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WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN AKP YEARS IN TURKEY: THE CONDITION OF ISLAMISM, TURKISH ISLAM SYNTHESIS, AND ISLAMIST VIOLENCE

Introduction

AKP (Justice and Development Party) comes from a long adventure between Islamism and democracy in Turkey, while surprisingly Islamism itself has been the side that demands rights in the name of democracy. Beginning by MNP (National Order Party), The Islamist political parties lived the experience of closure several times and each experience taught them much. Although many of the Turkish intellectuals, who are far from Islamism, are also defending some of AKP's demands, a certain fact is that the party discourse and the hard core defending this discourse clearly demonstrate a lack of 'secularisation of consciousness'.²

This becomes obvious so often in AKP's leader Tayyip Erdogan's speeches, in which he refers to *şeria* law, whenever a public issue was in discussion. Both Islamism and its today's leader have difficulty in accepting possible limitations on religion and religious life, which might be put by public law in the name of a public order. However, Erdogan's claims on the issues such as 'adultery', 'applying to *ulema* on *türban* affair', or 'bringing Koranic rights of forgiving the murderer back to the family of the murdered'³

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² Berger refers to a subjective level, by employing the term 'secularisation of consciousness'. According to Berger, it refers to "individuals who look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretation". Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc. 1967), 107-108.

³ AKP, discussing on adultery, tried to redefine polygamy and transform it to a kind of crime in case of complaint. However, it is a crime in already existing civil code, even if there is no complaint. Consequently, AKP gave up from such trial of legislation. The

seem to have acceptance within some of the voters for AKP. This means, some portion of Turkey's population is willing to live under *şeria* law. The problem is whether a *şeria* law might be demanded as a democratic right in a democracy, or not.

Certainly, no democracy would give such right but, there is a further problem, that is, AKP refuses that it has *şeria* claims while its acts and deeds are widely understood as *şeria* claims both by an important number of citizens and by the majority of lawyers. In the period of its coming into power between November 2002 elections and July 2007 elections, AKP became much more convincing that Islamist movement in Turkey gave up from its *şeria* claims and AKP would be integrated to the system as a Muslim democratic party for it was continuously approximating towards central right. However, AKP sharpened its discourse after it had got almost 47% of used and valid votes in July 2007 elections and lost the support from liberal and socialist intellectuals. Now, the party is faced with a trial of closure; Erdogan's and his partners' reaction is to renew and change the law about party closure.

The tension and conflict of recent months can be understood by looking at first period of power of AKP. In the first period, the economic programme established by the previous government was applied. Perhaps, we cannot talk of a big success but at least any one-night- crisis was not lived and AKP gained trust, although many social rights were taken back from the workers and from the retired, and despite of no real salary increase. Furthermore, salary increases were kept under the real inflation. AKP was not much promising for the salaried but it was for the 'poor', for it gave important support to the 'poor' from public budget. In addition, municipalities of AKP were much more sensitive to the old people living alone. They organised a network of volunteers who go to the houses of the old people, help them in domestic issues, chat with them, read books, newspapers for them. After a while, such humane support for the old became prevalent among almost all municipalities. The support for the poor, such as cash, food, coal, etc., began to be perceived as a kind of unemployment insurance, by the 'poor', and turned back to AKP as votes.

second problem rose when Erdogan commented on the European Court of Human Rights judgements on *türban*. Court judgements often relied on the idea that *türban* is not a religious expression for all Muslims; it can cause pressure on other Muslims and ones from other religions. Furthermore, it is used in a demonstrative way in some cases, and in some others, it is used as a symbol of confrontation to laïcité. In conclusion, both Turkish high courts and the European courts retold that public law operating in a society with a secular state might bring some limitations to freedom of expressing belief. After the final decisions, Erdogan commented on the issue that it should be asked to *ulema* (men of religion/experts on *şeria* law) whether it is a religious act or not. His final wording in Spain "let us say that it is a political symbol" attracted much opposition. The problem with *türban* is that it is not like any political symbol but it is perceived as the symbol of the will to *şeria* law. As the third case, Erdogan talked about death penalty, which does no more exist in Turkish law, but is also an issue still discussed. He said, "in fact, forgiving the murderer is the right of the family of the murdered". Perhaps, he is imagining such law as an ideal one and not suggesting any transformation but law is already laïcised in Turkey, and these are openly *şeria* claims from the viewpoint of most lawyers.

