkey appear to be a European country, something that will make communication and having relations with the west easier (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 254), (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 288-289), (Lewis, 1974, pp. 121,124)

In sum, Mustafa Kemal's revolutionary reforms changed Turkey completely. By making use of the absolute powers that were given to him with the Law of Maintenance and order he made good use of this authority to make his vision that he had in mind for Turkey a reality. So, in a pretty short period of time, around ten years, he changed almost everything in the country, including the importance and role of religion for the country, everyday people's customs and way of life and even the alphabet of the Turkish language itself. But the big question is: Why did he do it? What about his goal and how about his way of thinking that led him to this kind of reforms and changes?

c.Kemal Ataturk's goal and vision for Turkey

The new state that emerged in 1923, the Republic of Turkey, was impoverished, numerically decimated and its population was ethnically mixed, with 90% of it being Muslim. As stated earlier, Kemal Ataturk wanted to reform the country and change it completely. According to him, in order for the country to be saved two things had to be done. First, this mass of people had to feel that they belonged to the same nation. Second, he wanted to make the society modern and civilized. (ZÜRCHER, 2010 , p. 136) After his Party changed its name (now its name is Republican People's Party) and its manifesto was published Kemal's goal was made clear. It was made clear that the party he found was a pro-European party with secular and nationalistic identity. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 232) In other words, he wanted Turkey to become a modern, secular country and his ideal model was western European states. Kemal Ataturk completely agreed with Abdullah Cevdet, a well-known Ottoman intellectual, when the latter argued that 'Civilization means European civilization'. While speaking to the Assembly in 1924, after the laws against the theocracy passed from the Grand National Assembly, he argued that Turkey has at least overcome the obstacles that for centuries kept it from joining the other developed and cultured countries and now the path for progress is open. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 267) For Ataturk, uncivilized people, in essence countries that don't accept western European values are doomed to remain under the feet of the civilized world since they are inferior. Therefore, Turkey must reform itself, adopt these values and join the club of the superior, civilized countries in order to survive. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 268)

Kemal Ataturk had exactly this line of thinking when he decided to abolish the fez and the rest of the traditional Islamic garments. For him, they were an emblem of fanaticism and ignorance and symbolized the halt to progress that Turkey was experiencing. Of course, he also argued that the hat and the costume were used by the civilized world. So, according to his way of thinking, they had to start wearing the latter in order to start behaving like modern citizens from the western states. It could be said that this was the central pillar of the revolution.(LEWIS, 2001, p. 268)

As stated in the previous chapter, Ataturk took measures against ulemas and dervishes, the religious cycles. For him, ulemas and dervishes were responsible for superstitions dwelling in people's minds. Examples of these superstitions are seeking the help of the dead and the practice of fortune telling. For Mustafa Kemal, it was a disgrace for today's civilized world, where science, knowledge and civilization thrives, to have customs like these. (LEWIS, 2001, pp. 410-411)

In sum, Ataturk's vision for the new Turkey wasn't an Islamic state. For him and his comrades such a state would maintain the status quo and perpetuate the

backwardness of Turkey. That's why they wanted to transform Turkey, to make it a secular, modern state, similar to the western, civilized European countries. Of course, he believed in the greatness of the Turkish civilization. But, according to him, because of the influence of Arab religion's influence, which was dominant for many centuries, Turks weren't able to reach greatness and their true potential. Nevertheless, he didn't want to ban Islam. His goal was to sever Islam's influence by severing Islam and state. That way, according to his vision, Turkey could be able to reach the level of western civilization countries. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 53), (Lewis, 1974, p. 92)

At the same time that the country was being transformed, Republican People's party began to produce a new ideology which was called Kemalism or Ataturkism.

d.Kemalist Ideology and its basic characteristics

The new ideology aimed to inspire the state in order to progress rapidly as well as to win the allegiance of the people. In essence, the goal was to replace Islam and Ottomanism with nationalism. That way, the ties with the past would be destroyed. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 61) This ideology got formed during the 1930s. In particular, it became widely known when Kemal Ataturk published his famous manifesto which was accepted and adopted by Republican People's Party and later, in 1937, became a part of the Turkish constitution. It isn't a cohesive ideology, it consists of six different ideas that aren't clearly defined and explained. The ideas that form this ideology are republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionary thinking. Secularism and nationalism were among the most important characteristics for the new Turkey that emerged after the regime of Kemal Ataturk begun. Kemalism is being taught at schools and is being advocated and defended by both the army and the media. At the center of it lies Kemal Ataturk who is being preached as a God and is considered to be the teacher, mentor and father of the Turkish nation. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, pp. 247-248), (LEWIS, 2001, p. 286)

Republicanism means that the government's power and authority derives from the people. The basis of the government is democracy. Voters authorize a party to form a government through the election process. Of course, when Republicanism came to be Turkey wasn't a Parliamentary democracy with multi-party elections, freedom of speech and expression, freedom of Press, religious freedom and rule of law. Kemal Ataturk just started the process of transformation of the old Ottoman Empire into a modern, liberal western society. In the beginning of the Turkish Republic, Kemalist regime wasn't a pluralistic one and opposing voices were suppressed. During that time, Republicanism for Turkey meant that the country rejected the old, approved by God ruler, Sultan, and its replacement by a new, secular one. Turkey in theory is a republic since 1923, when the Grand National Assembly decided, after Mustafa Kemal's suggestion, the proclamation of the Turkish Republic.(Evaggelia, 2015, p. 31), (Antonios, 2016, pp. 27-28) Republicanism was generally accepted by everyone with the exception of those who still yearned for the restoration of the Ottoman dynasty. These people were a small minority without any political influence. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 63)

Statism accepts that state is the dominant one regarding economic activity. It is actually a mix of free economy with the governmental control of big enterprises and the control of the total economy for the whole country's well-being. The idea of statism means that the state participates in the economic activity in sectors that the private sector is unwilling or is incompetent to do so or simply when government officials think that it is the best for the national interest. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 33), (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 247) Kemalism accepts government intervention in the economy

but it should not be compared with socialism because the former accepts and welcomes private and individual initiative. In addition, politicians in Turkey had no intention to establish state monopolies or collectivizing the economy. Some examples of economic activity that the state participated were public banks, factories that produced matches, alcohol, sugar, tobacco and explosives. (Antonios, 2016, p. 31), (LEWIS, 2001, p. 286) Statism was a controversial idea and many were confused when it came into effect because neither the party nor the government clearly defined the limits of state intervention into the economy. Of course, private sector actors who had connections inside the Republican People's Party were really satisfied. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 63)

Revolutionism was one of the most important principles of Kemalism. Turkey has to be reformed and to replace old and obsolete institutions with new and modern ones. Of course, Turkey needs to adapt to the standards set by the western civilization. As a result, citizens' lives will be improved and the society as a whole will progress and develop. As analyzed earlier, Kemal Ataturk reformed the country and changed almost every aspect of the new state that emerged after the dissolution of the Sultanate extremely fast. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 35)

Populism assures that people is the dominant one in the democratic political scene through the rule of law. Elected officials and local government are a sign of populism and through them Turkish citizens participate to the administration of the country. This reform aims to protect the people. Kemalism rejects social and any kind of class cleavage and doesn't accept the superiority of any social class. In other words, every citizen is equal before the law. Populism just states that the important value is the Turkish citizenship and nationality and wants every citizen to feel proud and happy because of it. Of course, this will have a very positive development because these citizens will have an increased morale and, as a result, will work harder and the national camaraderie and unity will be achieved. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 33) Populism was suitable for the new ruling class, it legitimized their power since they are the trustees of the people that act in favor of their interests, and rejected the concept of class conflict. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 63)

Nationalism means that the country is independent, powerful and free from the influence of other states. Nationalism defines Turks as those who share the same language, culture and territory and who protect and promote the moral, spiritual, cultural and humanitarian values of the Turkish nation. The latter is all the people that live inside the borders of the Turkish Republic, they wish the well-being of their country and they know to handle their duties towards the democratic, secular state for everyone's well-being. Actually, what Kemal Ataturk tried to do was to create a new collective identity for all the people that lived inside the territory of Turkey. For this purpose, his reforms aimed to modernize the state and to break the link with

the Ottoman past by erasing all the characteristics of the Ottoman Empire. For instance, history was written again, the focus for the newer historians is the Turks' pre-Islam history. Researchers wanted to write a history of the Turkish nation that is free of Islamic influence. In addition, for the same reason the language was reformed, because Kemalists wanted to cleanse it from Persian and Arabic influences. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 32), (Antonios, 2016, pp. 28-29)

Secularism was the most important idea of Kemalism along with nationalism. In a secular state religion and the state are separate and the former doesn't control the latter and has any influence over it. The Turkish version of secularism is the same as the French laicism, according to which religion and the state are separate and the latter controls the religion by state institutions. (The instrument for keeping Islam in check that was found by Kemalists is the Diyanet or Directorate of Religious Affairs) Every law that gets voted has to be of secular nature and policy makers need to take into account that Turkey is a secular country. In addition, Islamic officials have no power or authority and citizens are free to practice any religion they want without any control or restriction from the state. Any religious institutions will be controlled by the state. Of course, all religions are allowed and all believers are free to communicate the teachings of their religion freely without any form of harassment. In addition, Kemalists believe that the search for the truth of God pleases him but the obligatory focus on one specific religion does not. So, secularism doesn't reject religion but it argues that it must not be mixed with science and politics. Faith and religious practice is everyone's right but its place is inside the house or the religious site and not inside the school.

Kemal Ataturk himself wasn't against the Islamic religion. The exact opposite, he believed that it is necessary for the public life but he didn't want law and order to be affected or replaced by it. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 34), (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 247), (Antonios, 2016, p. 29), (BERKES, 1998, p. 279), (Larrabee, 2008, p. 11)The basis of the religious policy of Kemal's party wasn't irreligion. Kemal Ataturk didn't want to ban religion, just to end the power of religion, to limit it to matters of belief and worship and control it. Actually, laicism, as understood by Kemal Ataturk and his own men, means that the state has the upper hand regarding the relations between the state and religion, controls religious institutions but also has the authority to regulate the lived Islamic tradition and expression of popular religiosity .In other words, Ataturk wanted to separate religion and politics and break the former's control over people's minds. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 412), (Saleem, 2017, p. 43)

Secularism was accepted by the majority of the population. Religion was made a matter of individual conscience and was freed by those who used it as a tool for their personal aspirations. (Ahmad, 1993, p. 63) However, the reforms were accepted mainly by those who lived in the western part of Turkey and in the big

cities. The east resisted secularization and Turkification. Despite the secularization reforms, in rural areas religious conservatism and feudal structures continued to govern rural life. The old Institutions, schools and religious structures were destroyed but the old practices weren't abandoned: The characteristics of the pre-Republican Ottoman society simply had gone underground. (Öktem, 2011, pp. 29, 38)

During the 1930s, there was a strong pressure for secularization. The fact that no more mosques were built in the new capital and the transformation of the great basilica of Santa Sophia into a museum (during the Ottoman period it functioned as a mosque) are some striking examples of this trend. (LEWIS, 2001, p. 416)

Undoubtedly, the regime did lots of reforms in the country and contributed to its progress. But, despite Kemal Ataturk and his supporters talking about democracy, it was an authoritarian regime that had the monopoly of power and there was a focus on nationalism, national homogeneity and camaraderie that imposed from above the changes and reforms to the population. This secularization has been heavily criticized because it has been hostile to the religion, preventing Turkey from becoming a country with a true, consolidated democracy. (ZÜRCHER, 2004, p. 252),

Summing up, Turkey had undergone immense changes in just a few years after Kemal Ataturk came to power. Kemalism, or the ideology of Kemal Ataturk and his supporters, in essence aimed to create a secular country where the focus would be Turkish nationalism. Despite the reforms there is evidence that secularization of the country wasn't as complete as its admirers thought. Religion continued to be popular in the peoples' eyes despite reformers' efforts, especially in small towns and villages that were far away from big cities. So, it could be said that at the same time two cultures existed in Turkey: The secular, westernized culture that have ties with the bureaucracy and the indigenous culture of the mass of people who continue to believe in Islamic religion. After the Second World War, when opposition was at last permitted and multi-party elections became a reality, there are attempts to challenge the dominant Kemalist bureaucracy. So, an Islamic reassertion begins, political forces rise in the following years that try to exploit this alienation that those traditional believers felt and gain their support. So, an Islamic reassertion begins which lasts for several decades and continues even today in Turkey.(LEWIS, 2001, pp. 416, 424), (Ahmad, 1993, pp. 63,92)

3. Rise of Political Islam in modern Turkey

a. Prior to the appearance of political Islam

After the death of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1938, his right- hand man, Ismet Inonu, became the next president of the country and continued the secularization policy that his predecessor initiated. During Inonu's Presidency the Constitution was amended, Arabic and Persian words were deleted from the original 1924 Constitution and were replaced by Turkish ones. Also, words that showed an Islamic influence too were discarded from the Constitution. Thus, Islam's banishment from Turkish state nationalism was almost complete.

The monopoly of political authority from Republican People's Party came to an end in the late 1940s when multi-Party elections were held for the first time, which meant the end of the single-party rule. This fact had an unexpected consequence. People who lived in the periphery, in rural areas and not in big cities, continued to keep in touch with Islam which still had huge effect in their lives because of the limited effect of the secularist reforms in their hometowns. In cities though, Islam was banished from the public sphere, it was supervised and suppressed by the state and its institutions. Ataturk's secularization reforms were mostly accepted by the Turkish elite, and the people who were not a part of the elite, who were living in the periphery, were feeling alienated inside their own country. As a result, politicians had to start taking into account their opinions too since now more opposing parties exist that have to compete for a seat in government and these people are the majority of the population. In other words, their support means their votes will be given to the party that fights for their rights. So, Islam now stops being secluded from Turkish political life and becomes instead a permanent part of it. Even members of the dominant Republican People's Party started criticizing secularist policies, out of fear of losing their seats in the government. Thus, Kemal's former party decided to be more tolerant towards religion. Despite winning the 1946 elections they quickly realized that they had to change their stance towards Islam and the population that continued to view it as something really important for their identity. It could be said that this development was an important breaking point for the rise of political Islam. (Saleem, 2017, pp. 40-41), (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 40), (Antonios, 2016, p. 40)

Hence, CHP (Republican People' party) made some changes that relaxed the restrictions imposed on religion before the next elections of 1950. Some of them were the relaxation of restrictions on religion education in schools, provision of foreign exchange for pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, the opening of tombs that belong to some Muslim saints, the initiation of new educational courses for prayer leaders, the

establishment of a faculty of Theology at the University of Ankara and the expansion of Diyanet. However, there didn't change any part of the constitution, the secularist nature of the state was left intact. (Saleem, 2017, p. 39)

Despite these reforms, CHP lost the elections in 1950 and the Democratic Party (DP), which had Menderes as the one in charge, won by receiving 415 out of 485 Grand National Assembly seats. Democratic Party appealed to parts of the society that felt alienated and repressed from the westernizing and secularist policies and promised to terminate some of the really strict secular policies that the Kemalist regime initiated. The various religious groups were pleased with this development; they argued that this was a deliverance from the 'Godless People's Party'. Actually, DP wasn't an Islamic Party but one committed to secularism but at a less aggressive way. Menderes didn't attempt to reverse Ataturk's most important secularization reforms, such as adopting the Swiss civil code or amending the Constitution to reject secularism. What Menderes and his Party did was to make Islam legal again and made it possible for Islamic political actors to participate in the Turkish political scene. Democratic party lifted many of the restrictions on religious actions with acts such as permitting prayer calling in Arabic, allowing religious programming on radio run by the state, making religious education compulsory in elementary schools (it wasn't compulsory, parents were able to opt out), setting up schools for prayer leaders and increasing the funding of the Diyanet. Also, Menderes gave leeway to banned religious groups that supported him and contributed to his electoral success.

Regarding Islam, the biggest change was reverting to the pre-1945 version of the 1924 Constitution. In 1952, the Turkified version of the Constitution, which didn't have any Persian or Arabic words, was replaced by its previous version that had Arabic and Persian words. But one of the most important principles of the Republic, which is secularism, was still a part of the Constitution. Regarding this matter, Menderes didn't deviate from Kemal Ataturk's vision.

Menderes government also focused on human rights and liberties, to the tackling of bureaucracy, economic freedom, agricultural reform and economic growth. New liberal policies freed the economy from state intervention. These almost revolutionary policies were perceived to be dangerous, heretic and not loyal to the ideology of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Also, the economy was in a really bad condition, government was really corrupt and failed to almost every aspect and that led to the coup organized by military officers that took place on the May of 1960 which resulted to its downfall. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 40-41), (Saleem, 2017, p. 39) Military takeover was viewed by the majority of the population as a positive and necessary development because that way the perversion of the democracy by Menderes and his government would be avoided. Military officers took over and

they remained in power until the October of 1961 (they had promised that they would return power to the people when their role had been finished). Prime Minister Adnan Menteres, Foreign Minister Zorlu and Finance Minister Polatkan were executed. In addition, Islamic brotherhood members as well as parliamentary members of the Democratic Party were hunted down and put to jail. Their crime was that they were responsible for the backwardness of the country because of their leniency towards religion. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 91), (Knudsen, 2005, p. 7)

Despite the short period of time the officers remained in power, they managed to leave important footprints on Turkey's political structure. After the coup and during the short regime of the military junta a new Constitution was produced. New Institutions were created which changed the political field in the country. The Grand National Assembly remains but a senate has been created as well as the National Security Council. Junta provided that some of its members become permanent members of the Senate. But, Grand National Assembly is the Institution which allows the armed officers to directly interfere in politics if the situation is 'grave and the security of the state is in danger'. Thus, now the interference of the army in politics in Turkey is now institutionally acceptable. Actually, a double-headed political system was created, ministers coexisted with military officers within the National Security Council on the executive level and the civilian justice system coexisted with the military system of justice. (Knudsen, 2005, pp. 7-8)

The Constitution had 157 articles. Now the parliamentary system is bicameral, it consists of the National Assembly and the newly created Senate. The independence of the judiciary was also ensured. Also, it focused on human rights; an expanded list of fundamental rights was included in the Constitution. It also expanded the right of religious freedom. Now not only can everyone practice the religion he/she wishes, as in the 1924 Constitution, but a person couldn't be compelled to worship a particular religion or to participate in a religious ceremony. (Saleem, 2017, p. 42)

The 1961 Constitution was the most democratic and liberal in the history of the Turkish Republic, aimed to tackle authoritarianism and allowed ideological pluralism. It encouraged all the progressive forces to take action for a fair society. As a result, during the 1960s and 1970s there has been a major increase of independent organizations, including religious ones. Army officers believed that this pluralism would prevent the rise of authoritarian governments. Nevertheless, despite the Constitution forbidding the politicization of Islam (because they were afraid that it will lead to the undermining of the state's secular nature), this ideological pluralism led to the rise of political Islam and the appearance of political parties that have religion in their official agendas and programs. The person whose actions contributed to the rise of political Islam was Necmettin Erbakan. Also, he was the

first person to find an Islamic political party. (Saleem, 2017, p. 42), (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 42), (Antonios, 2016, pp. 42-44)

b. The rise of Political Islam. Necmettin Erbakan

Organized Political Islam appeared in the last years of 1960s but the ground was fertile for its appearance much earlier. During the industrialization of Turkey those who had small industries and firms couldn't compete with the big and rich that had connections with the Kemalist elite. As a result, these people, that weren't living in the bigger cities but on the periphery and countryside, objected since they were second rate citizens and they were isolated from the economy. They needed a political force to support them and fight for their rights and interests. This force took the form of Political Islam. Thus, Political Islam and its rivalry with the Kemalists wasn't just a rivalry between secular and Islam cycles but between business elites who lived in the big cities and those who had small firms and were living in the countryside and were secluded from the society and the economy. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 106-108)

Political Islam represented 3 big classes. Businessmen who lived in the periphery and were merchants or craftsmen, poor classes that lived inside big cities but were pious believers of Islam and freelancers that lived in the countryside, had Islamic background and received secular education. All of them supported Political Islam and the political parties that spawned from it. They did so because they believed that this way they would stop being isolated from the economy and they would be able to earn. In essence, it was a mix of religious and conservative cycles.

As argued earlier, Necmettin Erbakan was the person whose appearance in the Turkish political life is tied with the rise of Political Islam. First of all, Erbakan found an Islamic organization in 1969 called Milli görüş (National View) which was the main representative of Political Islam and its supporters. Its main ideology is a mix of Islamism, national independence, Ottomanism and modernist growth. They also had anti-western, anti-Christian and anti-semitic rhetoric. The goal of this organization was to promote Islam and its values and it was the base for all the Parties of Political Islam that appeared the following years. Slowly but steadily these people started to become more active and mobilize by finding associations as well as various Islamic organizations in many areas of the country. These associations and their connections supported Political Islam and helped it spread. For instance, they helped Erbakan to start his political career and become a member of the parliament. Thus, the founder of Milli görüş movement became an independent parliamentary member in 1969 which strengthened the position of Political Islam, since now its supporters' views can now be heard. One year later, in 1970, Necmettin Erbakan found the first Islamic Party, the National Order Party. Its leaders came from the National View movement that was found about one year ago. This party had its electoral base ready before its appearance because of the mobilization of Islamic actors who had already started. Almost all the members of the future Islamic parties

in Turkey were former members of Milli görüş. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 109-112), (Incel, 2017, pp. 88-89)

National Order Party proposed a new social and economic organization of Turkey based on Islamic values which, according to the Party's officials, were also Turkish national ones. In other words, for them Islam is one integral part of Turkish identity and they wanted the religion to become the main factor of the society and political activity. They believed that Kemal Atatürk's effort to transform the Ottoman-Islamic state with a western and secular one was a historical mistake and, according to them, that was the source of all the hardships that Turkey was currently facing such as economic underdevelopment. Thus, the ideal solution for the state to survive was the return of traditional values and institutions and the creation of a new Islamic order that would stop the process of westernization. Of course, from now on those who become state officials had to accept these ideas and values. Despite talking about Islamic values, party officials didn't reject science and technology. Erbakan in particular believed that the country could develop and progress by using the power that comes from its history and culture and he was referring to the glorious Ottoman past all the time. Of course, western countries had inferior civilization and are immoral because they don't know the truth that only the Islamic religion teaches. For them Turkey is morally superior and belongs to the Islamic world and not to the Western one. Erbakan also supported a coalition of Islamic countries.(Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 42-43), (Antonios, 2016, p. 47), (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 116-119)

Erbakan and the members of his Party wanted for everyone freedom of thought, expression and conscience and they didn't want anyone to feel repressed. They didn't reject democracy and freedom. They accepted these values but they stated that they aren't western (as argued earlier, they considered the western civilization to be an inferior one) but Islamic. For them, a secular state is the state where all these freedoms exist and apply for every citizen without any distinction. Unfortunately, according to them, these freedoms don't exist in Turkey, pious ones are being repressed and disbelievers repress those who remain loyal to Islam. In order for this situation to change, those who are being isolated must fight for their rights. Only then will the regime become truly democratic. (Antonios, 2016, pp. 47-48), (Moudouros, 2011, p. 117)

National Order Party did have something common with the Kemalist ideology though: It accepted state intervention in the economy. In its program was clearly stated that it supported an Islamic intervention to the capitalist development that would be administered by the Political Islam. They weren't against capitalism, they also wanted the periphery to develop and that's why there were plans about investments being made there. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 113-114)

The Party was deemed illegal on May 20, 1971 by the Constitutional Court after pressure from military officers because it violated the principles of laicism laid down in the Constitution (Articles 2, 19, 57) and in the Law of Political Parties. But they weren't able to stop Political Islam. One year later, on the October of 1972, a new Islamic Political Party was found. Its name was Religious Salvation Party and its leader at first was Suleiman Arif Emre. After the 1973 elections, when the Party received the 11.8% of total votes and 48 seats in the Parliament, Erbakan again became the leader of the Party after Suleiman Emre quit. These election results were really important for Political Islam. Despite it didn't receive enough votes in order to form a self-sufficient government, it was the first time that a party of such nature received a high percentage of votes, allowing it to have an important role in the formation of future coalition governments. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 115,117), (Narli, 1999, p. 39)

Because Erbakan's Party received a pretty good percentage of votes in the 1973 elections it formed a coalition government with the secularist People's Republican Party, with Bulent Ecevit being the Prime Minister and Erbakan the vice Prime Minister. Also, he was the vice-President in the Nationalist Front government of Suleiman Demirel (1975-1977), that was formed with the participation of the latter's Justice Party and Alpaslan Turke's Nationalist Movement Party. In addition, Erbakan was vice-President in the second Nationalist Front government (1977-1978) and he supported the government that was formed by Suleiman Demirel which was later overturned by the military officers in the coup that took place in 1980. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 44) So, during the 1970s decade Political Islam is being established as an important political force and many of its members capture important seats to every level of public administration and bureaucracy. Moreover, it managed to pass a bill that made theological high schools (named Imam-hatip) equal to secondary schools and allowed these school's often pro-Islam students to attend universities. So, in the 1980s and 1990s many Political Islam supporters who received Islamic education have gone on to political power, one of them being the current President of Turkey, Recep Tayip Erdogan, and have formed a powerful pressure group. As a result, Islamist cycles have increased authority and businessmen that are its members now have connections with the state and can increase their wealth. In a way, Political Islam both becomes a part of the secular state and is opposed to it. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 121), (Narli, 1999, p. 39)

In the late 1970s Turkey faced dire economic and political problems and the successive governments failed to solve them. In addition, the society was harshly polarized and antagonism between radical left and radical right escalated into violent clashes bordering on civil war. The army, led by Kenan Evren, intervened and seized power after a bloodless coup that took place on 12 September 1980. They immediately declared Martial Law and the parliament, the Senate, municipal

assemblies and mayoralities were dissolved. Then Kenan Evren became President of the Republic. The leading parties of the time were banned from political activity as well as some of their ex officials like Ecevit and Demirel, their property was seized by the state and the political system was restructured with a new Constitution that was drafted by the military. For more than three years Turkey was ruled by a five- man junta with Kenan Evren as the leader and had supreme executive power. The military regime's goal was, in short term, to stop political violence and in long term to prevent violent confrontations from happening again and to achieve stability and social peace. They were able to carry out their first goal but at a major cost: Curfews were imposed, most public activities were forbidden, a wide range of magazines, books, newspapers and movies were banned, many professional associations and trade unions were suspended, 650.000 people were detained and around 14.000 Turks were stripped of their citizenship. In addition, there have been many reports of brutal interrogations, 18 leftists and 8 rights were executed and 171 prisoners have died as the result of torture. Regarding their second and most important goal, in order to succeed they made major changes to the Turkish state and the political arena. (Narli, 1999, p. 39), (Antonios, 2016, p. 51), (Jenkins, 2008., p. 141)

c. Political Islam after the 1980 coup

After the 1980 coup military officers seized power and made major changes to Turkey's political system. Their goal was to prevent events like the violent clashes that took place in the last years of 1970s from happening again. In other words, they wanted to prevent communism and left ideologies from rising again. In addition, they also wanted to stop Kurdish nationalism because they believed that it could pose real danger for the country. Thus, the army tried to reinforce Islam as an alternative counterbalance to communism. This way, radical movements will stop being attractive. So, they tried to alter the Turkey's ideological platform. Their aim was to create a new form of Turk-Islamic civilization in which the society would be reunited again and left ideologies, which were considered dangerous and polarizing for the society, would be left out. In addition, they wanted to stop and control the Islamic influence that came from Iran, Pakistan and the Arab world in general. As a result, this situation, according to Kenan Evren, will result in a united, powerful and stable political and social situation. Islam now has an important role for the Military regime. (Saleem, 2017, p. 45)

Thus, the new dogma for Turkey is Turk-Islamic composition. Kenan Evren tried to combine Islam with Turkish nationalism. Islamic and national symbols are being combined: Family, mosques and military camps are its basic ingredients. The military regime adopted Islamic religion and tried to appeal both to the believers that accepted secularism and the pious ones that rejected it in order to control the social and economic activity of both of them. Islam was used as a tool in order to achieve social peace but this Islamization of the society had to be centrally planned and controlled. In the Turkish state the religion and nationalism were combined and a conservative environment was created. Of course, this new ideological composition changed some of the reforms that Kemal Ataturk brought. But, it was a necessary measure in order for Turkey to overcome the polarization and to achieve social peace. Kenan Evren himself admitted that he was forced to use religion as a tool to persuade the people and to stop polarization. . (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 55-56), (Antonios, 2016, p. 52), (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 126-127)

Clearly the army's views about Islam and its actors have changed. Previously, military officers, because they were loyal to Kemal Ataturk and his reforms, wanted to defend secularism and to reduce Islam's influence. They even organized a coup in 1961 because the government strayed from Ataturk's legacy, endangering secularism. But after the 1980, military officers changed their attitude towards Islam and started using it as an instrument. (Saleem, 2017, p. 45)

On 1982 a referendum took place in which people voted to accept the new Constitution. It had 177 articles and established a unicameral Parliament and a

parliamentary system of government. It is considered to be the most authoritarian Constitution of Turkish Constitutions. While generally Constitutions aim to limit the state's power and protect the people from it, this one does the exactly opposite: It protects the state from people's actions and doesn't focus on citizens' fundamental rights. (Saleem, 2017, p. 45)

In this Constitution started a practice that continues even today, the promotion of Ataturk as an image in order to protect secularism. Mustafa Kemal is praised so much and so fiercely that it seems like the Constitution aimed to create a cult that worship him. This was one of its most distinguishing features. Of course, this promotion of Ataturk's image and personality weren't limited to the Constitution. During the decades of 1980 and 1990 his face was increasingly depicted on badges, posters, stickers and elsewhere. Suffice it to say, this practice was encouraged by the state. Arguing that an "Ataturk mania" started in the country isn't an exaggeration. In addition, for the first time, principle of secularism is included in the President's oath as well as in the oaths of the Grand National Assembly members. Another really important change is the role of the Diyanet: Its significance increased by making national solidarity and integrity one of its duties:

The Directorate of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity. (Article 136)(Saleem, 2017, p. 46)

But, despite their struggle to protect secularism, Islam gained ground in the 1982 Constitution. Under the army's guidance, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic religious education now becomes compulsory to every school for primary and secondary education. Classes for the teaching of Quran were created and the schools now also focus on religious and moral education with the state's approval. Also, now it is taught that there are similarities between the Turkish civilization before and after the appearance of Islam and that there are strong connections between Turkish nation and Islam. It could be said that Islam was used in order to reinforce Turkish nationalism. Nevertheless, these changes gave to Islamists the opportunity to reinforce their position. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 55-56), (Antonios, 2016, p. 52), (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 126-127)

As stated earlier, there have been major changes in the educational system, now those who graduated from religious schools can gain access to offices and important positions of the state despite its secular nature. It is also allowed to find private religious schools. There also has been a major increase in the number of these schools and now their graduates are able to gain access to Universities and study fields like Law and Public Administration. Many of them were able to start working as public servants. In other words, Islamic brotherhood members started

gaining access to the mechanism of the state during Ozal's years. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 130) In general, religion's public role and influence dramatically increased during the 1980s. Later, all governments continued these policies. These policies resulted in Islamic intellectuals starting to appear and many Islamic brotherhoods and associations attract many supporters and start influencing public life (for instance Fettulah Gulen's Hizmet). Political Islam supporters also support and help each other: For instance when choosing business partners, they prefer those who belong to Political Islam. As a result, slowly but steadily its members gain power and connections. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 156, 159, 161)

After this event, in 1983, military officers abandoned political power and after general elections the new party that won and formed a government was Turgut Ozal's Party of Mother Country. He continued military regime policies: This party combined neo-liberal policies and the new context for Turkey that Kenan Evren created that mixed Turkish nationality, secularism and Islamism. It was the dominant party in the 1980s. Its main characteristics were religious and nationalistic conservatism and economic liberalism. Ozal himself had stated that he wished for a population that will be competitive in the global economic environment but also pious and respectful towards God. He wanted an Islamic Renaissance for his country but, at the same time, technological and scientific growth. In other words, he picked and mixed military and economic power similar to the western countries and, at the same time, Islamic faith and camaraderie that were found in the eastern Islamic states. In addition, one of his goals was to gradually integrate into the economy every person that belonged to the middle classed regardless of the region. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 127-128)

These economic reforms contributed even further to the increase of Political Islam's rise in popularity: They relaxed the state's control over the economy and created a new category of businessmen that had their base in Anatolia cities. Because of economic development, a new middle class was created which had Islamic background. This new class supports liberal economic policies and the reduction of state intervention and was one of the main supporters of Erbakan's Party. These reforms also resulted in the entry of capital from the Arabic world. This money helped further pro-Islam actors to reinforce their positions. In addition, religious associations are now free to operate and to open religious private schools and universities. Last but not least, they also gain their own media, their voice can be heard and their views can be communicated to the public. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 44-45)

Linking Islam with state nationalism helped Erbakan's Milli Gorus movement. Although Erbakan and his National Salvation Party were banned from politics after the coup, they emerged again as the Welfare Party and were able to attract even

more supporters because Islam now is active again in the public sphere. This party was the continuation of the Mill Gorus movement and the next one representing political Islam, with the first one being Erbakan's National Order Party. Poverty and social exclusion were fertile ground for the increased popularity of Political Islam. Initially, its leader was Ali Turkmen but Erbakan was eventually reinstated into Turkish politics and became the party's leader in 1987, when Erbakan's ban from participating in political life was lifted. At first they were protesting for the impact of Ozal's neo-liberal policies but they changed their attitude: Their goal was to Islamize capitalism. They were talking about an Islamic economy, one that would act as a counterbalance to the western one. In addition, Erbakan wanted his party to come to power and aid the craftsmen and small businessmen of the periphery that were still isolated from the economy by the Kemalist, secular establishment. (Saleem, 2017, p. 47), (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 171-172), (Antonios, 2016, p. 54)

Welfare Party participated in the 1987 elections but wasn't able to enter the Parliament, it only received 7.2 percent of the total vote. (In Turkey, a party has to receive 10% of total vote in order to enter the Parliament) In the local elections of 1989 Welfare Party managed to receive 9.8% of votes, capturing municipalities in several districts and electing many mayors, which shows that its popularity is increasing. In the October 1991 general elections, Welfare Party formed an electoral alliance with the far-right party of Turkes and they received together 16.7% of total votes, earning 62 seats in the parliament. During those elections the dominant party received 21.38% of votes and earned 158 seats. In general, the next decade will not be one of political stability for Turkey. Many of the governments formed are based on multi-party coalitions and Erbakan's party participates in most of them, increasing Political Islam's role and influence even further. Welfare Party wasn't supported only by Islamists but by Kurds and Sunni communities. (Narli, 1999, p. 40), (Moudouros, 2011, p. 172), (Antonios, 2016, pp. 54-55)

During the first years of 1990s, Political Islam's popularity continues to increase. This is shown clearly in the 1994 local elections Erbakan's Party received 19% of votes and elected mayors in 28 municipalities, including Istanbul and Ankara. It is important here to underline that the mayor that got elected in Istanbul was none other than Recep Tayip Erdogan, the current President of Turkey and the most powerful man the country has ever known since Kemal Ataturk. Erdogan's successful administration of Istanbul gave additional points to Erbakan's Party, increasing its popularity even more. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 45), (Antonios, 2016, p. 56)

The big step forward for Erbakan and his Party, and in extension Political Islam, was the 1995 national elections. Erbakan's Welfare Party received 21.6% of total votes and it earned the greatest percentage of votes. A coalition was formed between Welfare Party and Tansu Çiller's True Path Party in order to form a

government. The latter was vice-president of the government and Foreign Affairs Minister and Erdogan became, for the first time, Prime Minister. This development shocked Kemalists and military officers: It was the first time since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 that Turkey is being administered by an Islamist Prime Minister and an Islamist Party. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 45), (Antonios, 2016, p. 56) Of course, this is the best opportunity for Islamists. During this period, Political Islam supporters capture important positions in the state and gain great economic power. As a result, Kemalists started to worry about its increased activity and influence. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 176, 178)

Many factors contributed to this increase of Welfare Party popularity. One of the most important ones was the Party's focus on social matters. This allowed the Party to widen its appeal to more people, not only to the religious left. Also, poor people voted for Welfare Party because of many decisions taken in order to alleviate the poor who live in cities: This Party was really well organized in the Turkish political life, a legion of faithful Muslims, many of them being women, were working as volunteers for the Party and that resulted in the creation of a network that helped and took care of poor people. This network also helped its voters find employment, provided medical care, food and other social benefits. In addition, the Party was able to appeal to the electorate because of its anti-western rhetoric. The Turkish society during that time had negative feelings towards the western world because European Union didn't approve of Turkey becoming a member state and thought that they were biased because towards their country. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 46)

Nevertheless, Erdogan's government wasn't successful while tackling the many problems that Turkish society was facing. It was very difficult for him to both keep satisfied those who remain loyal to secularism (they were really sceptic towards him) and, at the same time, to not abandon his anti-systemic rhetoric. Striking a balance between these two proved too great a challenge for him. Instead of adopting policies that would reduce social tension, he chose to polarize even more the arduous situation. On the one hand he accepts the Customs Union with EU and he doesn't cancel the Treaties with Israel, something which infuriates his traditional Islamic supporters, and on the other hand he infuriates Kemalists and military men with some of his statements and actions. Erdogan's relationship with Muammar Qadhafi also made some suggest the Turkish prime minister might owe ultimate allegiance to Libya's leader, who also headed a secretive organization called the Islamic People's Command to which Erdogan also belonged. In addition, Welfare's call for lifting the ban on the veil for female university students and civil servants, Erdogan's desire to build a mosque in Istanbul's Taksim Square were some of the decisions that Erdogan and Welfare Party officials took that made military officers and secularists really worried that Welfare Party wanted to dilute the secular state. The Welfare Party's anti-democratic position on several issues also

disappointed secular public opinion. For example, Erbakan and Justice Minister Sevket Kazan made critical and insulting comments about people who took part in the "One Minute of Darkness for Enlightenment" civil protest in February 1997. Women worried that their rights would be reduced. There were also allegations that the Party had connections with militant Islamist groups. Really important also was the fact that government officials tried to silence the Press. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 46-47), (Narli, 1999, pp. 42-43)

Because of all the above actions, the military chose again to intervene, like it did in 1960, 1971 and 1980. This time, however, military officers didn't organize a coup. On 27 February 1997 the National Security Council, which is dominated by military officers, prepared a list of recommendations and handed it out to Erbakan. In essence, they wanted him to apply Kemal Ataturk's reforms and stop activities that were against the secular nature of the state. Some of these recommendations were: The banning of the headscarf and to limit the accession of Imam Hatip schools graduates into Universities. Erbakan at first ignored these recommendations, then he agreed to implement them but he didn't. Eventually, the army mobilized the secular part of the society against him. He was sent to the Constitutional Court with the allegations that he violated the principle of secularism and the law of political parties.¹ The Court decided Erbakan's ban from politics and his Welfare Party was outlawed in January 1998. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 46-47), (Narli, 1999, p. 43), (Incel, 2017, p. 68)

This military intervention was different than the previous ones. This time, the coup was bloodless, the officers applied political pressure on the first Islamist Prime Minister in order to force him to quit and to ban him and his Party from Politics. That's why this operation was called Post-modern coup. Again, the army intervened, showed its influence and authority and the citizens supported this intervention. In other words, a multi-layered political system intervened, Turks call it their political system but observers outside the country call it the Turkish Deep State. (Antonios, 2016, pp. 57-58)

The February 1997 event was a really important event that affected the future developments in the country. It led to the abandonment of the idea that religion could be used for the stabilization of the society, which would be based on a Turk-Islamic mixture. The army began an anti-Islamist campaign, for those Islamists and their ideas, along with Kurdish nationalism, are the biggest threats for the security of the Turkish state. So, they purged the public sector from Political Islam members, with an emphasis on those who worked in the education, a list of

¹ This Law was promulgated by the junta on 25 April 1983. According to this law, new political parties are forbidden from having any connection with the parties that had been active before the coup. This law also specified that all parties must accept the principles of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and his revolution. (Jenkins, 2008., p. 142)

businesses that had ties with the Islamists was formed (and encouraged everyone to boycott these firms) and reporters that criticized the junta were fired immediately. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 56), (Incel, 2017, p. 68)

The coup also affected the Islamic movement. Its members understood that it was impossible for them to continue and succeed by pursuing a clear Islamist agenda because secularists and military officers would immediately intervene and stop them. As a result, many Islamists decided to continue their political movement by watering down their Islamist ambitions a bit because that way they will not have to face secularists. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 56)

d. Political Islam. After the Post-Modern coup to Erdogan's Justice and Development Party