Second, the elections of presidency also caused much conflict. It was debateable whether 367 members of the Parliament should be present in the first tour of the elections or not. There was no agreement even among lawyers. Despite the claims of CHP (Republican Popular Party), AKP continued its tours without supplying 367 members in the first tour. CHP went to the Constitutional Court, and the Court decided that 367 was required in the first tour and cancelled the elections of presidency. AKP prepared a referendum package including this judgement, as well; and at the same time, it decided to go for elections in July 2007. The Turkish law does not accept basic rights and the judgements of the Constitutional Court to be voted by referendum but AKP created a *de facto* situation. If the party executive organs could be sure of the result of the general elections, perhaps AKP would not go to referendum for the 367 Judgement. Whatever the reasons were, AKP and high courts usually became in opposite sides and AKP's position always became the 'suffering' one. In addition, military openly declared that they want a "laicist president not by wording but by acts, by essence". Finally, they put a warning in their web site, what took its place as 'e-warning' in Turkish history of coups.

July 2007 general elections took place in such political climate. The votes that AKP won probably came from liberals, and some socialists, who were reactionary towards 367 judgement and/or 'e-warning', as well as Islamists. MHP (Nationalist Action Party) increased its votes and CHP (Republican Popular Party) could keep its previous level of votes only. From the socialists only Ufuk Uras could enter the Parliament for he was an independent candidate. Finally, we should note that central right was almost erased from the political arena.

Understanding AKP Success

To understand AKP success, let us ask and try to reply some questions: First, who are they, what is the make-up of AKP? Second, why is not any leftist party able to increase its votes despite the increasing poverty and decreasing social rights, poor working conditions? AKP takes its votes from Islamist movement, which has arisen through class alliances. Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs form the main body; there are also a number of investors and industrialists managing larger portions of capital, state officers, and lower classes, including urban poor. Any leftist party could not be able to reach AKP's level of votes because they lack what AKP has: the communitarian aspect⁴ of religious discourses have. The religious discourse of AKP has some

⁴ Religion provides an "ideal community" in believers' imagination, and its second function in everyday life is that it provides "collective representations", according to Heller. For the relevant part of Heller's theory of everyday life, see Agnes Heller, *Sociologia della Vita Quotidiana*, [*Sociology of Everyday Life*] (trans.), Alberto Scarponi. (Roma: Ed. Riuniti, 1970), 164-5.

signs, symbols, almost a distinguished language. For instance, the style of *türban* that wives of president, and prime minister, and some of ministers' wives wear signifies that they are *Nakşibendis*.⁵ In such religious organisations, it is possible to find people from every strata of the society, and not surprisingly, members would vote to the party of their religious leader, who is a political leader in the tradition of Islam, at the same time.

Here begins the problem. Because 'the Islamic mind' having no distinction between politics and religion, should also live under the principle of laicite and the doctrine of laicisim, which makes a certain distinction between religion and politics, defending that religion plays a restricted role in society.⁶ Such a life can be and in fact is difficult for some Muslims, while for some others is not. Even among the AKP voters, it is difficult to talk about a strong *şeria* will, in majority. So what is the problem and where is it?

Declaring a state as laic is one thing and the management of religion is another. In Turkey, like anywhere else in the world, the problem arises when we talk about the management of religion and religious lives. As the *sunni* tradition began to dominate since Ottoman sultans called themselves as caliphs in the sixteenth century, men of religion in the service of education, law, and public administration lost their divinity, ironically. Coming from such tradition, in the Republican period, they continued to serve as paid officers, and after 1937, they were bound by the principle of laicite. This confused neither 'the Islamic mind' nor the 'secular mind', in Turkey for religious service was reduced to a public service and for it was carried out in a secular mentality.

However, *Nakşibendi* groups became the most advantageous ones, although they were forbidden from clergy training. This could become possible because of their interpretation of Islam, which was not much different from *sunni* orthodox interpretation, and which enabled them to take the advantage of formal education of religion in public institutions. They could work for the public, within the Department of Religious Affairs. If they wanted to go to mosque, they did not have to pay something extra for religious service, like in the case of other religions and sects. Because expenditure of mosques, including *imams'* salaries were always provided by public budget. Meanwhile, they kept their *Nakşibendi* ethics and networks of solidarity without any

⁵ *Sufi* orders, after a long discourse of decadence and criticisms from within, were closed in the Republican era of Turkey, in the year 1925, by law, with the exceptions of *Bektaşis*, *Kadiris*, and *Mevlevis*. *Nakşibendis* were in power especially in the last two centuries of the Ottomans. Their *sunni* orthodox interpretation and worldly asceticism well fitted to the needs of Ottoman state. In the Republican period, they continued to exist in different forms: while some were loyal to their commitments without training any new clergy and existing as *Sufi* brotherhoods, some others continued to train teenage boys illegally.

⁶ Elisabeth Özdalga, *Modern Türkiye'de Örtünme Sorunu, Resmi Laiklik ve Popüler İslam* [The Veiling Issue, Official Laicism, and Popular Islam in Modern Turkey] (Istanbul: Sarmal, 1998), 21.

sign. Even the *Nur* movement is a *Nakşibendi* success because they are diverged from *Nakşibendis* and we can accept this movement as 'innovation'.⁷

Consequently, people with such belongings began to perceive the ongoing situation as natural. Their demands, in their view, were not the demands of *Nakşibendis* or of *Nur* movement, but of Islam, and they raised their voice within AKP. Being funded by the public budget, they began to deny public control on religion and a dislike towards their attitude became prevalent in society, even among some *sunni* Muslims, especially ones without any bonds with *Sufi* orders. Furthermore, AKP's foreign policy was criticised much by both nationalist parties and CHP; and, in this period, we witnessed the rise of Turkish nationalism, again.

Some versions of Turkish nationalism have always had affinal bonds with Islamism. Even the founding ideology of previous leader Necmettin Erbakan was called *Milli Görüş*, which means "national view". However, AKP represents a divergence from the emphasis of nation: it left the anti-Zionist and anti-Americanist discourses of *Milli Görüş* behind; and, it does not have much emphasis on national identity. While this is the case for AKP, it seems that the ideology of 'Turkish Islam' (the imagined synthesis between Turkishness and Islam) has come to the end of the road; the ideologues of 'Turkish Islam' would have to choose their priorities, in very near future. In fact, such two competing and contrasting myths, i.e., the myth of nation, and the myth of *umma*⁸ could spend quite a long time together; and, especially AKP years can be noted as the years of violence towards people, who insist on *türban* ban, or who are not Muslims, or who have ethnic origins other than Turkishness. Here, it is aimed to analyse four chosen important cases of violence, which took place during AKP years of Turkey.

Assassination of Priest Santoro of Santa Maria Church in Trabzon, February 5, 2006

A teenager boy killed Italian Catholic Priest in the Church, in Trabzon. In the beginning, it seemed as a mysterious killing and did not get much reaction from the public. Most people thought that a young boy under the influence of Turkish Islam ideologues did this as a reactionary act to 'supposed missionary activities of the

⁷ *Nur* movement has claims to have a better understanding of modernity and it is in contrast with *Nakşibendi* scholasticism. They can be understood as innovation within *Nakşibendis*, and again, this is a *Nakşibendi* achievement. For "religious effects of modernity: decline, adaptation and reinterpretation, and innovation" see Yves Lambert, "Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age: Secularization or New Religious Forms?," *Sociology of Religion* 60:3 (1999): 303-333.

⁸ *Umma* is the archaic concept of Islam, which assumes extraterritorial, extra national bonds among Muslims, and thereby imagines a 'Muslim Community' covering all Muslims in the world. See Michael Gilson, *Recognising Islam* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

Church'. O.A. was under the age of 18 and he was punished by imprisonment of 18 years and 10 months. After the Supreme Court had approved his punishment, O.A.'s father declared that they would apply to European Court of Human Rights.⁹ In February 2008, we learned that the police pursued Santoro and both his telephone calls and Yasin Hayal's (who got O.S. to kill Hrant Dink) telephone calls were under police examination, for three months, beginning by 8 November 2005. The permission for telephone listening would be finished in 8 February 2006, and Priest Santoro was killed three days before this date.¹⁰ Feridun Boz, Police Head in Trabzon replied Dogan News Agency and claimed that there was no relation between Yasin Hayal and assassination of Santoro.¹¹