On 17 December 1997, as it became clear that Erbakan's Welfare Party would be banned, Political Islam actors were afraid that their voice would be silenced. In order for their struggle to continue and their voice to be heard, they found a new Party. This party was named the Virtue Party, which was the continuation of Erbakan's previous Welfare Party, and its leader was Recai Kutan who was one of Erbakan's closest men. Its inaugural congress was done on 14 May 1998. Despite Recci Kutan being the leader, behind the shadows Erbakan was controlling the Party although he was banned from politics. However, Recci Kutan and the other officials of the party found themselves on a difficult situation. On the one hand, if they continued their previous Islamist rhetoric they risked their prosecution and banning from politics. On the other hand, if their rhetoric and policies deviated too much from the previous incarnation of Political Islam Party, this could lead to the alienation of their supporters. In the end, the party opted for a more moderate image. They decided to avoid the Islamist rhetoric and they emphasized that they are committed to secularism, democracy and freedom of speech. Virtue Party even started appointing women who do not wear headscarves to its national executive. (Previous Islamist Party demanded women who were their members to wear headscarves) More importantly, Party officials stopped their anti-EU and their anti-United States hostility and they started traveling to the west, to both European countries and the United States, in order to meet politicians and other officials and they were declaring that they wanted Turkey to enter the EU. Of course, they stopped talking about building alliances with Islamic countries and Turkey's exit from NATO and the opening of Islamic banks is now an idea that belongs to the past. This thorough change is shown clearly in the Party leader's statements. According to Welfare Party, Turkey wasn't as Islamic as it should be. Now, Kutan and his Virtue Party state that Turkey isn't as democratic as it should be. (Jenkins, 2008., p. 164), (Antonios, 2016, pp. 59, 61)

In general, Virtue Party stopped talking about an Islamic mission. Now, they focus on democracy, human rights and personal liberty. For them, the headscarf ban issue is a matter of human rights violation and suppression of personal liberties and not a religious one. Also, now for them the ideal state is the one that is democratic and not authoritarian and is in the service of the people. This again is contrary to Erbakan's former party, whose desire was a holy state that stands above the people. (Narli, 1999, p. 44)

This new Islamist Party wasn't homogeneous though. There were two different groups inside it and their views and ideas about the best possible strategy

differed. The first group was the traditional ones. These people have Kutan as their representative and they were opposed to any serious change in the strategy and policies that the party supported. In essence, Erbakan controlled this part of the party despite Kutan being typically in charge. The second group was the modernists or reformists. Their representative was Abdullah Gul (but in practice Recep Tayyip Erdogan was the one pulling the strings). The modernists argued that the party needs to reassess its approach to matters such as democracy, human rights and relations with the western countries. They also were opposed to Erbakan's authoritarian leadership style and they wanted a more democratic party. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 57),

Virtue Party in 2001 was declared illegal because one of its women Parliament candidates attended the oath ceremony while wearing a headscarf. Immediately the prosecutor took action and the Party was declared illegal. (Antonios, 2016, p. 61)

After the banning, the traditional ones along with Necmettin Erbakan formed a new Party, the Happiness Party, while the reformist group found the Justice and Development Party (AKP), a center- right coalition, which is still in office in Turkey today. In essence, what happened was the split of Milli Gorus movement into two separate parties. Those that remained loyal to Erbakan believed that their mission is to establish a new civilization based on traditional Islamic values and were unwilling to make compromises with the secular establishment to expand their supporters. Of course, they didn't change their anti-Western rhetoric, they believed that Islam was incompatible with Western values and they were against Turkey entering the EU. Instead, for them the best possible outcome is Turkey intensifying their relations with the Arabic world. On the contrary, AKP founders had been members of the Milli Görüş movement but they were willing to cooperate with the secular establishment, accepts the fundamental values and constitution of the Turkish Republic and its officials have repeatedly emphasized that Western values such as democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are very important. Also, Western countries are very important strategic partners and they wanted Turkey to enter the EU. Actually, AKP views EU membership as a means of reducing the influence of the military and the Kemalist establishment and as a good chance of establishing a political framework that is tolerant to religious tolerance. That way, Political Islam will be able to survive politically. It can be said that the new party that Erdogan and Gul founded remain loyal to Political Islam but they had a different idea about how it could survive.

Nevertheless, this is an important ideological split: AKP defines itself not as an Islamic party but as a conservative democratic one that is similar to Christian democratic parties that are found in Western Europe countries. Traditionally,

Islamists were opposed to the West, rejected it and of course, they were against globalization. AKP officials though understood that in order for Turkish economy to grow they had to attract capital from foreign countries and to carry on with IMF's recommendations regarding the economy. So, AKP has promoted liberal market policies in order for Turkey to attract foreign capital and to integrate into the world economy. (Larrabee, 2008, pp. 46-47)

When AKP first appeared on the Turkish political scene, many were afraid that its officials had a secret Islamist agenda, to slowly turn the country into an Islamic one and to undermine secularism. It is true that some of the party officials were ideological Islamists but they were outranked by party leaders Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan who were supposed to be, according to their statements at the time, Islamists-turned- modern politicians and pragmatists that were promising democracy, religious freedoms, liberal market support and to tackle corruption. They abandoned Erbakan's views about the economy, disagreed with Kemalists' statism, they adopted liberal economic policies and they turned against state controlled economy and state intervention.

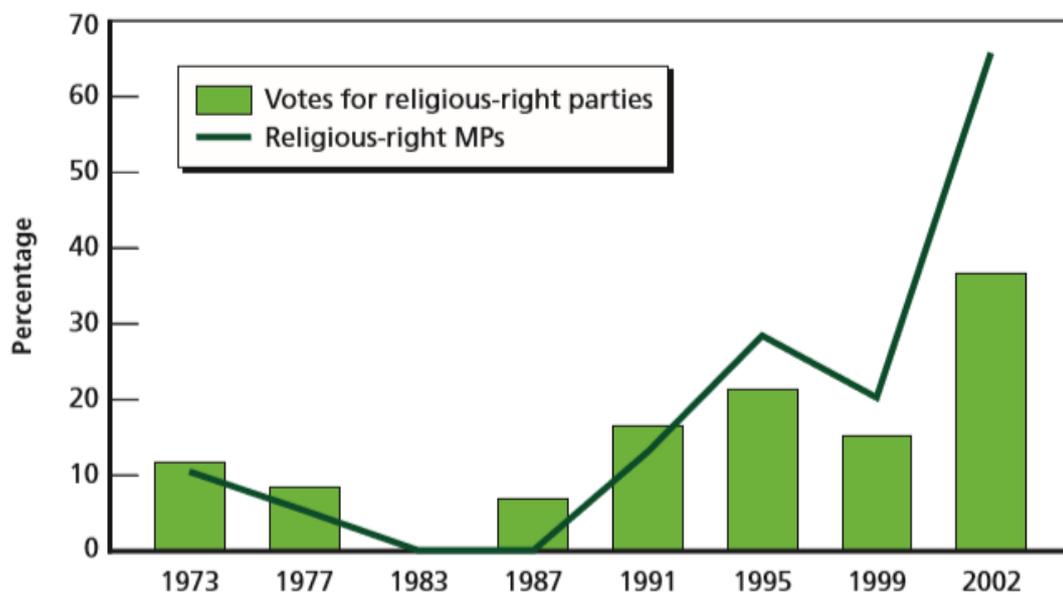
As a result, despite military officers and the Kemalist Republican People's Party accusing them of wanting to change the secular nature of the state, most of Turkey's elites didn't see them as a threat to the Kemalist foundation. Instead, they viewed them as reformists that wanted to stop the stranglehold of Kemalists over the country's political and economic life, to tackle corruption in state institutions and to promote democracy by strengthening rights and freedoms of expression and limiting the military's power over civil affairs. Recep Tayyip Erdogan has played a really important role promoting AKP. He managed to win the support of Turkey's western-oriented and liberal elites. Their backing and support in general helped AKP to drastically increase their voters beyond the typical Islamist movement. (Antonios, 2016, pp. 72-73), (Toledano, 2011 , p. 3)

Erdogan enjoyed also not only elites' support but also citizens'. People loved Erdogan and his party; they believed that they are close to them and that they could understand them and sympathize with them. Even Kurds and leftists voted him. The former supported AKP because they believed that their life inside Turkey would be easier and the latter because he opposed Kemalists. (Antonios, 2016, pp. 66,70)

Ideological modernization and the adoption of a different political rhetoric contributed to AKP's increase of its appeal. On the November 2002 elections AKP earned 34% of votes and 363 seats in the Parliament and won the elections, surpassing by far Republican People's Party, the traditional Kemalist Party, which received 19% of total votes and 178 seats. Kutan's and Erbakan's new party received only 2.5% of total votes and failed to enter the Parliament. Of course, previous Political Islam voters supported AKP but the Party was able to attract votes from

other parts of the society too. As it can be seen in the graph below, AKP received considerably more votes than previous Islamic Parties. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 48), (Jenkins, 2008., p. 169)

Parliamentary-Election Performance of the Religious Right in Turkey



SOURCE: Turkstat, http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PrelstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=199 for pre-1980 elections and http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PrelstatistikTablo.do?istab_id=200 for 1980–2002 elections (as of March 21, 2008).

This new Party's realistic and moderate tone appealed to a wider range of the electorate. Other factors that contributed to its victory were the corruption scandal revelations for many officials of old parties that became widely known. Contrary to the old, corrupt politicians AKP members weren't corrupt and they were able to attract voters by capitalizing on the corruption scandals that older politicians were mixed in by presenting themselves as clean. Also, the really bad situation of the Turkish economy² led many people to vote for AKP which was a new Party promising reforms, economic growth and political change. In addition, AKP managed to appeal to worker classes and to the poorer classes since leftists in Turkey didn't have political activity. Suffice it to say, the party had really well organized social networks (the majority of them were found by Erbakan's Welfare Party) which helped AKP increase their votes even more. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 48)

² Turkish lira was devalued several times, the banking sector almost collapsed and GDP shrank by 9.5% in 2001. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 48)

4. AKP in power: First years

As it has been written before in this current dissertation, AKP party members started their political career in the Milli Gorus movement, which is the movement behind Political Islam. Knowing this, the military, Kemalist establishment and their political opponents accuse them of having a secret Islamization agenda. Erdogan himself, as well as other AKP officials, openly stated that there isn't a secret Islamization agenda. For them, their party isn't an Islamist one and its members were simply "Muslim democrats" and not plain Islamists. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 306) The truth though is that AKP has completely cut its ties with the Milli Görüş movement and accepted secularism because, according to AKP officials, is a principle that "maintains peace among diverse beliefs, schools of thoughts, and perspectives." Erdogan himself underlined that they cut any ties they had with this movement. In the party program secularism is depicted as a principle that assures the freedom of religion and conscience and rejects the "the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion." This new ideology is identified as "conservative democracy." Erdogan himself explained what conservative democracy stands for: It didn't mean the conservation of established institutions but the protection of important values and principles while, at the same time, pursuing progress. For him, religion shouldn't be used as a political instrument as it may be harmful for social peace, political diversity and even religion itself. AKP's goal is to synthesize local and universal values, tradition, modernity and morality. (Kuru, 2007, p. 146), (Larrabee, 2008, p. 54)

There is a huge difference between a party that wants to change a society based on the religion without the citizens accepting this change and a party that just accepts religion and its values. That is what Erdogan claims. AKP, according to the country's newest politicians, belongs to the latter category. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 234)

Regarding their relation with Kemalism, AKP officials criticized Ataturk's ideology and stated it severs the Turkish society from its past and its traditional characteristics, including religion. In other words, traditional culture and its values were missing. If society's link with them would be restored then Turkey would be able to achieve both growth and modernization. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 238) Erdogan and the other AKP officials weren't against Kemal Ataturk and his ideals though. They underlined that the Turkish Republic's founder's principles and reforms are the most important vehicle for raising the Turkish public above the level of contemporary civilization and an element of social peace. Where they disagreed with Kemalist establishment though is the interpretation of secularism. They rejected this version of secularism because there is enmity against religion. For AKP, secularism is defined as:

“A principle which allows people of all religions and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organize their lives along these lines.”

In addition, AKP wants to change the way secularism had been interpreted and applied by the Kemalist establishment. According to them, secularism is distorted by the Kemalists because they have enmity against religion. So, Turkey wasn't truly secular. What AKP wants is a truly secular country then, where everyone would be free to live practicing their religion freely. Suffice it to say, even those who don't believe in God can live in the country normally and organize their lives without any form of discrimination. In a way, Erdogan wanted the evolution of the Kemalist ideas, they didn't reject Ataturk. That's what they were claiming during that time at least. (Moudouros, 2011, p. 236), (Jenkins, 2008., p. 168)

During his first years as a Prime Minister, Erdogan repeatedly stated that AKP is committed to democracy, freedom of speech, clean government and promised that the party would be different from previous political parties in Turkey which have been dominated by their leaders. And he delivered: The party's founding statutes limited the leader's authority and included a large measure of decentralization. Also, he distanced himself from the radical ideals he had while he was a member of Erbakan's movement and claimed that he had changed. (Jenkins, 2008., p. 167)

Erdogan kept his word; AKP remained distant from divisive social issues.³ He declared that his government's priorities were EU membership and economic stability and he was using the language of modernity as he realized the advantages of doing so. Having EU membership in his political agenda was seen as something positive and he earned the support by business cycles, pro-Western liberals and the public in general. The emphasis on democracy and human rights allowed the AKP to minimize the influence of the military⁴ and the Kemalist establishment in politics. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 51) Also, the fact that their stance and rhetoric wasn't radical and extreme, contrary to the majority of the previous Turkish Islamic parties as well as similar parties in other countries gave them many points. Actually, their electoral success was possible because of their moderate stance. Some people, based on their point of view, believed that AKP's stance is anti-Islamic and some others that they are becoming increasingly secular. Nevertheless, it is a fact that this new way of

³ There was one exception though. AKP tried to establish a law that criminalized adultery. Liberal cycles and the EU criticize AKP and because of the controversy it caused the law was cancelled. Conservatives didn't like this development. (Incel, 2017, p. 117)

⁴ AKP took some measures in order to reduce the army's intervention. They were able to do so because the EU supported AKP regarding this matter. Actually, from 2002 to 2004, Turkish Parliament voted 8 units of reforms, including some Constitutional amendments. With these reforms, the nature of the National Security Council changes, it is now 'politicized'. This means that military officers' presence and influence in this institution is now limited. (Incel, 2017, p. 124)

moderate politics helped AKP survive and to be the dominant party. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 68)

AKP persuaded the electorate that it is a liberal and politically moderate party. Also, economic growth and stability that they brought after the disastrous economic recession of 2001 raised the party's popularity even more. That's why it managed to attract votes from many parts of the society, Erdogan and his party lived up to many of these liberal expectations. It could be said that AKP proved to be a catch-all party. This can explain the increased vote percentages that achieved during the next elections that took place in 2007. (Evaggelia, 2015, pp. 60-61) It managed to earn 46.7% of total votes and 341 seats in the Parliament. This is a clear sign that the electorate trusted the AKP because they preferred the liberalism that Erdogan promised to Kemalist authoritarian perception. (Antonios, 2016, p. 76)

In the lead-up to the elections many, including the judiciary and military officers, accused AKP that it harbored a hidden Islamist agenda. Its popularity wasn't affected though. Economic growth, AKP's relatively clean governance, the absence of credible political opposition, their devotion in EU accession, their statements that they respect European Court of Human Rights and other International Institutions and the overall stability that was achieved led significant portions of the country's liberals and pro-Western voters to trust them again. (Toledano, 2011 , p. 4), (Incel, 2017, p. 109)

When assessing the electoral success of AKP, special mention must be made to Hizmet, the organization that Fethullah Gulen found. The latter is an Imam and Islamic preacher that resides in USA in a self-imposed exile because he was accused for anti-secular activities. His movement follows his teachings and is the largest Islamic network. Although it is an Islamic one it is moderate, they advocate dialogue with the other religions, accepts science and doesn't argue that scientific advances and Islam are incompatible. This movement is very popular and large, it has millions of members in Turkey alone and it has also expanded in many other European and Asian countries. The movement controls a significant amount of financial resources: It controls many businesses, has its own media, schools, hospitals, insurance company and even its own bank. It has been mobilizing mainly through its vast network in the education system which consists of hundreds of private schools, dorms and studying centers. Also, many important people are members like renowned businessmen, police officers, bureaucrats and even military officers despite them being secularists. It didn't support Erbakan and radical political Islam though because his views were too radical and weren't compatible with Gulen's ideals. But because of AKP adopting a more moderate tone and because the version of Islam they supported wasn't radical, the Fethullah Gulen movement and its vast and grand network decided to strengthen AKP party and to engage in politics. So, a

grand alliance was formed during the first decade of the 2000s, which resulted in the initiation of a golden age for Islamic actors, which surely contributed greatly to AKP's electoral success. On the one hand, Gulenists voting for Erdogan were an immense boost in AKP's percentages, since this movement has millions of members and supporters inside Turkey. On the other hand, many of these people had important positions and they helped counter-balance the Kemalist establishment's counterattack against AKP (for instance, the political influence of the military was halted) when the latter started to become a serious threat. So, Gulen helped AKP consolidate its control over political institutions. In addition, this alliance was beneficial for Gulenists too: Claiming that they represent civil Islam, until the AKP years, the movement avoided any confrontation with secularists and kept a safe distance from active politics and political parties in general, keeping a low profile. But aligning with AKP allowed the movement to obtain political influence in a more direct way and without much effort. Now, after many years of keeping a low profile and withstanding the suspicion of the political elite and the Kemalist establishment, now its honor has been restored and can operate openly and engage in politics. In sum, this alliance initiated a Golden Age for Islamic actors as it was extremely beneficial for both AKP and Fethullah Gulen. (Maria, 2011, pp. 24-25), (Demiralp, 2016, p. 3)

This important victory in the 2007 elections wasn't the only one for AKP. In April 2007 the Party nominated their candidate for the Presidency: He was Abdullah Gül, who was serving as the Foreign Affairs minister during that time. This decision was strongly opposed from pro-secular actors because he was a member of earlier Islamist parties (it was completely unacceptable for secularists to have an Islamist President) and because his wife wears a scarf which is viewed by them as a symbol of opposition to the secularism. The military intervened too and mobilized the public. As a result, mass rallies took place in Turkey with the goal to "uphold secularism". In major cities more than one million protesters gathered to prevent AKP to elect the new President. Nevertheless, on 28 August 2007 the Presidency elections took place and he was nominated President of the Turkish Republic. This of course shocked the Kemalist establishment and secularists in general. It was the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic that both the President and the Prime Minister are Islamists. This was a great victory of the Islamic movement against the Kemalist establishment, previously in the Turkish political landscape the President of the Republic counterbalanced the parliament that was dominated by the AKP: Because the President signs the appointment of high ranking generals and top civil bureaucrats as well as high court judges and university presidents, AKP's impact toward state policies regarding religion was limited. As a result, because of this development, many of the non-Muslims were afraid that now AKP has the authority to impose radical changes to Turkey, they will start Islamizing the society. Erdogan tried to ease

their fears: After the elections Erdogan made a conciliatory speech, where he promised that his government will embrace all of Turkish citizens, secular or religious. (Jongerden, 2011 , p. 30), (Larrabee, 2008, p. X), (Kuru, 2007, p. 149)

Despite the controversy and the political crisis that was caused by the appointment of Gul, the matter was solved in a peaceful and democratic way and according to the democratic institutions. During that time AKP had a moderate stance and its officials didn't want the situation to escalate. (Evaggelia, 2015, p. 73)

Soon afterwards, with the support of two more parties, AKP amended the Constitution. Now, the ban for the headscarf has been lifted, allowing women wearing a headscarf to study at the University or work in civil service jobs and government offices. For AKP, wearing the scarf is a matter of personal choice and is not something that the state should allow or ban via policies as its banning is a violation of human rights. Of course, the main opposition party, the Kemalist Republican People's Party, didn't welcome this change and took recourse to the Constitutional Court, where the amendment was annulled because, according to the judges, violated the principle of secularism as enshrined in the Constitution. Nevertheless, this wasn't the end of this case as the chief public prosecutor charged the party with having an Islamization agenda that seeks to undermine secular state and to establish an Islamic one and called for AKP's dissolution. In July 2008 the Constitutional Court decided not to ban AKP but by a margin of only one vote. They just issued a financial penalty and a warning because of some of its members' activities and statements were viewed as contrary to the principle of secularism. (Jongerden, 2011 , p. 30), (Saleem, 2017, p. 48)