Attack to the Council of State, Ankara, May 17, 2006

Council of State became the target of a bloody attack. High judges were injured, one of them, Mustafa Yücel Özbilgin died. Security personnel of the Council of State caught murderer, Alparslan Arslan, a lawyer registered in the bar of Istanbul. His first cries were such: "I am God's soldier. We are Ottoman sons. This will follow up".¹² The Court, who was attacked, was known by the judgement on a teacher who was not assigned to the execution of a Kindergarten in Gölbaşı, Ankara. The approval of the court was criticised much and especially the newspaper Vakit published the photographs of Court Head and three members of the Court, in 13 February 2006; and because of this publication, it was under examination of Ali Çakir, Press Attorney General of Bagcilar, in requirement of the sixth clause of the Law of Struggle with Terror. The same Court also cancelled a circular of Ministry of National Education, about the election of teachers for Anadolu Lyces (public schools, accepting students with a central exam).¹³

Alparslan Arslan and three of the judged were punished by life-long imprisonment for they tried to change the constitutional regime by using force and violence. However, their 'deep' relations remained unanswered. As their last wording, Alparslan Arslan wanted President Gül and Prime Minister Erdogan to declare *şeria*, and threatened military; and, Osman Yildirim insulted judges and Atatürk.¹⁴

⁹ CNN TÜRK, October 4, 2007: <http://www.cnnturk.com>

¹⁰ CNN TÜRK, February 21, 2008: <http://www.cnnturk.com>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NTVM SNBC, May 19, 2006: <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/news/373502asp>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Radikal, February 14, 2008: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=247392>

Assassination of Hrant Dink, Agos Newspaper, Istanbul, January 19, 2007

Hrant Dink, journalist with Armenian origin, was assassinated in front of Agos newspaper in Istanbul. More than 100.000 people joined his funeral; and, his wife Raket Dink made a short, unforgettable speech. However, there were doubts that this assassination would remain in the dark. Neither the police heads in Trabzon and Istanbul, nor the majors of both cities took responsibility. Like minister of Interior Affairs, Abdülkadir Aksu, they only condemned the assassination. ANAP (Motherland Party) gave a proposal for general questioning in the Parliament, for the minister Aksu; in the proposal, ANAP argued that Aksu and his ministry was unsuccessful in preventing those crimes beginning by the assassination of Hablemitoglu¹⁵ (academician/researcher), attack to the Council of State, assassination of Priest Santoro, and of Hrant Dink.¹⁶ ANAP's proposal was refused by AKP's votes; and the doubts came true. We could not learn who wanted Hrant Dink to be killed, for public officers could not be judged. Fethiye Çetin, advocate of Dink Family, openly said that the clues were hidden from attorneys.¹⁷

Ferocious Killings in Zirve Print house, Malatya, April 18, 2007

German citizen Tilnman Geske, and Turkish citizen Necati Aydin were assassinated violently in Malatya office of Zirve Print house; and Ugur Yüksel, who was also knifed, died in the hospital. It was a real shock, and no one had a clear idea about this ferocious violence towards three Protestants. It was reported that victims were tortured for hours and then they were killed. Zirve Print house was publishing books on Christianity and the executives had changed its name "Kayra" as "Zirve", because of threats coming from some groups for they were distributing Bible.¹⁸ Murderers were again young men. Four of them were caught in the building and the police took Emre Günaydin, one of the murderers, who tried to escape by jumping from the third floor of the building, to the hospital.

The victims were tied with *domuzbagi* (pig bandage).¹⁹ Turkey witnessed this method in the years 1990s in Hizbullah affairs. The trial is now going on. However, no one could have an understanding of the question "why these young men could

¹⁵ I did not evaluate this assassination among the ones above because it was completely mysterious and there was not much public reaction.

¹⁶ CNN TÜRK, February 7, 2007: <http://www.cnnturk.com>

¹⁷ Radikal, October 1, 2007: <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=234428>

¹⁸ Milliyet, April 18, 2007: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/04/18/son/sontur43.asp>

¹⁹ Ibid.

become so violent against three protestant Christians, while their missionary activity, -if they were doing-, was permitted by new laws, it was legal and legitimate, in Turkish law. The questioning period that the police carried out did not seem trustful and the last shock was that the law indictment had given the most part to the missionary activities of the victims as if they were the ones, who should have been judged.

What will Happen Now?

Sivas Massacre of 1993²⁰ can be accepted as a turn in the ideology of Turkish Islam. Until this date, the violent groups were not so organised and not so courageous, either. BBP (Grand Unity Party) seemed to have some kind of relation with some people from these groups but it was not proved that there was an organic relation. In the assassination of Hrant Dink, the second chain Yasin Hayal and the third chain Erhan Tuncel seemed to have contacts with some people from BBP but an organic relation could not be proved, again. Muhsin Yazicioglu, leader of BBP, took no responsibility, either. Consequently, the party was not put under police questioning. Even if it was proved that they had a relation, it seemed difficult to answer the question whether this party would be closed or not, as a party in the extreme-right. I guess that they will not meet a trial of closure as long as they unite Turkishness and Islam. Because will to Islam alone is perceived as a will to *şeria* law. Emphasis on Turkishness alone reminds pan Turkism and it is accepted as extreme-right; it is perceived as a threat to nation-state. A group of people, who were diverged from MHP (Nationalist Action Party), formed BBP. Both parties still carry claims on Turkish Islam synthesis but BBP in recent decade proved much more emphasis on Islam.

Not similarly, AKP's emphasis was always on Islam, only. However, these four important cases above took place in the power of AKP, which was also a power that Turkey has not been witnessing for the last two decades; and all of the trials remained in the dark although two of the trials were finished. Now, at this step, AKP has been faced with a trial of closure; the party is accused of 'being the focus of anti-laicite activities'. If the Constitutional Court accepts the trial, the process might end up with closure. People not voting for AKP are also anxious about the consequences of the closure because as I noted in the beginning, AKP comes from a long experience of closure; and, after each closure, it increased its votes. If we look at the voting rates of the parties at the right, in the last elections, we are faced with a huge success; three political parties who entered the Parliament got more than 60 % of used and valid votes. AKP got 46,58 %, MHP got 14,27 % of used and valid votes²¹, BBP did not join the elections

²⁰ Turkish-Islam fanatics fired 37 people in Madimak Hotel in the city of Sivas, in 1993, and state power could not prevent this.

²¹ <http://www.belgenet.com>

but its leader Muhsin Yazicioglu became an independent candidate from the city of Sivas and entered the Parliament, then joined BBP, again. In November 2002 elections, BBP got 1,02 %²² and it is not expected that it would have a big change in its votes. However, these three political parties share more or less the same views in *türban* affair and MHP and BBP gave support to AKP in its legislative efforts.

Türban Ban

All of these political parties have more or less similar ideas on the ban and they agree that *türban* ban should be cancelled, in the universities. DTP (Democratic Society Party) also declared agreement on the abolition of *türban* ban. New ANAP, in the leadership of Mesut Yilmaz and Erkan Mumcu in the previous governments, did not support the ban so hotly but it did not try to cancel it, either. CHP was always on the side of the ban. The legitimate basis of *türban* ban was formed by two judgements of high courts, in the years 1989 and 1991. Since women, who claimed to have education in the universities, or who wanted to work in state bureaucracy by wearing *türban*, went to high courts, their trials ended up with these judgements, and the judgements became applicable in all similar conditions. Before these trials, there were no judgements, but some public executives were interpreting public regulations and deciding to accept women by *türban* or not accepting them. With 1989 and 1991 judgements, no sphere was left to interpretation. As the 1991 judgement was the judgement of the Constitutional Court, it cannot be changed or by-passed. Even if legal arrangements were done, as AKP put to use²³, the judgement would remain. Only legitimate way is that the Constitutional Court would come up with a new judgement cancelling the ban. AKP would not like to follow this way; and CHP went to the Constitutional Court about AKP's legislative arrangements. Before CHP's trial was concluded, AKP had been faced with the trial of closure.

The End of Turkish Islam Synthesis

It seems that AKP has already done its choice between the idea of Turkishness and Islam. It decided to remain in the latter. Otherwise, it could not get its voting levels from the Southeastern part of Turkey. It is guessed that its votes in the region came from *sunni* Kurds. What AKP interprets as Islam, can be Kurdish nationalism; and, like

²² Ibid.