In the end, AKP remained in office, is more popular than ever since it received much more votes in the 2007 elections and the new President of the Republic is an Islamist, which means that Erdogan and Political Islam are more powerful than ever. However, secularists' backlash that almost led to the dissolution of AKP worried Erdogan and he launched an attack on the Turkish deep state in order for him and his party to politically survive. After the 2007 elections, the minister of Interior Affairs, after being instructed by Erdogan, started a campaign against the Turkish deep state and the Ergenekon paramilitary network.⁵ The result of this campaign was the arrestments of many military officers, judges, reporters, academics and even renowned businessmen. Also, it became widely known that this network planned to overthrow the Erdogan government. Nevertheless, this case

⁵ The Turkish deep state includes senior army officers, security services seniors, the top echelon of the state bureaucracy and leading members of the judiciary. They operate under a code of absolute loyalty to Kemalist principles and the republic. When the Kemalist state is faced with a crisis this organization reemerges and acts in order to defend and save the state and Kemalist principles. In order to do so, they overturn, if they have to, institutions and even governments if they have deviated from Kemalist principles which are considered to be sacred. (Toledano, 2011 , pp. 6-7)

ended with the victory of Erdogan and Political Islam against the Kemalist deep state. (Moudouros, 2011, pp. 317-319)

AKP's and Erdogan's power increased even more after the referendum that was held on 12 September 2010. This referendum marked the end of the hold of Constitutional Court and the military by the secularists. It reduced the powers of the military and broke secularists' control over the Constitutional Court which had lasted for 50 years. The composition of the Constitutional Court was changed and democratic governments were given more powers. Also, the power of the military over civilian matters was decreased. Now, civilian courts can try military personnel as the latter do not enjoy the protection that the coup leaders of 1980 had. Also, the powers of the military personnel were decreased. These changes didn't bring Islam into the Constitution of course but made it possible for a political party to do so in the future should it manage to gain the support required. (Saleem, 2017, pp. 48-49)

AKP remains dominant in the Turkish political field. During the 2011 elections it received 49.83% of total vote, and it was the first party. AKP's position and power is consolidated since almost one of two Turks vote for AKP. One of the main reasons for the increasing popularity of the party is the economy. After 10 years that the AKP is in government the country's GDP almost tripled. Poverty was drastically reduced (those who lived under the poverty line reduced from 30% of total population to 7% in the period from 2002 to 2008), Turkey's public debt had been reduced too and, as a result, more money was spent for health and education, a new middle class was created because many people were able to work, earn and participate in the economic life due to economic growth, Turkey was also able to repay IMF loans and enter the G20(Turkey entered the club of the 20 countries with the highest GDP internationally) and was able to attract foreign investors. But, despite the impressive performance of the economy the situation isn't as positive as it first appears to be. Results have shown that Turkey was split in two. On the one side AKP supporters have formed conservative Islamic elite. On the other side, the other half of the population was Turkey's secular part which feels threatened by the other sides' rise and consolidation of power. That's why many voices are raised that Erdogan's government would become an authoritarian and totalitarian one that aims in the creation of an Islamic society. It is true that the authoritarian regime of the Kemalist establishment received a heavy blow by AKP and its members but many in Turkey are afraid that this will not lead to a more democratic and liberal society. It will just lead to the replacement of an oppressive regime with another similar one. (Antonios, 2016, pp. 82-83), (Filis, 2017, p. 41)

5. Is the secular state in a process of change?

As argued earlier, Erdogan and the AKP officials were promising a truly secular and democratic society where everyone would be able to live equally and practice their religion freely without any form of discrimination. In addition, they were repeatedly claiming that they don't have an Islamist agenda. Their goal was just to stop the anti-religious tendency that Kemalists imposed on the country because, according to them, it is undemocratic and unfair for pious Islamists who feel oppressed in their own country. After the passing of years and many electoral victories, AKP' power and popularity has been consolidated and Recep Tayip Erdogan is the dominant one inside Turkey and the most powerful man the country has even known since the years of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk himself. So, now is the time for the big question: Did Erdogan's policies resulted in a democratic and liberal country or, on the contrary, he made an authoritarian turn? And, last but not least, does he attempt to change the secular state by Islamizing the society and undermining Kemal Ataturk's reforms?

a. Erdogan's authoritarian turn.

Despite talking about the democratization of Turkey and human rights and the creation of a truly secular and liberal society, only after a few years after the consolidation of AKP in power Erdogan's political behavior changed dramatically. During the first years, the Kemalist establishment and his political opponents tried to defame AKP. They accused the party that they aim to Islamize the society and they mass mobilized the people against it, for instance during the Presidential elections of 2007. Soon after, during the Constitutional amendment regarding the headscarf ban lift, the AKP was almost banned and that would mean the end of Erdogan's political career. During all those incidents, the disputes were resolved in a moderate tone and according to the laws and Institutions.

But, soon afterwards Erdogan started changing his stance and he begun hunting down and purging those who could pose a threat, initiating a witch hunt. For instance, in 2010 two reporters were arrested, Ahmet Sik and Nedim Sener with the allegations that they 'were part of the Ergenekon terrorist organization'. But the truth is that they wrote a book in which they reveal the connections that the Gulen movement has in the judiciary and the police, who have started the fight against 'terrorists'. Also, in the same year, a few weeks after the Constitutional referendum of 2010, Hanefi Avtzi got arrested with the allegation that he is collaborating with Far- Left terrorist organizations. Erdogan himself approved of these arrestments and even claimed while talking in front of the European Council that the arrestment of Sik and the seizure of his hand-writings are a preventive measure, similar with the seizure of a hand-made bomb!

The witch hunt continues in August of 2011 with the arrestments of around 100 military officers with the allegation that they were preparing a coup. On the autumn of the same year, many intellectuals that were members or just supporters of the Peace and Democracy Political Party got arrested. Their crime was their involvement with Kurdish terrorists. (Incel, 2017, pp. 175-178)

The year 2013 is a turning point for AKP and Erdogan. The party now is consolidated, opposition parties cannot pose a threat and military officers, because of the previous witch hunts, are now completely harmless. Erdogan is now extremely powerful and he and his party have the police, the judiciary and the secret services under their control. In addition, most media are AKP supporters. (Incel, 2017, p. 182) Of course, in previous years there were many indicators that Erdogan has authoritarian tendencies and he isn't an ardent fan of democracy and liberalism but one that wants to gather all 3 powers in his hands (Executive, Judiciary and Legislative) and he is aggressive towards

his opponents and critics. These suspicions became a reality after the Gezi park events. On 28 of May a tree removing operation has started on the Gezi Park. Erdogan's initial plan was the removal of the park. In its place, a large shopping center would be constructed. Soon after the start of the operation, a small group of ecologists gathered there and protested for the destruction of the park and the removal of trees. Immediately policemen came and used violence in order to force them to leave. Soon after, because of the violence that the police used, thousands of protesters gathered in the streets near the Taksim Square (it is located near the Gezi Park). They weren't protesting only against the destruction of the Gezi Park. They were also protesting against AKP and Erdogan's authoritarian government and conservative policies and its interference on personal lifestyles by attempting to impose a way of life compatible with the Sunni Islam morals (more about that later). Erdogan wants to create a conservative society with Islamic values and he tries to impose his ideal way of Islamic, pious and moral society into everyone. As a result, everyone in Gezi Park and Taksim Square protested because they were opposed to these Erdogan's policies. Protesters had a mixed background: They were in large percentage young people, middle classmen, supporters of the secular state and even Alevis. The latter feel threatened from the undermining of secular state that Erdogan does with his policies. Protesters want AKP officials to respect democracy and their own way of life. In addition, they show their disagreement to Erdogan's crazy construction projects like the third Bosphorus Bridge and the construction of a third airport in Istanbul.

Erdogan responded in a violent way. After about ten days, the police was ordered to suppress the protesters. They used violence in order to succeed. But protests continued and they started to appear in many cities throughout the country. 7 people were killed by police force. In the end, Administrative Court decided the cancellation of the Shopping center construction and the protests stopped. The incident ended but it was clearly shown that Erdogan has abandoned the moderate tone that has shown during his first years as Prime Minister, doesn't accept criticism and, of course, one that doesn't accept democratic principles. He is also a populist: He stated that the Gezi Park protests weren't an expression of Turkish people but were organized by enemies of Turkey worldwide. (Incel, 2017, pp. 188-191)

In other words, AKP and its officials are now above the law and they can do whatever they want. On 17th of December of 2013, it became widely known that many AKP officials, including Ministers and other high-ranking officials, were mixed in economic scandals. Police officers, judges and

prosecutors that began research about this case were demoted, transferred to other cities or forced to resign. (Incel, 2017, pp. 194-195)

Nevertheless, things in Turkey became much, much worse after the July 2016 coup. Erdogan believes that Fetullah Gulen and his movement organized the coup in order to overthrow him.⁶ After the failed coup, Erdogan and his government responded fiercely. More than 50.000 people were arrested, more than 140.000 people that were working in the public sector as judges, police officers, teachers, reporters or academics lost their jobs. Their crime was, according to AKP, their collaboration with Gulen in order to overthrow Erdogan and AKP. In addition, more than 1000 firms were confiscated and media that were considered to be opposing to AKP or controlled by Gulen were forced to close. In general, after the coup the political landscape in Turkey changes dramatically. Now, any opposition or criticism to the government of Erdogan himself is immediately suppressed: People that speak against him are considered to be terrorists and sent to jail. Those who are Erdogan's enemies are also enemies of Turkey and need to be taken care of. Also, the President initiated a purge against military officials. Those who are secularists and are against Islamization of the society lost their positions. Erdogan is above the law and the institutions and can surpass them and do whatever he wants. He doesn't hesitate to criticize judges, for instance, when they decide something that is against his interests despite the principle of the separation of the 3 powers being in effect in Turkey. (Filis, 2017, pp. 10-12), (Antonios, 2016, p. 95)

⁶ This alliance between Fetullah Gulen's movement and AKP didn't last long. While it isn't easy to explain the reasons of this break-up there are some events that shed some light and possibly can explain it. The first turning point was the secret meeting in Oslo between the head of the National Intelligence Organization, Hakan Fidan, and PKK representatives, the armed Kurdish organization that had been fighting Turkish security forces since the 1980s. This meeting sparked controversy in Turkey and opposing parties criticized AKP. Along with the other critics, Gulenists raised their voice as well. This was the first time that they criticized Erdogan since they started cooperating. The next turning point was the Gezi Park protests. During that time, the Gulenists didn't support Erdogan but remained neutral. In a polarizing political environment sometimes neutrality is considered to be opposition and that's exactly what happened in this case too, Erdogan didn't like their stance regarding this matter. Afterwards, AKP began to attack the Gulen movement. In November 2013 AKP officials announced their new education policy, which included the shutting down of all study centers which prepared students for university entry exams. This was a blow to Gulen's movement since it had many study centers and these were the Organization's means for mobilizing people. Softliners from both sides tried to not let things go out of control but in the end hardliners dominated. Their relations became even worse when many government officials were mixed in economic scandals: Tapes were released from anonymous sources implicating AKP members. The latter accused Fetullah Gulen for these tapes and their circulation and they claimed that they are fake and that Gulenists plan to overthrow the government. In the months that followed, AKP officials continued the attacks on Institutions and Organizations that had ties with the movement. The last nail in the coffin was the 2016 coup. Erdogan himself accused Gulen for the planning of the coup and initiated a witch hunt in order to get rid of his Organization and to silence its members once and for all. (Demiralp, 2016, pp. 3-5)

Nevertheless, Erdogan is the dominant one in the Turkish political field but only in practice. In theory, laws limited Prime Ministers' and the Presidents' power and the principles of checks and balances as well as the separation of powers were active in Turkey. In other words, institutionally there was a limit in President's power. But this changes after the Referendum that took place on the 16th of April 2017. It was decided that the Constitution would be amended and the President would receive increased powers. Now, the President is the dominant and most powerful official in Turkey. The position of Prime Minister is abolished and the government is being appointed by him. There is now need for the latter to receive the Confidence Vote from the parliament. Also, the President appoints Ministers, high ranking judges and he is the main bearer of executive power. In addition, he can issue decrees and no one, not even the Legislative power can check him and counterbalance his authority. In other words, earlier Erdogan surpassed institutions and laws and was able to do what he wanted. Now though, he amended the Constitution in such a way that he can continue ruling in the exactly same way the country without being above the law. (Filis, 2017, pp. 11-12)

As it has been already explained in this current research, Erdogan has a completely different behavior as a ruler during the latter years. While observing the political situation in Turkey, is essential to review Freedom of Press in the country because it is a very good indicator of how democratic a country is. In addition, in the case of Erdogan and Turkey it has increased importance: If Erdogan represses Press and sends to jail reporters who criticize him and, on the contrary, the only media that can operate undisturbed are the pro-AKP ones then that means that Erdogan can distort the truth and present his own version of events. Suffice it to say, if that is the case, it will be much easier for him to influence public opinion and promote his own political agenda: If he has a secret Islamization agenda it will be much easier for him to succeed and change the secular nature of the state.

b. Freedom of Press in Turkey

Erdogan was never a strong supporter of an independent and free Press. Even a few years ago, when he hasn't shown yet his authoritarian tendencies, he has openly shown his dislike of reporters who criticize him. In fact, in 2010, while he was talking to some party members he has said that everyone should know his place and his limits (he was referring to reporters) and he warned them to not speak against him and his Party.

Erdogan very soon took action. Not only he criticizes opposing media but he also boycotts them. He asked people to boycott them because 'they work for foreigners and their interests'. Actually, one of his targets was the media network that belongs to the businessman Aydin Dogan. Some of the reporters that were working for him criticized Erdogan, AKP officials and their actions. Immediately after the decision of the judiciary of 2008 where the AKP almost got banned from politics, Aydin Dogan faced the consequences. Tax officials checked them and decided that they are guilty of tax- evasion and they had to pay around 4 billion dollars. Dogan was forced to sell part of his business to pro-government businessmen. (Incel, 2017, pp. 169-171)

Repression of the Press was always existent during AKP's rule but the last years, after the failed coup of 2016 and the state of Emergency that followed, the situation became much worse. It is almost impossible to present news on the country on a normal and objective way, as the reporters are supposed to be doing. Workers in media have two choices: Either to give the pro-Erdogan version of the news or to not give them at all. Those who don't do as AKP officials say pay the price: They are arrested immediately and sent to the court with the allegation of insulting President Erdogan and/or collaborating with terrorist organizations and face dozens of years' worth of prison time. Prosecutors and judges have an increased workload as they have tens of cases to prosecute. (Ahval, 2018) Details about these arrestments are shocking. Journalists were sent to jail without receiving a trial and, in most of the cases, without being issued an indictment. The indictments began being issued around a year after their initial capture and their trials are now starting to get under way. Some notable cases are thirty employees of the daily newspaper Zaman – 20 of whom have been held for nearly a year – will finally begin being tried in Istanbul on 18 September. Some of them face the danger of being imprisoned for a life sentence. (Borders, 2017)

Turkish journalists of course tried to fight back. They are turning to the European Court of Human Rights and they ask the Institution to intercede on behalf of the journalists that have been detained. The Court responded almost immediately and started working on some cases. (Borders, 2017) After a few months, the Court has reached a decision: After examining the

cases of two reporters (their names are Mehmet Altan and Şahin Alpay), it calls Turkish Government to release them because that have been wrongfully imprisoned after the 2016 coup. European Court argued that these people's detention was neither "necessary" nor "proportionate" and that it violated their "right to liberty and security of person" and their "right to freedom of expression." (Borders, 2018)

In general, acquisition of media enterprises by Erdogan and his supporters is a practice that started a few years ago and continues even today. One of the greatest and more worrying examples is Aydın Dogan's enterprise and its fate. As stated in the previous paragraph, Dogan became a target of Erdogan and his supporters in the past but that was not the end of it. A few months ago, on 21th of March 2018, it was announced that Dogan media group was bought by Demirören Holding, who is a pro-government conglomerate. This is a truly worrying development since Dogan media group was the biggest media group in Turkey, having the daily Hürriyet, the 24-hour news channel CNN Türk (a joint venture with CNN), the news agency DHA, the English-language Hürriyet Daily News, the TV channel Kanal D and the tabloid Posta. Demirören on the other hand is a businessman who is known for having close ties with Erdogan himself. There is no need to say that with this takeover Erdogan now controls the majority of media enterprises and can control the news and the information published. About 90% of them are now pro-AKP. (borders, 2018) According to journalist Ayşenur Arslan, Dogan was forced to sell his enterprise under the threat that he would be sent to jail should he didn't comply. (Öncü, 2018)

The Government attempts to control online streaming news sites too. According to a new law that appeared this year, online streaming news sites, which are now very important since traditional media are almost entirely controlled by Erdogan, in order to operate need to receive the approval from the government broadcast monitoring agency if they wish to receive the necessary license. (Ahvalnews, 2018)

In general, AKP attempts to control and to suppress the flow of information in general, not just from media websites. Since 2014, AKP censors the internet: It closes websites that posts information or images that are opposed to the government and Erdogan's policies and actions. From time to time, many websites and social media platforms have been periodically proscribed or restricted by the authorities, who claim to do so in order to battle terrorist groups. For instance, the well-known online encyclopedia Wikipedia is completely inaccessible since April 2017. In addition, around 220.000 websites are blocked by the government. (Sabanci, 2018)

The results of all these actions are really noteworthy. Since the July 2016 coup attempt Erdogan and his government have forced more than 175 news outlets to shut down and more than 12.000 lost their jobs. Right now, unemployment in journalism is among the highest rates of all sectors, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute. As a response, independent journalism is on the rise in Turkey right now. Many journalists attempt to use social media platforms in order to continue working as journalists and to make their voice heard. Their aim is to present an alternative to the majority of media which are almost completely controlled by Erdogan. (Zeren, 2018)

In sum, Recep Tayip Erdogan was never in favor of independent journalism. He always tried to hunt down and get rid of media outlets that criticized him but the situation became much worse after the failed coup of 2016. After that, a real witch hunt began in Turkey. Opposing media outlets are forced to close, hundreds of reporters were sent to jail and they being kept there without being issued an indictment and Erdogan now controls almost all media. Indicative of this situation is the ranking that Reporters Without Borders give about freedom of Press in Turkey. The year 2015 Turkey was ranked 149th among 180 countries-a very low score. After that, Turkey's rank becomes even worse. The ranking for 2016 was even lower, 151 among 180 countries and it became even worse in 2017: Turkey's current rank is 155 among 180 countries. Turkey is without any exaggeration a giant prison for journalists and one of the countries with the less media freedom in the world. (Borders, 2017)



Journalists protest. In the labels that they hold is written: We want justice, freedom to newspaper workers.

c. Turkey and European Union. Is Turkey continuing EU rapprochement and reforms?

It has already been established that Erdogan has deviated from democratic procedures, has gathered all powers in his hands and he suppresses press, not allowing any voice that criticizes him or counterbalances his Party. The only actor left that can apply pressure on him is the European Union. So, before assessing if Erdogan tries to Islamize the country and the society, it is essential to examine if Turkey continues the necessary reforms in order to join the Union. If Turkey's politicians have deviated from EU path then EU officials' recommendations and pressure will have no effect on them, leaving them free to proceed with their plans about altering the Turkish state and society in general.