²³ AKP added some phrases of 'getting equal service' to the tenth and forty-second items of the Constitution and all their lawyers think that this would work. The black humour in *türban* is that women who are wearing it declare that they want their service in this unequal form, in this detachment, but this 'order of religion' is advocated as if it were a 'human right'. That means, "Give me service recognising my inequality".

in the case of Turkish Islam synthesis, it seems to be a Kurdish Islam, which votes for AKP. The problem is that no one knows how AKP will react to rising Kurdish nationalism. MHP gave support for AKP in *türban* issue but this support provided the last drop for the trial of closure. MHP will not pay any cost in front of law, but would most probably lose some part of its votes from nationalists not having Islamic emphasis.

The near future would bring legal struggles for naming political parties, who called themselves nationalists, as extreme-right, like in the case of MHP and BBP. However, it would be difficult to name any political party as extreme-right because they prepare standard manifestos, committing loyalty to democracy, while they are openly far from democratic values. The same process takes place in the case of AKP, in terms of Islam. AKP manifesto does not have any claim in the name of Islam, but their acts and discourses often have references to Islam. Erdogan does not say that he wants *şeria* law, but he refers to *şeria* law so often that he has lost trust among the secular minded audience.

The fact that Erdogan increased his references to *şeria* law after July 2007 elections increased lack of trust towards his party, as well. Political parties having the claims of Turkish Islam synthesis are not showing negative reaction to Erdogan's references to *şeria* law. However, it is not certain that Erdogan's Islam will tolerate their extremism in Turkish nationalism. Neither MHP nor BBP shows any sign of divorce between Islam and Turkish nationalism but *türban* affair would make many voters give up from MHP even if not from BBP. AKP's policies are sharpening the necessary distinction between Islam and Turkish nationalism; and, in the first elections, MHP would find itself with a mass of voters with the same profile of BBP's voters, who are still insisting in the ideology of Turkish Islam synthesis. It seems that the imagined synthesis between Turkishness and Islam is able to exist only in BBP and BBPlike MHP, and for a while. Eventually, this ideologisation, which tries to bind Islam, -*sunni* Islam indeed-, and Turkishness will find itself at the crossroads that *Milli Görüş* found itself years ago.

The results of July 2007 elections might be interpreted in many respects. From the angle of four cases above, it can be said that Turkish voters ignored what has happened to their citizens and citizens of other countries in their lands. The victims were non-Muslims (Turkish or foreigners) or lawyers defending laicite. Non-Muslims were seen as a threat to Turkishness and laicite defenders were seen as a threat to Islam, and its ultimate goal *şeria*. The way of commitment of these, and the relations of criminals are not very clear in all cases but in case of assassination of Hrant Dink, my impression is that state power is in use not to permit state personnel having responsibility in not being able to prevent these assassinations, to be judged. We do not know what AKP voters think about these four cases above, but it is certain that neither AKP nor its

voters find any responsibility in themselves. Worse than the fact that these have happened in Turkey, is that, Turkish citizens are widely ignoring what has happened.

Any Peace between AKP and the Politics in Turkey? Precepts of Communication

AKP's position is still the one between a two-year-old child and mother. At this age, children try to challenge the framework that is put by their mothers. Whenever mothers loose their attention, or as much as they tolerate, children at this age come to the borders of tolerance. Islamism has always done this in terms of laicite, and, now AKP is following the path. In addition, it goes further and tries to change the laws about closure just after the trial of closure has been declared. However, the problem here is two-fold. First, secularisation in Turkey has a long history and it is quite rooted. Second, the problem is that the state tradition in Turkey does not resemble a cheerful, tolerant mother but an authoritarian father.

Perhaps, the first step might be acting as adults; AKP should become an adult and take the responsibility of its acts and deeds, and the political system should recognise its adulthood. For instance, instead of punishing and forgiving Islamism from time to time, it would be a solution to ban fascist and Islamist (*şeria*) parties at the same time. However, in case of AKP and political parties at the extreme right, the problem is that the written documents about their inner regulations are not much different from all other political parties. This means they violate primary rule of an ideal-type of communicative interaction. What they say does not correspond to their real purpose.²⁴ According to Mardin, Islam permits that one can hide his/her beliefs and ideas if s/he is under pressure. Mardin calls this "*Takiyye*" doctrine and follows Keddie in that Muslim thinkers, in the medieval Ages, from orthodox or heterodox schools followed such a path in which they did not make their real ideas public.²⁵ Certainly, Mardin was right in his observation that it was commonly believed that '*takiyye*' was still a very general mode of attitude, in Turkey, but, in 2000s, the *psyche* of AKP has something more than the content of this concept.