Turkey, on theory at least, is a candidate country for joining the EU and AKP is a pro-EU party that supports EU accession and entering the EU was one of its main goals when it was first elected on 2002. On the side of the EU, the conditions for becoming a member state rest mainly on Copenhagen Criteria. So, Turkey is expected to achieve stability of institutions that guarantee democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. EU Institutions and its officials for year have monitored Turkey's progress in these fields. (Toktas, 2006, p. 490) The European Council granted Turkey the status of a candidate country in December 1999 and Accession Negotiations were initiated in October 2005. Despite the Turkish government expressing their commitment to EU accession, their actions do not match their statements. Necessary reforms have actually stopped. According to European Commission's most recent report, key recommendations of the Council of Europe and its bodies have yet to be addressed. For instance, the report underlines that the judicial system isn't independent from political pressure, is at an early stage of preparation and there has been serious backsliding in the last two years after the failed coup and initiation of the State of Emergency: The recent Constitutional amendments regarding Council of Judges and Prosecutors entered into force and further undermined the judiciary's independence from the executive power. (COMMISSION, 2018, pp. 2-4)

Regarding the fight against corruption, the report states that although there is some level of preparation no progress has been achieved in the last years. Turkish policy makers need to try harder in order for the legal and institutional framework to align with the standards set by EU. Turkish institutions do little in the fight against corruption: They allow influence by the executive in the investigation and prosecution of high-profile corruption cases and the country's track record in these fields remain poor. As a result, corruption remains

prevalent in many areas and it is very high, both the actual corruption and the perceived one. (COMMISSION, 2018, pp. 4-5)

Regarding corruption, Transparency International's Report agrees with EU's arguments.⁷ Turkey's corruption levels remain extremely high and also have the tendency to increase. This can be clearly seen on the corruption scores for the country. (The smaller the grade the greater the corruption is)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Corruption Score	49	50	45	42	41	40

Source: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

It can be clearly seen from the values that Turkey always has been very corrupt. There has been some improvement for the year 2013 but after that the score drops. In essence, after AKP's and Erdogan's consolidation in power, the concentration of powers in the latter's hands and their authoritarian turn, it can be seen that corruption increases even more.

In theory, Turkish legal framework guarantees human and fundamental rights but they have been further challenged and undermined by a number of emergency degrees passed during the last 2 years during the state of emergency: Because of them, there has been a serious backsliding in the freedom of expression too which is a field that Turkey is actually at an early stage of preparation. During the state of emergency, legal action has been taken against reporters, academics, human rights defenders and activists, writers and social media users. The internet law and the general legal framework enable the executive to control and block online content without a court.

In the areas of freedom of assembly, freedom of association and property rights there was serious backsliding too. Freedom of assembly continues to be restricted both in law and practice. Also, there wasn't any progress regarding rights of the most vulnerable groups. Gender based violence, discrimination, hate speech against minorities, hate crimes and violations of human rights of

⁷ Transparency International is a Non-governmental organization whose aim is to tackle corruption. It is a global NGO that has its base in Germany, has many chapters in many countries and its goal is to tackle corruption and promote transparency. In order to do this, Transparency international members tries to inform about the phenomenon of corruption and its negative effects on economy and society and cooperates with politicians and partners of businesses and civil society in order to develop anti-corruption strategies. In addition, every year it measures the corruption in each country, a score is given that ranges from 0 to 100. 0 means full corruption while 100 means full transparency.

gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender persons are still common. (COMMISSION, 2018, p. 6)

In sum, government officials and policy makers in Turkey show clearly that they do not abide by EU rules and recommendations. AKP and Erdogan have stopped reforming the country in order to adjust Turkey's institutions to EU standards. Of course, they state that they want Turkey to join the Union but the reality is completely different. What's important for this current research is that Erdogan doesn't hear EU's criticisms and ignored the reports produced by its Institutions. He does whatever he wants without being checked by anyone.

As established in the current research, Turkey's ruler now rules the country in a really authoritarian way. Since defeating its domestic rivals and establishing its control over the judiciary and the military, the AKP is in a better position to put in place laws of his own choice. His opponents are silenced, media are almost entirely controlled by him and his people and he now controls all 3 powers. Erdogan also completely ignores EU institutions and their criticisms. He is the most powerful man Turkey has ever seen since Ataturk's time. So, if he has an Islamization agenda, it will be much easier for him. But, is it the case? Does he want to Islamize the society and to change the secular state?

d. Interference on personal lifestyles

As stated in a previous chapter of this current research, Erdogan wanted to correct the flawed secularism of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and wanted a society where everyone, regardless of their lifestyle and religion, could live peacefully. According to the official AKP's program, secularism is

“A principle which allows people of all religions and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organize their lives along these lines.”

Having in mind what he was promising back in 2002, when he first became Prime Minister, everyone would expect that AKP officials would be tolerant and not intervene on Turkish citizens' personal lifestyles.

The truth is completely different though. With the exception of Kemalists who always felt anxious with the rise of a party whose members were previously members of Milli Görüş, most of Turks, according to polls, didn't feel that government officials were trying to interfere on their personal lifestyles or, at least influence them. This started to change though in 2013. (rosaTi, 2015, p. 151) What Erdogan has been doing is the promotion of the Islamic way of life by using the Western Institutional structure: Actually, AKP officials have been forcing Islamic values on the society and they state that they are doing so because they believe in the western principle of protecting the human rights of the oppressed pious citizens. But the truth is that Erdogan wants to create a new, pious society where the ideal image of a Turk is the Muslim who believes in God and respects Him and prays five times a day and he doesn't consume alcohol. Erdogan's vision for the country is grand and takes time in order to become reality. He wants a new pious generation to be created which, given enough time, will become the majority and become consolidated. In other words, it is a slow but steady Islamization. It is both an up to down procedure and a down to up one. (Filis, 2017, pp. 24-26)

In order for this plan to succeed, in order for this new, pious generation to be created, AKP officials chose an indirect way. Instead of imposing Islamic laws that are according to Islamic teachings, they try to enhance the role of religion in everyday life by providing incentives. For instance, alcohol consumption and its selling aren't forbidden but it is forbidden by law for shopkeepers to sell it after 22.00 and to put them on a display if their store is located near schools or mosques. (Filis, 2017, pp. 24-27) It is also forbidden to promote or sponsor any alcoholic drink; products like these are blurred out in television shows. Because of the high taxation,

alcoholic drinks are very expensive, now account for two thirds of the cost of some alcoholic drinks and some Turks prefer to brew the drinks themselves because of the very high prices. (Tuvan Gumrukcu, 2017)Also, a new channel has been found by the Turkish public television which broadcasts in the Arabic language (Ataturk himself made the use of Arabic forbidden). Television programs shown promote the traditional image of a woman-housewife that stays inside the house. More signs of this new lifestyle that is imposed is the lift of the ban of the headscarf and the new standard for women' looks that is promoted- for instance, women working for the Turkish Airlines are discouraged from wearing rouge with intense red color and from dressing in a provocative way, otherwise they risk losing their job. Equally worrying is the way that the police and the judiciary have been dealing the last years with domestic violence. Instead of prosecuting the perpetrator, sometimes a murder is labeled suicide and the perpetrators receive lenient punishment. Sometimes, in rape cases perpetrators receive reduced punishments because the victim was considered to be dressed in a provocative way. (Filis, 2017, pp. 24-27)

Erdogan clearly has shown his beliefs regarding morality and the place of women in society. For him, men and women aren't equal, cannot do the same jobs and he underlined that AKP rejects the western idea for women' rights: The ideal thing for Turkey is to formulate their own version of women' human rights. Also, he has stated that he doesn't like the idea of a woman working, praised woman for their ability to give birth and underlined that her place is in the house, taking care of the children. A woman who neglects her family in order to pursue a career is one that has lost her femininity, gave up on humanity and is deficient. He recommends women to have at least 3 children and harshly criticized those who use birth control measures. When criticized about these views he replied that he doesn't oblige by law anyone to do anything, he just recommends what he believes is the ideal and right thing to do for the good of Turkey and its people.

As anyone can imagine, AKP officials have repeatedly stated that they are against abortions too. According to Erdogan, there isn't a difference between killing a child after its birth and inside the belly of its mother. It's exactly the same act. But in this case, they didn't just state their opinions but they acted too: In 2012 the AKP government passed a law that restricted abortions. Now, an abortion is permissible only if it is done within the first ten weeks of the pregnancy. Afterwards, if a woman undergoes an abortion and there aren't important medical reasons then the law proposes punishment. So, if a woman wants to stop her pregnancy, she has to go to a private hospital, where this service is very expensive. (Saleem, 2017, pp. 146-148)

In addition, government officials changed radically the education system in order for the children to receive Islamic education. These policies and trends that AKP officials promote were one of the reason that forced people to protest and shout “Enough already!” during the 2013 protests in the Gezi Park of Istanbul. (Incel, 2017, pp. 188-189)

There are many more examples that show that Erdogan and the other AKP officials try to create a pious, conservative Islamic society. On January of 2018, the Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council fined television channel over footage that show girls dressed in shorts. It ruled that the footage had violated its ethical broadcast regulations and fined the channel 2 percent of its advertising revenues, amounting almost to 1 million lira which is around 200.000 euros with the current Turkish lira value. This move is likely to anger secularists who accuse the government and Erdogan that they try to roll back secularism. (Solaker, 2018) In addition, recently Erdogan stated that now is a good time for Turkey to start considering criminalizing adultery. This wasn't the first time that Erdogan considers tackling adultery. In 2004, during his first years as a Prime Minister, his government tried to formulate a law that criminalized this act but it was abandoned because of the fierce reaction from the opposition and EU. Now though the situation is entirely different for Erdogan and is a good time to consider passing such a law because “society is in a different position with regards to moral values”. In other words, Erdogan believes that Turks pay more attention to moral values after all these years of AKP being in government. He even went that far saying that he made a mistake when AKP heard EU and abandoned this law back in 2004. (Solaker, 2018)

Another example is AKP's decision for Turkey to not participate in the Eurovision singing contest because some of the participants are LGTB. This, according to AKP officials, clashes with Turkish values. Of course, this isn't a matter of grave importance but this shows that conservatism and intolerance gains ground in Turkey as time goes by, especially if we take into account the fact that AKP officials spoke against LGTB communities despite promising a secular and democratic society about 15 years ago, when AKP first came in power. (Ahval, 2018)

One new law got passed from the parliament on November 2017. This law sparked controversy and fierce opposition by the secularists. Now, Turkish religious officials can register marriages that are approved and considered official by the state. In the past, marriages conducted by religious officials not only they weren't considered official but were illegal. On 2015, the law that banned marriage from Imams was annulled but these marriages weren't still recognized by the state: Only state registrars working for local municipalities were previously authorized to approve and register marriages.

In other words, previously religious marriage was forbidden in Turkey but now is allowed and approved by the state, which also indicated a policy change regarding religion. Muftis' responsibilities will include granting applications, preparing marriage documents, conducting the marriage, arranging the family registry, and notifying civil registry authorities. (Ahvalnews.com, 2018) This law was heavily criticized by political opposition, secularists and activists because, according to them, it would allow polygamy and child marriage, it could allow legislation on the future that would undermine women rights and in general increase religious pressure on society. Also, they underlined that this law was formulated without the participation of people that would be affected by it such as women's groups. (Ahvalnews.com, 2018), (Saleem, 2017, p. 147)

In general, in Islamic non-secular countries, sharia law (which is the official law of Islam) blends with state power and it imposes Islamic practices on the public, for instance everyone is obliged to not eat or drink anything during the day during Ramadan. Of course, those who don't respect Sharia Law are punished. In other words, Sharia law draws its power from governmental mechanisms. What about Turkey? Truth be told, because of the reforms brought by Kemal Ataturk, Turkey's case was completely different. Sharia law was left out of the public sphere and citizens didn't get punished by saying or doing something contrary to Islamic teachings.

In recent years though, after Erdogan became Prime Minister and AKP consolidated its position, things started to change. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government have begun sanctioning individuals that insult Islam. Since November of 2017, the national police, which are controlled by the AKP government, have started monitoring comments regarding religion posted online. A new unit was found with the task of observing online behavior and acts like weapon sales, violence against the animals, insult of the state or religion will result in the police prosecuting the perpetrators. When they find comments that are considered to be offensive to Islam they suppress freedom of expression. Also, it isn't uncommon for the police to arrest those who speak critically of Islam in public: For instance, Fazil Say, who is a world-renowned pianist, has been prosecuted twice with the allegation he commented on Islam in a provocative way. Actually, what Fazil Say did was make gentle fun of the everyday call for prayer on Twitter. In addition, Turkey's state controlled television channel, TRT, harshly criticizes those who are not typical Muslims and do not take part in Islamic principles. In June 2016, the channel hosted Muslim theologian Mustafa Akar, who said during a live broadcast that those who don't pray according to the Islamic practices are animals. Last but not least, government officials impose restrictions on public behavior: They criticize provocative women's dress, public kissing and

state that men and women shouldn't hang out together in entertainment areas, suggesting that mixing of men and women is unethical (Toledano, 2011 , p. 8), (Cagaptay, 2018) , (Cumhuriyet, 2017) . Another good example is a public announcement that had been posted in a subway station in the municipality of Ankara, asking from passengers to behave according to moral codes. One of the main targets was young people who 'act in an inappropriate way kissing each other'. (rosaTi, 2015, p. 151)

More recently, on the last days of 2016, many high ranking officials, including mayors, government institutions and non-government organizations, started attacking those who celebrate the New Year: The former asked them to not celebrate. Diyanet officials spoke against the celebrating of New Year and claimed that it is illicit for the pious Muslim people of Turkey. Immediately, banners discouraging people to participate in the celebrations appeared in Istanbul: These banners show a Muslim, bearded man punching Santa Claus. In addition, Muslim newspapers issued a harsh warning, calling everyone to not celebrate. In general, despite the vast majority of Turkish population being Muslim, celebrating the New Year and drinking alcohol wasn't a major issue. But now, after all these years of AKP being in power, the mentality has clearly shifted. Now Turkey is much less tolerant. What's really interesting though is the reaction of government officials after the terrorist attack that took place in Reina club of Istanbul during the Christmas Eve. They claimed that it was the work of extremist leftists. (Basaran, 2017)

Summing up, AKP officials, despite of their promises when they first came in power, openly intervene in the lifestyles of citizens and they want them to change their behavior in order to be faithful to Islamic laws.



In this banner is written: We are Muslims, NO to Santa Claus, NO to New Year celebrations

e. Diyanet and its importance

Diyanet, or the Directorate of Religious Affairs, is the most important institution in Turkey regarding the Islamic religion. Because the objective of this current research is to assess whether the secular state changes, it is essential to observe the status of the Organization during the last years and the stance of AKP government towards it.

The Diyanet was found by secularists during the reforms that made Turkey a secular country. The institution gained constitutional rank in the aftermath of the first coup in 1960. In 1971, the year of the second coup, the Directorate's prayer leaders and preachers were made civil servants. Moreover, the law governing political parties that forbids expressing the demand for a change in the Directorate's status, freezing the current situation, was passed in the aftermath of the last military takeover in 1980. (Saleem, 2017, p. 167)

The Organization mainly has two functions. It administers the (steadily increasing) 77.000 mosques that exist around the country and produces religious knowledge, regarding the Islamic religion, especially the Sunni part of Islam, which is the version of Islam that is worshipped in Turkey. It also supervises the muftis, which are Islamic scholars who give legal opinions.⁸ It has no relations with the other version of Islam of the other religions worshipped by the other religious minorities in the country. This fact is a paradox. Turkey, after the founding of the Turkish republic and the reforms that Kemal Ataturk envisioned, is a secular country. This means that the state must be equidistant from all religions and not favor one in particular, which doesn't happen in Turkey, since many religions like the one that is worshipped by Jews and Christianity aren't managed by an official institution. Diyanet also is supposed to not mix itself in politics but sometimes its officials do, for instance during the headscarf controversy they supported the right of any woman to wear it for religious reasons.

Also, the Diyanet administers Islamic religious education. For this purpose, it organizes the operation of Imam Hatip schools, which are schools that provide Islamic religious education and trains future clergy and muftis. Also, it is responsible for the functioning for any of the country's 20 faculties of theology. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 12)

The Institutions' status and influence undoubtedly increased during the years 1980 to 2000, but the true important changes happen during the AKP rule. In 2010 a new law passed regarding the Diyanet and became

⁸ Each of Turkey's 81 provinces and 900 districts has a mufti. All muftis and Imams are state employees.. They are educated in the Imam-Hatip schools, state religious-education institutions, and in any of the country's 20 faculties of theology. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 12)

operational that resulted in numerous significant changes: The status of the Diyanet was raised to the level of the undersecretary. Also, now the Institution has the right to establish its own television and radio channels. Its mandate was expanded: Now it can provide its religious services outside mosques, including, for example, in institutions such as hospitals, prisons, retirement homes, and women's shelters. In addition, now its officials can issue halal certificates, a function that secularists couldn't even imagine before 2010. (Saleem, 2017, p. 179)

In the current period Diyanet's influence increases even more and its status is more respected from high ranking politicians. In 2012, President Abdullah Gul was the first president in more than 30 years to visit it. In 2014, Ahmet Davutoglu, after becoming Prime Minister, raised the stature of the Diyanet: Now, the head of the organization would report directly to him and not to a minister in his office. This clearly shows that for AKP officials it is an institution of grave importance that is placed in a high position in their agenda. Shortly after, President Erdogan raised the status of the head of the Diyanet in the state protocol list, now he is above in the list of many of the cabinet ministers. Erdogan declared that the head of the Directorate of Religious Affairs is a position as important as the Pope! Also, its increased importance is made apparent because many political parties take it into account. For instance, in the parliamentary elections of June 2015, Republican Peoples' Party promised that they would keep the Diyanet above politics if they won. On the other hand, People's Democratic Party wanted to abolish it. AKP declared that they would promote it even more. Suffice it to say, the organization was mired in a serious controversy: Some European governments accused its imams of spying for Turkey. According to reports, imams that are active in various European countries who answer directly to the Diyanet have gathered intelligence from 38 countries, including the U.K. This is another clear sign that the Organization's influence and power expanded tremendously with the blessings of high ranking government officials. (Saleem, 2017, p. 181)

The Diyanet's budget also has been increasing steadily since the 1950s, but the increase after 2010 has been significant and unprecedented. In 2014, the budget of the Directorate has been around 1.24% of the country's total GDP, one of the highest levels ever achieved. For 2019, the budget is set to increase even more: It will be increased by an additional \$ 850 million (5 billion liras) boosting its budget from \$1.3 to \$2.1 billion for 2019. This means that its funding will increase for about 34.36%. This increased funding comes at the cost of the country's Science, Industry and Technology Ministry's budget, which will be cut by around 56% for the following year. (Saleem, 2017, p. 179), (t24, 2018) This clearly shows that AKP

officials and Erdogan himself consider this institution to be of utmost importance, since deciding to increase government spending on this particular institution, especially in the current period (2018 winter) that Turkish economy is in a really bad situation.

Also, the number of personnel that are employed by it increased tremendously. From 2010 to 2014 the number has increased from 84.000 to around 120.000. More recently, according to a new presidential decree published in Turkey's Official Gazette during the first days of November 2018, Diyanet's personnel will increase by an additional 8,489 new positions. (Saleem, 2017, p. 179), (Welle, 2018)

Diyanet members and officials are forbidden by law to engage in political activity and support any political party. But it is clear that they want to get mixed in politics. Recently, they applied to the country's highest court, Constitutional Court, to ease these restrictions. The court voted unanimously against the proposal to reform the law. However, the Diyanet is still determined to change this law and, according to reports, has amassed lawyers and other legal experts in order to try again, showing that they really want to be politically involved. (Tartanoğlu, 2018)

Nevertheless, the institution until 2010 stayed out of politics. But, despite failure to reform the law about Diyanet's involvement in politics, its personnel didn't stay neutral. It has clearly supported Erdogan and his party. For instance, during the coup of July 2016, its mosques mobilized people to go out in the streets and support Erdogan. This mobilization of the masses was one of the reasons that military officers failed to overthrow Erdogan and resulted in him initiating a state of emergency, during which he purged his political opponents and became even more powerful. In addition, Diyanet has been assisting AKP in its foreign policy: As stated earlier, its vast network of mosques across many European countries, especially Germany, influenced Turks living there to support and vote for Erdogan as well as collect intelligence on his opponents. (Cornel, 2017, pp. 32-33)

So, during the AKP years Diyanet's importance is increased as well as its annual budget and its personnel. But what about the nature of this institution, are its people progressive or are they conservative Islamists? For most of its history, the Diyanet had embraced the principle of secularism and adopted a more moderate version of the Islam that accepts secularism and modernity and that has nothing to do with fundamentalism. But today's reality is completely different. Taking advantage of its newfound political power, the Diyanet has begun issuing orders to introduce elements of sharia law to the Turkish society. Recently, in a fetwa that they released, Diyanet declared that men must use only their right hand to eat and drink because, according to its officials, men cannot be left handed; only demons can and

those who were born left handed should switch sides. The reason for this fetwa is because humanity must follow the example of the prophet Muhammad, who used only his right hand for such actions and because he pointed out that those who are left handed are demons. In January 2018 the organization published another fetwa that is even more alarming: Under Islamic law, girls as young as 9 years old can marry, become pregnant and give birth! Because of the public outrage Diyanet withdrew this statement and declared that it was just pointing parts of the Islamic law and not recommending it. Even more recently, the head of Diyanet, Ali Erbaş, stated that everyone, especially children, should study the Quran because “a heart that hasn’t embraced and accepted the Quran is a dark heart that is open to Satan and its influence.” He underlined that children should start studying the Quran after they become 7 years old, because during that age they start shaping their character. So, that way, they will grow to be pious and faithful Muslims. Also, the Directorate of Religious Affairs discouraged everyone from celebrating the western New Year because it is against Islamic faith. Judging from these fetwas and statements that their officials have made, it looks like that Diyanet moves close to a hardline interpretation of Islam. (Asani, 2018), (Economist, 2018), (Sincar, 2018)

Summing up, the Diyanet , or the Directorate of Religious Affairs, is an Institution that during AKP’s years grew in importance and influence. Its budget (that is a percentage of the country’s GDP) has risen significantly as well as its personnel and it can now influence people much more easily since it has its own television and radio channel. Also, it issues fetwas on demand and gives advice via a free telephone line. The fact that AKP and Erdogan place such importance to a conservatist institution that embraces such a hardline version of Islam is an additional sign that Erdogan and the other AKP officials want to create an Islamic society, changing the secular state.

As stated earlier, one of the main functions of the Diyanet is the training and education of muftis and Islamic clergy. The latter are trained through the imam Hatip schools mainly. So, because education is so important for a country, since it directly influences the future citizens and, in extent, the future society, it is necessary to review the status of the Imam Hatip schools during the last years. If there are policies from the government aiming to increase the number of these schools and the number of their students, who will receive Islamic education, then this will be an additional sign that AKP’s policies aim to Islamize the society.

f. Education and Educational policy during AKP's years

Undoubtedly, education is extremely important for a state. It directly affects the future generations and the contemporary reality in a state and society because the official education provided by the state will form the characters, beliefs and culture of the country's future citizens and, in extent, the society in general. Having this in mind, researching about education during AKP years is essential. If Turkey's Islamic government really has an agenda of Islamization and wants to Islamize the society then it is highly likely that part of their policy making would be amending the education in order to produce more citizens with a strong Islamic background.

Islamic education is provided mostly through the Imam-Hatip schools. They are schools that train future Islamic clergy and muftis and they were found during the reform period of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk after the banning of the previous establishments of such nature, medressas. Initially, 29 Imam Hatip schools opened, which had around 2250 students in 1924. However, they quickly got reduced and after a few years all of them had been converted into public schools because religion was banned from education. The official explanation was that there hadn't been public demand for them but the truth is that they were shut down because the officials didn't want the citizens to receive religious education. After the introduction of multi-party democracy, the schools started to operate normally. More than half of the lessons in these establishments are religious in nature. Some of the subjects taught there are the Quran, the Prophet Muhhamed's life and sayings, Arabic and other subjects relevant with the Islamic philosophy and holy law. The remaining lessons follow the normal national curriculum. This mixed curriculum was state approved. In general, girls attending these schools wear the headscarf, which is considered to be an emblem and symbol of Islam. Secularists view these educational establishments with suspicion and sometimes with fear because they believe that those who study there are cultivated first and foremost as a pious Muslim believer and only secondary as a Turkish citizen. Of course, they were always afraid of the danger of the retreat of secular state which Kemal Ataturk created. (Akpinar, 2007, pp. 162-163), (Saleem, 2017, p. 203)

The Imam Hatip schools had always some level of restriction. The last remaining restrictions were removed by the army officers who organized the 1980 coup. As it has already been established, their goal was to re-introduce religion into the social sphere in order to counterbalance communism and other radical ideologies. Now, students attending these schools could now enter all university faculties the exact same way as any other high schools

student. Also, the authority, prominence and acceptability of all faculties of theology have been increased. The number of these religious schools increased from around 350 to 605 during the period from the early 1980s to 1998 and the number of students increased from 200.000 to more than 500.000.

After the post-modern coup of 1997, religion and Islamic actors were targeted. Imam-Hatip schools had the exact same fate. They were considered to be training grounds for Islamists. With the reforms that were introduced, it was made very hard for those who graduate from these schools to enter university faculties: According to the reforms, graduates could access similar faculties to the high schools that they attended. Otherwise, they would suffer a penalty in their grade, which means that they have to achieve very high grades. In other words, Imam Hatip graduates could only access religious faculties except if they achieved very high grades, much greater than the rest students that graduated from schools. The argument for this change was that now the graduates would be able to work on their own field. Another anti-Imam Hatip measure was the scrapping of the first three grades of the preacher schools. Also, the number of Imam Hatip schools and their students was drastically reduced. In 1998 around 605 were operating but by 2003 only 450 were active. The number of students was reduced from 511.500 in 1998 to a measly 64.534 in 2003. The military argued that Diyanet couldn't absorb so many employees, so they had to drastically reduce the number of schools in order for the youth to not be unemployed. (Saleem, 2017, pp. 211-212), (Öktem, 2011, pp. 106-107)

AKP was committed to eliminate discriminations against Imam-Hatip school graduates. Once it first won the elections, in 2002, AKP attempted to remove the restriction, sparking a major controversy, but failed because the military, the judiciary and the President Sezer himself disagreed and opposed this policy. In the second half of 2003 AKP tried again to remove these restrictions but failed because the military interfered again. After winning the local election on March 2004, AKP policy makers passed a law that aimed to end this discrimination but the law was scrapped as President Sezer vetoed it. Because of these interventions, few new Imam-Hatip were opened between 2002 and 2009. The number of students though more than doubled, from 71.000 it rose to 198.000. In general, it can be seen that since coming to power, Erdogan had religion in his political agenda and wanted to increase the influence of these institutions.

In 2007, after winning in the parliamentary and Presidential elections, the AKP, because it consolidated its power and its officials were feeling that they were in control, started increasing the number of these schools. In 2003 their number was 450 and in 2010 were 465. Also, in 2009 they were finally

successful in removing the discrimination against Imam-Hatip school graduates. They could now enter any university faculty without any restriction. The result of this change was immediately seen: Enrolment, which was really low before, increased dramatically. During the year 2009-2010 around 200.000 students enrolled. At the same time, Quran courses run by the Diyanet started to increase too.⁹ By 2010, around 200.00 people were attending these courses. These increasing figures show the results of AKP policies that clearly aimed to increase the role of the religion to everyday life. (Saleem, 2017, p. 212)

In fact, AKP high ranking members openly state that they want to increase Islamic education in order for the citizens to receive education of such nature. Erdogan declared that he wants to raise a devout, pious generation, based on Sunni Islamic values and teachings. He argues that such education is essential for the formation of citizens' characters because it had helped in the fight against violence, racism, terrorism, drug addiction and even anti-Semitism. Likewise, Turkey's former minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu, defended AKP's educational policy by saying that it is essential for Turkish citizens because that way they will be able to control and process the unhealthy information about the religion that is abundant and is a source of radicalization in the countries that have the same borders with Turkey. (Saleem, 2017, pp. 214-215)

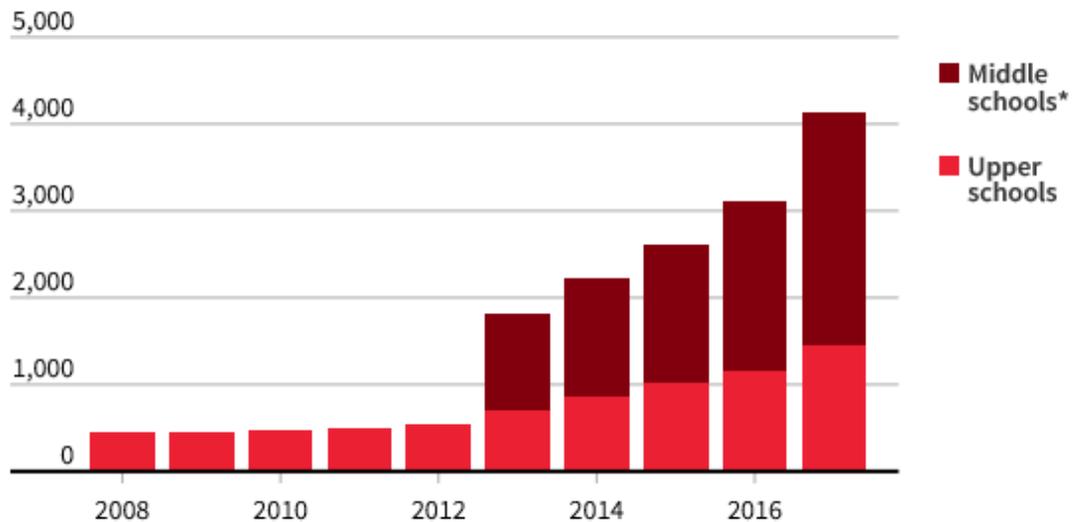
In the following years, Imam-Hatip schools number continues to rise. The number of Imam-Hatip secondary schools increased from 1099 in 2012/2013 to 1361 in 2013/2014 and 1961 in 2015/2016. Likewise, the number of Imam-Hatip high schools rose from 493 in 2010/2011 to 704 in 2012/2013 and to 1149 in 2015/2016. It is especially interesting to keep in mind that many of these new Imam-Hatip schools were formerly normal high schools that provided secular education. When asked, government officials don't give an exact number of secular schools that got turned into imam hatip. But what is known is that hundreds of schools that had ties with the Gulen movement got seized by AKP and got turned into religious schools. In general, many of the normal schools had been converted to schools that provide religious education. (Saleem, 2017, p. 215) , (Ahvalnews, 2018)

According to the Turkish news website sendika.org, just in the academic year 2016/2017, 250 new imam hatip schools opened, costing around 2.2 billion Turkish liras. (Sendika, 2017) AKP's goal for 2018 was the opening of an additional 128 schools. (Arakon, 2018)

⁹ Those who enrolled in 1980 were around 60.000, while the number increased to 158.000 by 1996, showing the results of the religion rapprochement policy that Kenan Evren and the other military officers initiated. However, after the post-modern coup declined to less than 80.000. (Saleem, 2017, p. 212)

IMAM HATIP SCHOOLS

Number by school year



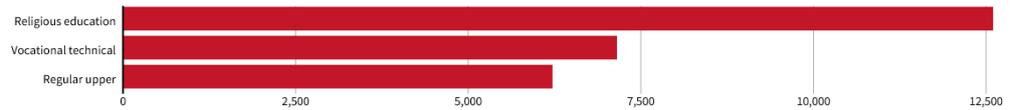
Source: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/>

As it can be seen on the graph above, Imam Hatip number has been greatly increased during the AKP years. When this Islamic Party came to power, only 450 were active but now, 16 years later, are more than 4.000. (Gall, 2018)

Not only the number of these schools increased, but also the percentage of total government spending in order to fund them did. The National Education Ministry's budget for 2018 has increased by 7 billion Turkish liras (around 2 billion American dollars) to more than 92 billion Turkish liras. From that budget, the percentage spent for the Diyanet increased by 68 percent. Out of the 7.7 billion lira that was to be spent for religious education, 6.6 billion will be spent for covering imam hatip schools expenses. This means that one quarter of the entire budget for middle schools will be spent on Imam Hatips. The 645.000 students that study in these establishments, who are around 11% of the country's students, will receive a 23% share of this budget, which is twice the amount spent for students that study in regular schools. In fact, 12.500 liras will be spent for each Imam Hatip student, while for the other students, that attend schools of secular nature, the state will spend just 7.000 liras. (Arakon, 2018), (Cumhuriyet, 2017)

GOVERNMENT SPENDING PER UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT

Budget plans for 2018, by type of school. Amounts in Turkish lira.



Source: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/>

It is clear from this graph that for 2018 the amount of money spent for religious education is much greater than the amount spent for regular one, showing that the AKP, by policy, wants to reinforce education of this nature. In other words, they promote it.

So, it is clear that since 2012 the number of these schools greatly increased as well as the budget spent for these. Because of this policy that clearly promotes and benefits imam hatips, Erdogan has been accused by secularists that he wants to create a devout, Islamic generation, undermining secularism. However, AKP policy makers, (one of them being Nabi Avci, former minister of education) have defend this policy by claiming that this increase was because there is public demand for these schools: In other words, they claim that conservative parents, who were feeling marginalized because they are pious Muslims, want their children to study there, which is an environment safe from drugs that will teach them Islamic morals. AKP just claims that they put a stop to the violation of these peoples' rights. Also, they claimed that no one is forcing anybody to send their children there. Since 2012, the education provided by these schools extended to middle schools for students that are between 10 and 14 years old and, as a result, more than 1.3 million children study there today. (When AKP won the elections in 2002, only 65.000 students attended these schools) (Saleem, 2017, p. 216), (Yeginsu, 2014)

However, many protest for this support that is provided to Imam Hatips. The expansion of religious education exasperates them and they argue that because many schools get turned into religious ones, it is becoming increasingly harder to find a school to send their children to. For instance, in August 2014, the Yesil Bahar Secondary School in Kadikoy, one of Istanbul's more liberal districts, was among hundreds of secular schools converted to religious ones. Parents staged protests, and the conversion was reversed. (Yeginsu, 2014) Likewise, on the Asia side of Istanbul, there is a school complex, named Sarigazi middle school witch has been operating for 60 years and is a non-religious school that is located in an area that has strong Alevi and secular presence. Nowadays, a large part of this school's premises has been converted into an Imam Hatip school. A group of parents didn't welcome this change. They claim that the change happened gradually, beginning several years ago with a few guest religious classes which

expanded over time. Now these classes have over 1.300 students, encroaching on the building where some 3,000 students study in a regular middle school. The parents want to stop the conversion of this historic school into a religious one and they even petitioned education authorities. Their point is that it is wrong to force Islam on people against their will. Parents complain that their children, who do not attend religious courses, receive less support than Imam Hatip students and that their classes are more crowded, sometimes reaching 40 pupils in a classroom. According to Reuters, officials declined to comment about this incident.

Another example of a regular turned into an Imam Hatip is the Mahmut Kemal Inal middle school which is too located in the Asian side of Istanbul. This time, parents failed to prevent it from becoming an Imam Hatip. They organized protests and even a petition, which was signed by hundreds of people, but to no avail. The schools operated as an Imam Hatip for the academic year 2017-2018. Parents claim that they don't want the school to become a religious one and that officials completely ignored their voices when they protested showing their opposition to the conversion. Officials say a completely different story. According to them, the local community wanted the conversion and they welcomed it. But, according to reports, only 125 students enrolled in September, which is a low intake. This fact contradicts authorities' claims that parents wanted the school to become Imam Hatip, the low enrolment rate is a proof that this kind of schools isn't as popular as officials claim, many parents didn't want to send their children to such a school. (BUTLER, 2018)

There are many more examples of course. Again in Istanbul, in Besiktas, one of the known districts of the European side of Istanbul, one of the schools there too got turned into an Imam Hatip, despite the parents protesting and trying to stop the conversion for more than two years. Another example is in Acibadem, a middle-class district on the Asian side of Istanbul. Parents heard rumors that the school was going to be demolished and that in its place an Imam Hatip would be constructed. The principal dismissed these rumors and assured them that this was a lie. But the demolitions did happen.

Parents that are against the conversion mass protested with the slogan "Don't touch my school". These protests gave rise to a movement, the movement for Secular, Scientific Education, which coordinates people from around 20 cities around Turkey.

There have been many reports that in many municipalities regular public schools aren't available because all of them had been turned into religious ones and parents are forced to either send their children to private ones or to technical and vocational schools. (Gall, 2018)



In the label it is written: We are not going to deliver our children to darkness. Don't touch my school!



In this label it is written: We own our future. Our schools should not be sold, should not be converted! We want a secular, scientific, free education!

Newspaper Sozcu reports that despite the non-stop increase of Imam-Hatip schools, a very large percentage of students' spaces in these establishments, around 69%, remain vacant despite the governments' pressure for parents to send them in these schools. This report contradicts the AKP officials' claims that there is a huge demand for religious education than needs to be covered. Actually, for the academic year 2017/2018, according to official statistics from the Ministry of Education, 68.7% of spaces of Imam Hatip schools remain vacant. For technical and occupational schools the demand has been higher, around 44.9% of positions weren't covered. The regular grammar schools, known as Anadolu lisesi in Turkish, have the highest demand; only 1.6% of positions weren't covered. As it can be deduced from these figures, despite of AKP officials claiming that there is a strong demand for religious education, Imam Hatip schools have been the least popular choice for children when selecting where to go to study. Parents are really reluctant to enroll their children there. But things aren't so simple. In many municipalities there aren't enough grammar schools. For instance, Istanbul's Kagithane district, where around 440.000 people live, there are only 2 grammar schools and 6 Imam Hatips. In that case, parents have to choose between technical and occupational schools or private education, if they want their children to receive secular education. The second option isn't always easy, as the fees are sometimes really high. As a result, those whose income isn't high are forced to send their children to occupational schools, where the education provided is second rate compared to grammar schools. (UYGUN, 2018) In other words, not only the demand for religious schooling isn't high but it is an unpopular choice. Erdogan's policy though insists promoting them, which clearly shows that he wants future citizens to have a strong Islamic background.

Despite their low popularity, AKP policy makers try to increase these schools' attendance. According to a guide that explains Turkey's newly implemented examination system for entrance to high schools, students who graduate from middle schools, when selecting choices online for the high schools that they desire to study too, are obliged to choose at least one of the available Imam Hatips. Otherwise, they will not be able to gain access to the next page, which lists the "quality" high schools. Of course, this means that some of these children will find themselves studying there. In addition, Ministry of Education plans to place around 25% of the best students in Imam Hatips. This is a part of the new education reforms drafted based on President Erdogan's orders. Of course, many citizens, secularists mainly, criticized these measures and stated that Erdogan undermines secularism. These moves are also proof that there is a policy by AKP for the increase of the number of children who will be taught Islamic values, which will result in

the future citizens becoming an Islamic one. (arabnews, 2018), (Sputnik.news, 2018)

Even more worrying are the claims of the Turkish Atheist Association. According to them, thousands of families have applied to this organization in order to ask for their help in getting their children out of compulsory religion classes. Parents hesitate to ask for their children's exclusion themselves because they are afraid. The prevailing atmosphere of fear stops them, they are afraid that they or their children will be blacklisted and they will lose their job. (Bişkin, 2017)

Regarding the content of the provided education, students who study at Imam Hatips will be taught the national curriculum but around half of their courses are religious: Students will learn about the Prophet and his life, the Quran, Arabic language and Islamic values in general. In addition, even children who don't attend these schools have increased religious teaching. Formerly, they had only one hour each week but the government has doubled it to two hours. Also, the restructuring of education curriculum, resulting to a new system that includes 3 tiers of four year schools, greatly expanded the amount of time students spend receiving religious education. Regarding the conservative nature of the people teaching there and the provided education in general, there have been reports that teachers advice more mature girls to not dress in a provocative way and to embrace Islamic teachings in order to evade a terrible fate. The announcement of the new curriculum raised even more suspicions. In Turkey, Darwin's theory of evolution will not be taught at high schools any more. Only university students who study a relevant science will hear about it. The official explanation is that the theory is too difficult for younger students to comprehend. In reality, this theory is rejected by Muslim creationists. (Gall, 2018), (BUTLER, 2018), (Gumrukcu, 2018), (Karataş, 2018)

According to Feray Aytekin Aydoğan, the General Manager of the Educators and Scientists Union (Eğitim-Sen), Turkey's largest trade union, Turkish schools have been completely given to religious communities. Ministry of education enters into direct agreements with these religious communities and sects and funds them. These agreements are permanent and they cannot be cancelled even if the members of these communities are found guilty for serious crimes like physical and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, assault, or even rape. They were first entered in 2012 but nowadays, after the state of emergency that followed the 2016 July coup, have become even more widespread and common. For instance, the Ensar Foundation, which is an Islamist group, has become an important part of today's educational system in the country. Another such group is TÜRGEV, which has

direct ties with Erdogan and members of his family. These groups are known for their conservative views. The books published by them frequently contain hate speech directed at adherents, other religions and people with different beliefs, identities and thoughts. Also, even though mixed education is accepted by the law, which law also applies to Imam Hatips, children are separated by sex. This separation has become a common practice in religious schools. Those who are in favor of this separation, conservative Islamists and AKP supporters, argue that it is the right thing to do and that mixed classes are against nature. AKP officials, who are responsible for this practice, defended this policy by claiming that students that attend gender specific classes are more academically successful and they even claimed that having gender specific classes is a right and that mixed education violates it! (Karataş, 2018), (Haber.sol, 2016)

Recently, on the first days of December 2018, Turkish Education Ministry approves a project, which first started by a religious foundation, to have a prayer room in every school across the country, according to the Turkish news website Oda. The project will start by installing prayer rooms in 90 schools throughout Istanbul and will be funded directly by the Ministry of Education. (Odatv, 2018)

Finally, it is essential to underline that religious communities can open new, religious type schools easily, without many requirements, while Education Ministry is making it increasingly much more difficult for a regular secular to open. This is clearly a policy that favors religious education. As a result, many times parents are forced to send their children to a religious school. (Karataş, 2018)

In sum, during Erdogan years, major changes took place in education provided. First of all, religious courses increased for secular schools. Also, Imam Hatips receive much more funding by the state than the regular ones and their number increases dramatically. Secular regular schools are being turned into Imam Hatips and the government attempts to increase the number of students in these schools as much as possible. AKP claims that they don't force anyone to study to an Imam Hatip and that they just make these schools available in order to cover the high demand for them but the truth is different: Imam Hatips aren't a popular choice when applying to schools and the proof is that many of them remain vacant. Also, these establishments are highly conservative: Almost half of the teaching hours are about Quran and Islam, mixed classes are a taboo for these schools, many girls, even really young ones, wear the veil and scientific achievements like Evolution Theory are considered unacceptable. According to all these facts, it is clear that Erdogan and AKP want the population to study to these schools and receive Islamic education.

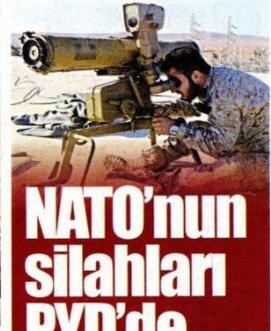


Suriye'yi mezarlığa çevirdi

ESED rejiminin kan gölüne çevirdiği Suriye'de artık ölenler için mezar bulmakta güçlük çekiliyor.

Vüzbince kişinin hayatını kaybettiği Suriye'de mezarlıklar yemyeni. Havadan ve karadan yağın bir şekilde bombalanan Sam'in Doğu Guta bölgesinde mezarlıklarda yer kalmadı.

RUSYA ve ESAD'ın herşeyi bomba yağdırdığı Guta'da yerleşim birimlerinin dışında hayatını kaybedenler için 40 metre genişliğinde, 5 metre yüksekliğinde ve derinliğinde bir alan kazılarak katli mezar haline getirildi. ● 70E



NATO'nun silahları PYD'de

NATO silahları, Suriye ve Irak'ta faaliyet gösteren teröristlerin elinde çıkıyor. ABD'nin en gelişmiş tanksavar silahı olan Javelin, PYD'li teröristler tarafından Türk tanklarına karşı kullanılıyor.

NATO'nun yine özel kuvvetler için ürettiği M4A1 tüfeği de Hakkari Yüksekova'da terörist örgütü PKK'nın kullandığı bir sığınakta ele geçirildi. Alman yapımı Milan antitank füzesini ise Irak'ta her yanda görmek mümkün. ● 120E

75 KR (KDV Dahil) KATIL: 1,5 TL

Yeni Akit

23 MUHARREM 1438

PAZARTESİ 24 EKİM 2016

www.yeniakit.com.tr

Darbe girişimi yatırımcıları durduramadı

İZMİR ve Kocaeli şehir hastaneleri projelerine 1,1 milyar dolar yabancı finansman sağladıklarını açıklayan Türkler Holding Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Kazım Türkler, "Türkiye'ye güven sürüyor" dedi. ● HABERİ 4. SAYFADA



Erdoğan, Katar Emiri ile görüşti

CUMHURBAŞKANI Erdoğan, Sıriyer Şehit Kemal Aytık Genç Polis Merkezi'ni ziyaret etti. Tarab-yadan geçtiği sırada komuyu durdurduan Erdoğan, bir dolmuş duruşu- nu ziyaret ederek bir süre söforlerle sohbet etti. Erdoğan daha sonra Katar Emiri Al Sani ile görüştü. ● 167DA

AK Parti Anayasa teklifini getiriyor TÜRKİYE BÖLÜNMEZ

PARTİSİNİN 25. İhtisare ve Değerlendirme Toplantı- sında konuşan Başbakan Binali Yıldırım, "Her yeni anayasa hem de başkanlık sistemiyle ilgili çalışmalarımız tamamladık. Bundan sonra yapacağımız iş, teklifimizi en kısa zamanda Meclis'e getirmek" dedi.

"HER halkımızda son karar millette götürülecek" diyen Yıldırım, "İnanıyorum ki, Gazi Meclis bu tarihi sorumluluğu en güzel şekilde yerine getirecek. Milletten korkmayalım. Millet her şeyin en iyisini yapar" diye konuştu. ● 167DA

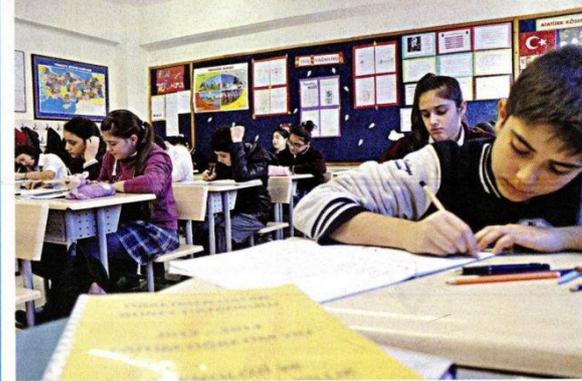
FETÖ İTİRAFÇISI: Cumhurbaşkanı açık denize götürecek

Enver Baytan Hoca, Hakk'a yürüdü

ÖMRÜNÜ İslam'a hizmet yanında geçiren emekli vazir Enver Baytan Hoca Hakk'a yürüdü. 33 yıl İmam ve vaizlik yapan Baytan Hoca, bugün Fa- tih Camii'nden öğle vakti ebedi aleme uğurlanacak. ● HABERİ 20'DE

Karma eğitim HAK GASPIDIR

Akit'in gündeme getirdiği karma eğitim dayatmasına tepkiler çığ gibi büyüyor. STK'lar karma eğitim ile eğitim haklarının gasp edildiğini belirterek, bu uygulamanın sona ermesini istiyorlar.



BU DAYATMA SON BULMALI

DÜNYANIN birçok ülkesinde sadece eğitim değil hayatın birçok alanında kadın ve erkeklerin hizmetlerinden ayrı ayrı yararlanmasını sağladığını vurgulayan İHH Başkanı Mehmet Hüseyin Öncü, "Dini hassasiyeti yüksek olan ülkemizde karma eğitim dayatmasının son bulması gerekiyor" diye konuştu.

"KARMA" PEDAGOJİK YALANDIR

EĞİTİMDE asıl olanın yüksek ve- nim olduğunu vurgulayan Kol Kola Demireli Başkanı Eğitimci Mustafa Başbakan, "Eğitimci çağın karma eğitim pedagojik bir yalan olduğunu ortaya koydu. 28 Şubat'tan kalma uygulamalar maalesef devam ediyor. Eğitimde dayatma olmaz, karma eğitim konusunda ısrar tek tip insan yetiştir- meyi hedefliyor" görüşünü dile getirdi.

BAŞARTISIZ ZULME EDİYOR

DİN-BİR-SEN eski Başkanı Lütfi Şenocak ise, insanlara terahit hakkı sunmama- nın, karma eğitim istemeyenlerin hakkını gasp etmek anlamına geldiğini ifade ederek, "28 Şubat'ta başörtüsü zülmünden zulmedile- nin barajlığı tortulardan kurtulma- lıyız" şeklinde konuştu. ● 120E

İSVİÇRE'DE BAŞÖRTÜLÜ KADINA TAZİNAT ● HABERİ 2. SAYFADA

TSK DEAŞ'A BOMBA YAĞDIRIYOR ● HABERİ 7. SAYFADA

HDP'NİN İŞKENCE YALANI ÇÖKERTİLDİ ● HABERİ 15. SAYFADA

15 TEMMUZ MİLLETİN YENİDEN DIRİLİŞİDİR ● HABERİ 17. SAYFADA

O kadın buz gibi DHKP-C'li çıktı

Baro'da ByLock'çu (FETÖ) avukatları değişti

İlluminati, FETÖ petesi Opus Dei ve Moon Tarikatı

Yalçın TURGUT 10

A. KARAHANÖĞÜ 10

FETÖ ve VIP

A. DİLİPAK 8

Kadir DEMİREL 11

CEPHE SÖZÜ İÇİN MİMAR-C TUTUKLAMASI

KARTEL'in irisi Hürriyet, önceki gün manşetten verdiği haberde DHKP-C militanı- na sahip çıktı. Terör örgütü so- ruşturmasından tutuklanan Yrd.Doç.Dr. Senem Doğdukan- sızlı öldüğüne kabark.

DOVDUK'un başta örgüt ü- çüğüne sevinçli, natüzy ve eman- kazın alınma, le Halkın, Para- hindan düzenlenilen birçok ya- sa dışı eyleme aktif olarak rol aldığı bildirildi. ● 107DA

Değerleriniz değer katmaya devam ediyorsunuz.

EYÜKSEK KÂR PAYI

TL bazında %9,89

ALTIN bazında %0,62

MANŞET

alBaraka

Headline: Mixed education violates rights. Yeni Akit is a pro AKP newspaper.
Source: <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/gericiler-durmuyor-karma-egitim-hak-gaspiymis-173333>



Photos of Imam Hatip students. Boys and girls are separated. Girls, even the really young ones, wear the headscarf.

g. Alevi community and their rights

When the Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002, one of its main goals was to tackle social exclusion. Erdogan had criticized the secularism that Kemal Ataturk brought to the Turkish Republic, calling it incomplete, and promised that he and the other AKP officials will create a society that would be truly secular, where the enmity against religion that the Kemalist establishment brought would be lifted and everyone, regardless of the religion they practice, would be able to live freely. In other words, they were promising a society where no social group would be excluded. So, because this research assesses if secularism in Turkey is changing, it is essential to review the status of whether Erdogan kept his promise: Did he allow the different social groups to be integrated into the society with equal rights? It is essential to report on this matter too because secular countries do not favor any particular social or religious groups, all people are considered to be equal citizens. The focus here is the largest group than lives in Turkey, Alevis.

Kemal Ataturk and the new ideology that he created, which formed the new Turkish state, this modernization and secularism that he brought didn't create a society where everyone, every social and religious group would be able to live equally but created many groups of others who were second rate citizens. The most marginalized were Kurds, Alevis and non-Muslim minorities. Alevis were maybe the largest of these groups. They could be assimilated into the body politic but only if they denied their ethnic and religious origins. In other words, if they would abandon their ethnic and religious identity, then they would enjoy the rights that a Turkish citizen has. Full citizenship and full rights would be given only to Turkish Sunni Muslims that would embrace the secularist policies of the Kemalist regime. All the others were facing different levels of social exclusion. (Öktem, 2011, pp. 6,26)

Most Alevis are ethnically Turks but in the group also the majority of Arabs that live in Turkey, Azeri and a small portion of Kurds are included. Sometimes they are confused with Shi'ites because they have some common beliefs and religious practices like the veneration of the Imam Ali and observance of the holy month of Muharrem, but in reality they are a different religion and culture. Alevism is a belief system that has Shamanistic elements that existed before the Islam and Zoroastrian elements as well as Sufi influences. They do not visit mosques, don't pray many times each day like Sunni Muslim do and they have meeting houses which they call Cem evleri, which are used for socialization and not for religious purposes. Despite their intellectuals claiming that they are not Muslims, the Turkish state recognizes them as Muslims. Also, some Alevis claim that Alevism isn't a religion but a group identity. They don't have a systematic theology, no holy books and don't follow shari'a tradition. For them, like the Sufis, religion is an esoteric experience. (Larrabee, 2008, pp. 20-21)

Alevi are geographically spread throughout Turkey and are one of the largest, if not the largest, non-Sunni communal groups in the country. There isn't a consensus regarding their actual number, reports range from 5 million to 25. So, it is best to assume that the truth lies somewhere in between. The Alevi identity is one that has been shared across members of a particular group that share the same culture, moral values, rituals and collective emotions. This identity has been maintained for centuries through an endogamous practice in rural context. These unique rituals and cultural practices that Alevi share have played important role for the maintenance of their identity. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 144)

Alevi for centuries, during the Ottoman period, were prosecuted, oppressed, and discriminated against by the central governments. The Alevi identity and culture were either denied recognition or assimilated into the population majority, which was the Sunni identity. For this reason, when Kemal Ataturk came to power and began changing the country and reforming it, Alevi supported him and embraced the secularization reforms, they were considered to be citizens loyal to the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, in particular secularism. They accepted Ataturk's policies because with the arrival of the secular Republic the ties to Sunni Islam, which was recognized as the state religion, were cut off. They also hoped that the discrimination against them would end. That's why Alevi were often portrayed as defenders of secularism, accepted Ataturk as the most important politician in modern history and were against religious fundamentalism. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 145), (Larrabee, 2008, p. 21)

Despite their support, Alevi were discriminated against by the Kemalist establishment too. Ankara welcomed this support but the government never trusted them. Like the Ottoman regime, they either ignored them or attempted to assimilate them into the Sunni majority to control them despite the majority of them being Turkish speakers. Despite the secular reforms, Sunni Islam remained the defining characteristic of the Turkish state and the Alevi were the others, a different, outsider group. (Öktem, 2011, p. 34) The Turkish state never recognized them officially and their unique culture and lifestyle wasn't accepted. There were legal and institutional barriers against their organizations and, on the social level, cultural biases against them prevailed. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 145) Sometimes these biases escalated and led to massacres: On 19 December 1978 a mob made up by Islamists and Nationalist action members in the city of Maras attacked them because they didn't believe in the Islamic faith, killed around 100 Alevi and destroyed many of their buildings and associations. Another massacre took place in the city of Sivas, where 35 Alevi were killed as well as in Istanbul on 1996, were many Alevi protested and clashed with the police. Security forces used live ammo and around 17 people lost their lives. (Öktem, 2011, pp. 52-53, 96-99)

The Alevi issue is a very complicated one and this is because there is a wide range of disagreements inside their community about many social and political issues, for instance the definition of Alevism itself. They agree though on something: The need to seek public recognition of their identity and institutions as well as acknowledgement of the grievances caused by the Kemalist establishment. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 144)

In general, Alevi intellectuals and community leaders are secular in their lifestyles. They mostly support the Republican People's Party, the one that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk found despite the problematic relationship they have with the country's secular establishment. They also have been skeptical towards Political Islam actors, for instance in the July 2007 parliamentary and Presidential election the Alevi Cem Foundation leader, İzzettin Doğan, called the Alevis to support the CHP and other secular parties because, as he said, AKP has an Islamization agenda. (Larrabee, 2008, p. 22) They were anxious of the idea that the President and the Prime Minister being Islamists. (Abdullah Gul was one of the candidates for the next President of Turkey) Alevis were genuinely concerned about AKP's conservative policies. They also participated in the Gezi Park protests: They were very active during the protests which has shown their alienation from the dominant Sunni majority and their frustration with the Erdogan government because the third Bosphorus bridge was named after the Sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim, considered by the Alevis as being responsible for the killing of tens of thousands of Alevis in the early part of the sixteenth century. (rosaTi, 2015, p. 161), (Öktem, 2011, pp. 152-153)

After AKP come to power in 2002 it has introduced a number of reforms to democratize Turkey's political system. Alevi community expected that part of these reforms would be about them: Some of them expected AKP to alleviate their position, do something about their rights and recognize them. But soon they were disappointed. Among the 363 parliamentary members that got elected with AKP no one was an Alevi. The new Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan didn't refer to them or to the problems they were facing in his public speeches. In general, AKP officials didn't attempt to engage with any Alevi representatives or Alevi civil society institutions. The AKP party program didn't include any policies about the Alevi issue and in general, during the first years of AKP government there was no improvement for Alevis' life in Turkey. The Alevi social, political and identity-based claims were completely ignored. As was the case with the previous governments, they were feeling socially, politically and economically discriminated against and marginalized by the governing party. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 147)

In general, Alevis' demands are the following: 1) Maintenance of their identity in modern, urban social context. 2) They want their identity to be recognized as a legitimate part of the Turkish society as an equal to other social groups. 3) They

also want the state to allocate material resources for their institutions and 4) to acknowledge the traumas and victimhood that they suffered in the past. They also fight for guarantees that would prevent the past traumatic experiences from happening again. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 150)

After winning elections for the second time, in 2007, the AKP government decided to include the Alevi issue in its agenda. This initiative is known as the Alevi opening and is the first serious effort to tackle the identity-based discontents of the people that belong to this group. Of course, this step is part of AKP's broader policy of "democratic opening, whose goal is to tackle the problems of the many different identity groups that reside in Turkey. (Some other groups are the Kurds, the Roma people and the non-Muslim religious minorities) The general objective of this "democratic opening" is to reconcile the marginalized segments of the Turkish society with the state and to integrate them into the society. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 143)

With this "Alevi opening" AKP has initially shown some conciliatory moves. It was the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic that state officials have acknowledged the victimhood and traumatic experiences of Alevis. The Minister of Culture, representing his government, has given a verbal apology for the oppressions and direct violence that they suffered from the authorities. Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself stated that he is committed to accommodate their requests and he acknowledged that they were victims of discrimination and atrocities in the past. Also, the Alevi leaders and their associations have been recognized by the AKP government and there were talks during that time about legal reforms in order to create the legal framework in order for Alevis to be recognized and integrated into the Turkish society. This was the first time that such a policy was formed and it is a new approach for Turkish governments. High-ranking AKP politicians and statesmen, some of them even being the President Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan, made many symbolic yet important gestures. (KÖSE, 2010 , pp. 146-147) Also, the early steps of AKP's Alevi engagement policy included the nomination and election of parliament members Reha Çamuroğlu and İbrahim Yiğit, who are known in the public sphere to be Alevis. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 148) Even the ultra-nationalist far-right party MHP, widely known as Grey Wolves, formulated a plan, which was compatible with AKP's policies, for the addression of Alevis' demands and their inclusion in the society.¹⁰ (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 157)

Many Alevi leaders responded positively to these new policies but in general their community remains skeptical about them and their previous historical

¹⁰ The plan that MHP prepared included: 1. Allocation of budget to cemevis, 2. Representation of Alevis within the Diyanet, 3. Opening of government-funded Alevi research centers and institutes, 4. Public broadcast of informative productions about Alevi culture on Alevi special days on official state TV, the TRT, 5. Representation and teaching of Alevi culture and beliefs in religion classes (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 157)

experiences are to blame. Actually, a large percentage of them believe that this policy was nothing more than an attempt by the AKP to 'Sunnificate' them. In other words, they don't trust the governing party. (KÖSE, 2010 , p. 148)

The softening of the state's stance towards them along with reforms induced by the EU resulted to more lively public sphere for Alevis. Now they have numerous radio and TV stations, journals, online portals and their special buildings and institutions are now more visible. They never have been as visible and present in the public sphere as they are now. But leaders of the Alevi community state that their long standing requests have been completely ignored. According to Kerem Oktem, AKP doesn't follow a serious policy in order to stop the discrimination towards Alevis, its policy makers just want to take advantage of them, earn their sympathy and their votes. (Öktem, 2008)

Despite these movements of good will, Alevis' lives weren't substantially improved. Still they aren't recognized by the state as a minority and a different religious group despite being the largest religious minority in Turkey. For years they have been asking for official recognition by the state, to enjoy the amenities that other religious group do (for instance they want their official worship places, Cem evleri, to be officially recognized and to receive subsidies to cover their expenditure, like all the other religious minorities do) as well as the recognition of their religious leaders and their recruitment as civil servants but to no avail. Turkish Courts overruled their case claiming that Alevism isn't a religion and that they don't have the right to receive state subsidies. Also, Alevis appealed to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. One of their main points was that their children are forced to receive Sunni Islamic education at schools. The latter decided that they "were subjected to a difference in treatment for which there was no objective and reasonable justification." The ECHR's Grand Chamber ruled by 12 votes to five that Alevis' right to freedom of religion had been violated, while voting 16 to one that the religious group was the subject of discrimination. In addition, recently the Turkey's Supreme Court of Appeals decided that the state should cover their electricity bills. However, to the time of writing this research, November 2018, Erdogan hasn't addressed their demands yet. (Erdemir, 2018), (Hallam, 2016)

Summing up, if AKP officials had addressed the Alevis' problems , who are one of the larger if not the largest religious groups in Turkey counting more than 10 million, and were successful in their integration into the society, then that would be a step forward in the secularization process. A society that accepts every ethnic or religious group without discrimination and provides full citizen rights is a truly secular one. Of course, there had been some gestures of good will towards the minority but as it seems they just aimed to attract them as voters and they only remember them when elections were close. However, despite promising a

democratic society that doesn't discriminate, AKP and Erdogan delivered a Sunni Islam dominated state, where AKP actors, as it has been established, try to impose Sunni Islam's morals and lifestyle to everyone. Of course, Alevis haven't been recognized officially by the state and their demands for respect of their heritage and their rights haven't been met to the day of the writing of this dissertation. This is another clear sign that secularism doesn't gain ground but it withdraws, as the Sunni identity is the dominant one in Turkey nowadays.

h. Does Erdogan have an Islamization agenda?

Recep Tayip Erdogan was claiming that his party is a conservative democratic one, one that would allow the formerly repressed Muslims to freely live their lives according to the religion's teachings as well as to create a truly secular society, where everyone would be able to coexist, no matter their religious beliefs. In reality, what he did was to make Sunni Islam the dominant belief and lifestyle in Turkey. The Diyanet, which is the institution that administers religious education and the mosques, has an increased importance and influence and this is a policy designed by AKP and Erdogan himself. Diyanet also, whose members are conservative Muslims, recently started taking advantage of its newfound political power, and has begun issuing orders to introduce elements of sharia law to the Turkish society. The fact that Erdogan and AKP in general support the Diyanet is a clue that they are in favor of their very conservative views.

Also, AKP's education policy is very important if we want to understand Erdogan's goals and vision for the future Turkish society. As discussed, Imam Hatip schools are being promoted, they are being funded with billions of dollars, much more than the regular schools, they have increased in number and tend to increase even more despite the low demand for them and education officials try to increase the students attending these schools as much as possible by altering the high school entry system. Also, AKP slowly but steadily converts regular public schools to Imam Hatips and they fund the currently operating secular schools with much less money than the former ones, resulting in a shortage of secular schools in some municipalities. Parents are forced to either send their children to religious schools, pay very large fees in order for their children to study in private secular schools or send them to technical occupational schools. Almost half of the teaching hours in Imam Hatips are about Islam and the Quran, which means that children's views will be completely affected by Islamic education they receive. Summing up, it is clear that Erdogan wants future children to be conservative pious Muslims and that's why there have been so many changes in the education system in Turkey in the last 15 years.

A secular society is one that doesn't have a dominant religious or ethnic group at its center. Despite promising a true secular society and democratization, Erdogan didn't deliver: The Alevis, which is the largest religious group in Turkey that has over 10.000.000 members, still isn't recognized by the state; It doesn't accept their religion, they don't receive funds and they don't have rights as all minorities do. This is another clear sign that secularism doesn't gain ground but it withdraws, as the Sunni identity is the dominant one in Turkey nowadays.

Also, Erdogan and AKP politicians don't accept difference and lifestyles different than the Islamic ones and they try to interfere on Turkish citizens' way of life. For instance, they increased the tax for alcoholic drinks trying to disincentive everyone from consuming them, advice women to now wear provocative clothing, prosecute those who insult Islam in social media and in general they promote, as an official policy, the conservative Islamic way of life.

All the above measures and policies hint that AKP politicians and Erdogan himself, who has superpowers, controls everything in the country and is the true mastermind behind AKP's policies, want to Islamize the society, based on the Sunni version of Islam. They claim that what are they doing is to alleviate the position of the religious Muslims, who were feeling repressed by the Kemalist establishment but in truth, what is happening in Turkey right now is completely different. Not only the Islamists' way of life dominates, but they don't peacefully coexist with secularists. Now, the latter are the repressed ones, who feel that their lifestyle is threatened by Islamists who gain ground.

6. Conclusions

As it has already been established, Turkey got turned into a secular and modern country because Mustafa Kemal Atatürk believed that that way Turkey would reach the cultural level of the developed Western World and achieve greatness. In order to achieve this goal, he imposed a secular and modern lifestyle to the Turkish population, a move that was radical for the time. A large part of the population was feeling repressed by these changes and they wanted to return to the old ways of life, where the Islamic values were the dominant ones. Islamists mobilized politically, having as their head Necmettin Erbakan, who found the Milli Gorus movement, which gave rise to the Political Islam. He succeeded entering the Parliament and even becoming Prime Minister but he wasn't able to change the Turkish state. The Kemalist establishment and military officers always stopped him in order to preserve the state that Atatürk had created. Erbakan and Islamic actors in general had found many political parties but all of them, one way or another, always got dissolved by the intervention of kemalist establishment.

The big change happened with the rise of the Justice and Development Party, the one that Recep Tayip Erdogan, Turkey's current powerful man, founded. He declared that he abandoned the old, conservative and radical ways of Political Islam actors and promised a liberal, truly democratic, tolerant and secular society, where everyone would be able to live freely and where no one would feel repressed, no matter their religion as well as he promised to stop the repression and alienation that pious Muslims felt. Secularists were feeling threatened though because they believed that Recep Tayip Erdogan had an Islamization agenda, which he repeatedly denied. Western countries believed that Erdogan was a moderate Islamist that would reform the country, liberalize it and that Turkey would become the example that all the other Islamic countries should follow. But, after years passed and Erdogan consolidated his power, things changed for the worse. Erdogan abandoned democratic procedures and made an authoritarian turn, seizing every power in his hands. Also, he stopped reforms that aimed to make Turkey a candidate country for joining the EU, the vast majority of media are under his control and opposing voices are immediately suppressed. Now he can do whatever he wants. If he really has an Islamization agenda, like the former political Islam actors did, now he has the power to do so since no one can stop him, checks and balances in Turkey are non-existent right now.

His policies didn't assure secularists that he doesn't have an Islamization agenda. First of all, the Islamist lifestyle is imposed to the society with measures like prohibition of alcohol and prosecuting those that insult Islam in social media. In addition, AKP increased the Directorate of Religious Affairs' role. First of all, they increased its funding and its personnel as well as they allowed it to get mixed with

politics. In addition, its personnel are mostly conservative Islamists that believe in Sharia law. The greatly increased influence of this institution, thanks to AKP party and Erdogan, allow it to influence society and they have the means to do it, such as radio and television programs.

Assessing education policy points that the goal of Erdogan is to have as many children as possible study in Imam Hatips, which are religious schools that formerly served as training schools for future Muslim clergy. These establishments have increased dramatically, receive much greater funding than regular schools and AKP officials turn regular schools into Imam Hatips. As a result, in many municipalities, it is hard for parents to find regular schools to send their children to in order to study and they are forced to pay for private education or to send them to occupational schools. In addition, the new curriculum aims to send as many children as possible to these schools, where almost half of the teaching hours are about Quran and the life of the Prophet. These children will attend much less science classes than the previous generations and will be conservative Islamists when they grow up. AKP states that they don't force anyone to study there, they claim that they just open many Imam Hatips in order to meet the, according to them, high demand. But in reality, these educational establishments aren't popular, a large percentage of them remain vacant.

In general, AKP's policies show that they want the society in Turkey to change, to become an Islamic and more conservative one, where Islamic values and teachings of the Quran would be really important for the society. But, before an answer is given to the question this current research tries to answer, whether secularism in Turkey is in a process of change, first it is necessary to define secularism. If secularism is a principle where a state is equidistant from any religion, ethnicity or social group then the answer is that Turkey has never been a secular state to begin with. It was a country where there was a dominant religion and ethnicity, Sunni Islam and Turks where the ones that were dominant, the prestigious ones in a manner of speaking and the other ethnicities and religious groups were disadvantaged and discriminated against. If, on the other hand, secularism means that religion and the state are separate, religion's teachings and its holy laws aren't important for the society but is only something personal for each individual and policy making isn't affected by it, then Turkey was made a secular country and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the one that made it happen. According to this way of thinking, today's government follows an agenda that is changing the society and is undermining secularism. In other words, secular state is in a process of change, secular state during the AKP years has started to change as the religion is in the political agenda and is the center of many of AKP policies. In the past, the religious and conservatives were feeling repressed because of the dominating secularists.

Now tides have turned and the roles have been switched. The Islamists are the dominating ones and secularists feel alienated inside their own country.

7. Literature

Books

- Ahmad, F., 1993. *The making of modern Turkey*. New York: Routledge .
- Antonios, S., 2016. *Turkey under transition, AKP's role as a tool of transition to the post-Kemalist era*. Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia.
- BERKES, N., 1998. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Evaggelia, M., 2015. *Islamic element in the Turkish political life*. Komotini: Dimokritio University of Thrace.
- Filis, K., 2017. *Turkey, Islam, Erdogan (the book is in Greek)*. Athens: Papadopoulos.
- Incel, A., 2017. *Erdogan's new Turkey (the book is translated in Greek)*. Athens: Diametros.
- Jenkins, G., 2008.. *Political Islam in Turkey Running West, Heading East?*. New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
- Jongerden, M. C. a. J., 2011 . *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish issue*. New York: Routledge .
- LEWIS, B., 2001. *THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN TURKEY*. third ed. London: Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, G., 1974. *Modern Turkey*. Fourth ed. London: Praeger Publishers.
- Maria, A., 2011. *Soft power: The case of Turkey (in Greek)*. Athens: University of Pireus, Department of International and European Studies.
- Moudouros, N., 2011. *Islam Politics and Economics in Turkey, from Kemalist urban class to the Islam chapter*. Leukosia: University of Cyprus.
- Öktem, K., 2011. *Angry Nation, Turkey since 1989*. New York: Z Books.
- RosaTi, M., 2015. *The Making of a Postsecular society a Durkheimian approach to Memory, Pluralism and religion in Turkey*. farnham : ashgate.
- Saleem, R. M. A., 2017. *State, Nationalism, and Islamization, Historical Analysis of Turkey and Pakistan*. s.l.:Palgrave Macmillan.
- ZÜRCHER, E. J., 2010 . *The YOUNG TURK LEGACY AND NATION BUILDING*. New York : I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd .
- ZÜRCHER, E. J., 2004. *Modern History of Turkey (In Greek)*. Athens: Alexandria.

Articles from News websites

- Ahval, 2018. Ahval. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/press-freedom/turkish-media-under-more-pressure-ever-newspaper>

[Accessed August 2018].

- Ahval, 2018. Ahvalnews. [Online]

Available at: https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-youth/turkeys-secular-youth-estranged-own-country-opinion?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

[Accessed November 2018].

- Ahvalnews.com, 2018. ahvalnews.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/religion/turkish-religious-officials-register-marriages-report>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Ahvalnews.com, 2018. Ahvalnews.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/marriage/turkish-religious-marriage-law-slippery-slope-say-activists>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Ahvalnews, 2018. ahvalnews. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/press-freedom/turkish-journalists-determined-overcome-state-media-monopoly>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Ahvalnews, 2018. Ahvalnews.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/imam-hatip/erdogans-pious-generation-vision-stirs-debate-islam-and-schooling-turkey-ft>

[Accessed November 2018].

- arabnews, 2018. arabnews.com. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1283871/middle-east>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Arakon, M., 2018. Ahvanewsl.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/education/budget-pious-generations>

[Accessed December 2018].

- Asani, R., 2018. The Spectator. [Online]

Available at: <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/02/turkeys-religious-authorities-tighten-their-grip/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Basaran, E., 2017. Washinton Post. [Online]

Available at:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/01/03/secular-citizens-of-turkey-have-never-felt-so-alone/?utm_term=.65066b7e1dd6

[Accessed November 2018].

- Bişkin, H., 2017. Gazeteduvar. [Online] Atheist Foundation: Thousands of people seek our help in order for their children to stop going to Imam Hatips because they are afraid (in Turkish)

Available at: <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2017/11/15/atezim-dernegi-binlerce-kisi-din-dersinden-muaf-olmak-icin-bize-basvuruyor/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Borders, R. W., 2017. rsf.org. [Online]

Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/news/dire-year-journalists-under-state-emergency-turkey>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Borders, R. W., 2017. rsf.org. [Online]

Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/campaigns/turkeys-imprisoned-journalists-pin-hopes-european-court>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Borders, R. W., 2017. rsf.org. [Online]

Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/turkey#alerteszone>

[Accessed November 2018].

- borders, R. w., 2018. Reporters without borders. [Online]

Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/news/dogan-media-group-sale-completes-government-control-turkish-media>

[Accessed March 2018].

- Borders, R. W., 2018. rsf.org. [Online]

Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/news/european-court-issues-first-rulings-journalists-detained-turkey>

[Accessed November 2018].

- BUTLER, D., 2018. Reuters.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/turkey-erdogan-education/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Cagaptay, S., 2018. Washington Post. [Online]

Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2018/02/16/in-long-secular-turkey-sharia-is-gradually-taking-over/?utm_term=.7fd63909ca4f

[Accessed November 2018].

- Cumhuriyet, 2017. cumhuriyet.com.tr. [Online] A special unit was found that will watch for comments against the religion (in Turkish)

Available at:

http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/bilim_ve_teknoloji/879206/Emniyet_ozel_biri_m_kurdu..._Dine_ve_devlete_hakaret_edenleri_izleyecek.html

[Accessed November 2018].

- Cumhuriyet, 2017. cumhuriyet.com.tr. [Online] The budget for Religious education increased by 68% (in Turkish)

Available at:

http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/egitim/861868/Din_egitimi_butcesi_yuzde_6_8_artti.html

[Accessed November 2018].

- Economist, 2018. Economist. com. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/01/18/turkeys-religious-authority-surrenders-to-political-islam>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Erdemir, A., 2018. Foundation for Defence of Democracies. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2018/11/30/akp-eyes-alevi-voters-again-and-to-no-avail/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Gall, C., 2018. New York Times. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/18/world/europe/erdogan-turkey-election-religious-schools.html>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Gumrukcu, T., 2018. Reuters. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-education-evolution/turkey-to-stop-teaching-evolution-theory-in-high-schools-education-board-idUSKBN19E1RA>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Haber.sol, 2016. Haber.sol. [Online] Conservatists just don't stop: Mixed education is a violation of rights (in Turkish)

Available at: <http://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/gericiler-durmuyor-karma-egitim-hak-gaspiymis-173333>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Hallam, M., 2016. DW Akademie. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-discriminates-against-alevi-faith-echr-rules/a-19214883>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Karataş, E., 2018. Ahvalnews. [Online]

Available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/turkey/our-schools-have-been-handed-over-religious-groups>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Odatv, 2018. Odatv.com. [Online] Schools should not be without a prayer room (in Turkish)

Available at: <https://odativ.com/mebden-mescitsiz-okul-kalmasin-projesine-onay-08121841.html>

[Accessed 2018].

- Öncü, O., 2018. <https://ozguruz.org>. [Online] If Dogan wouldn't sell his property he would be sent to jail (in Turkish)

Available at: <https://ozguruz.org/2018/03/22/gazeteci-aysenur-arслан-aydin-dogan-satmasaydi-cezaevine-girecekti/>

[Accessed August 2018].

- Sabancı, A., 2018. <https://journocom.tr/>. [Online]

Available at: <https://journocom.tr/internet-censorship-in-turkey>

[Accessed December 2018].

- Sendika, 2017. sendika63.org. [Online] 250 new Imam Hatips opened (in Turkish)

Available at: <http://sendika63.org/2017/07/2-2-milyar-liraya-250-yeni-imam-hatip-lisesi-acildi-432230/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Sincar, H. İ., 2018. <https://www.aa.com.tr>. [Online] The heart without Quran is a black heart (in Turkish)

Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/diyanet-isleri-baskani-prof-dr-ali-erbas-kur-anin-girmedigi-kalp-karanlik-bir-kalptir/1331884>

[Accessed December 2018].

- Solaker, G., 2018. reuters.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-media/turkey-fines-tv-channel-over-girls-in-shorts-in-talent-show-idUSKBN1ET1DQ>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Solaker, G., 2018. Reuters.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-adultery/turkey-should-again-consider-criminalizing-adultery-erdogan-says-idUSKCN1G42BU>

[Accessed 30 November 2018].

- Sputnik.news, t., 2018. tr.sputniknews.com. [Online] Imam Hatip, while selecting high school wss made compulsory (in Turkish)

Available at: <https://tr.sputniknews.com/turkiye/201807021034100091-lgs-tercih-imam-hatip/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- t24, 2018. t24.com. [Online] The budget of the technology Ministry was cut in half (in Turkish)

Available at: <http://t24.com.tr/haber/bilim-sanayi-ve-teknoloji-bakanligi-butcesi-yari-yariya-kirpildi-diyanete-ek-5-milyar-butce-verildi,722281>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Tartanoğlu, S., 2018. cumhuriyet.com. [Online]

Available at:

http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/1131429/Diyanet_in_siyaset_israri.html

[Accessed November 2018].

- Tuvan Gumrukcu, D. B., 2017. Reuters.com. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-alcohol/steep-alcohol-taxes-drive-turkeys-drinkers-to-home-brew-idUSKBN1DH1SF>

[Accessed November 2018].

- UYGUN, Y., 2018. sozcu.com.tr. [Online] In a municipality of Istanbul, 2 grammar, 8 occupational and 6 Imam Hatip high schools are available (In Turkish)

Available at: <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2018/egitim/istanbulun-merkezindeki-ilcede-2-anadolu-8-meslek-6-imam-hatip-lisesi-var-2161048/>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Welle, D., 2018. Deutsche Welle Türkçe. [Online] Thousands of new positions open for Diyanet (In Turkish)

Available at: <https://www.dw.com/tr/diyanet-isleri-baskanligina-binlerce-yeni-kadro-aciliyor/a-46223297>

[Accessed 29 November 2018].

- Yeginsu, C., 2014. New York Times. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/world/europe/turkeys-religious-schools-rise-as-erdogan-exerts-sway.html>

[Accessed November 2018].

- Zeren, E., 2018. ahvalnews. [Online]

Available at: https://ahvalnews.com/turkish-media/turkish-journalists-turn-social-media-escape-state-crackdown?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook&fbclid=IwAR195yUp3ssfpmaq_O-t1BNSKblqV1s6p-ymbxhdot5peSPItw72HorNvZc

[Accessed 26 November 2018].

Academic Papers and articles

- Akpınar, A., 2007. *The making of a good citizen and conscious Muslim through public education: The case of Imam Hatip schools*. Istanbul, s.n.
- COMMISSION, E., 2018. *Turkey 2018 Report*, Strasbourg: European Commission.
- Cornel, S., 2017. A Religious Party Takes Hold: Turkey. *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 37.1, pp. 21-38.
- Demiralp, S., 2016. THE BREAKING UP OF TURKEY'S ISLAMIC ALLIANCE: THE AKP-GÜLEN CONFLICT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Spring 2016, pp. 1-7.
- Knudsen, B. V., 2005. *The role of the military in Turkish politics*. , Copenhagen: Copenhagen University .
- KÖSE, T., 2010 . The AKP and the "Alevi Opening": Understanding the Dynamics of the Rapprochement. *Insight Turkey Vol. 12 / No. 2* , pp. 143-164.
- Kuru, A. T., 2007. CHANGING PERSPECTIVES ON ISLAMISM AND SECULARISM IN TURKEY: THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT AND THE AK PARTY. In: *The Gülen Movement and the AK Party.* " Muslim world in transition: Contributions of the Gülen movement . s.l.:s.n., pp. 140-51..
- Larrabee, A. R. t. F. S., 2008. *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, Santa Monica, California: NATIONAL DEFENSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE.
- Narli, N., 1999. The Rise of the Islamist Movement in Turkey. *Middle East Review of International Affairs* , September , pp. 38-48.
- Öktem, K., 2008. Being Muslim at the Margins Alevis and the AKP. *MER 246 - Empire's Eastern Reach volume 38*, Spring.
- Toktas, S., 2006. EU ENLARGEMENT CONDITIONS AND MINORITY PROTECTION: A REFLECTION ON TURKEY'S NON-MUSLIM MINORITIES. *East European Quarterly*, XL, No. 4 , December, pp. 489-518.
- Toledano, E., 2011 . *The AKP's New Turkey*, s.l.: Hudson Institute.