²⁴ McLellan, referring to Habermas, schematises such ideal communicative interaction: People talking to each other aim to reach a kind of convention. Here, it is presumed that the partners of a communicative interaction can claim four types of validity: first, what they say should be understandable; what they say should be true; what they say are legitimate in their own contexts; what they say should sincerely reflect their real purpose. See David McLellan, *Ideoloji [Ideology]* (trans.) Ercüment Özkaya (Ankara: Doruk, 1999), 108.

²⁵ See Şerif Mardin, *Din ve Ideoloji [Religion and Ideology]* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2000), [1969], 84-5. See also N. R. Keddie, "Symbol and Sincerity in Islam", *Studia Islamica* 19 (1963) 27-63, 27.

While the visibility of Islam in 1980s Turkey might be evaluated as the consequences of urbanisation and rapid socio-economic changes²⁶ beginning by 1950s, the new Islam represented by AKP in 2000s, can be the outcome of the interaction between religion and globalisation, especially in 1990s Turkey. Within this process of interaction, religious communities made their experiences public in modern life and supplied these experiences to the global information market. Especially, learned practices of power during western experience helped them in demanding more for religious lives, such as asking for more freedom in expressing beliefs and questioning some regulations about religious life in the name of 'democracy'.

Not surprisingly, AKP was influenced by western examples of the continuity in religious lives and asked for the same account, independently from its context. I mean, AKP does not take the already existing public agreement, which had given rise to a Unitarian nation-state in Turkey into consideration, and it refers to United Kingdom or United States, when it is demanding some kind of new regulation for the public life. First dilemma that AKP ignores is that there is no church institution in Islam and there is no similar separation between Islam and state, like in the case of Western experience.²⁷

Turkey resembles France both in that the management of religion is based on a pure *laicist* type of separation, and it resembles France, in the nature of the state, which is indivisible Unitarian nation-state. The difference from France lies in the difference of Islamic tradition. The existence of a "Department of Religious Affairs" has been confusing neither for the 'secular mind' nor for the '*sunni* religious mind', in Turkey. The underlying assumption is that the religion is reduced to worshipping and it is carried out like any public service. Furthermore, men of religion working for the "Department of Religious Affairs" are accepting that they would serve for the public under the principle of laicite, and in cooperation with 'national solidarity and integration', by definition, i.e., as a requirement of the regulations with which they are bound. *Sunni* men of religion, forgiving their idea of political leadership, which is not separated from the religious one in the doctrine of Islam, should in fact, be appreciated as long as they are getting along with their commitments, well.

Obviously, AKP has some kind of problems with the already existing reconciliation between *sunni* Islam and the Republican regime. Even if it is not so, AKP owes some part of its power to the dislike against such reconciliation among *sunni* Turks,

²⁶ Nur Vergin, "Toplumsal Değişme ve Dinsellikte Artış," *Toplum ve Bilim* ["Social Change and Increase in Religiosity" *Society and Science*] 29/39 (1985): 9-28.

²⁷ Nielsen distinguishes between *laicist* type, the Napoleonic *concordat* model, the *establishment* model appearing in two forms: first "*recognition* by the state of a special status for certain churches, or religious communities" and second, "*incorporation* of a church in the constitutional state structure in some form". For a survey of state and religion relations in Europe, see Jorgen S. Nielsen, *Towards a European Islam*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999), 113.

and newly, among *sunni* Kurds. With such account, it might be expected from AKP that it would come up with reform demands to detach and emancipate in this way, men of religion working for the public as paid employees of the state, from the sphere of secular public regulations. For instance, demanding religious education like in the case of Christian seminary, *-sunni* men of religion are educated in secular schools, in Turkey- might be a beginning for an institutionalisation of Islam, apart from the state. However, this is not what AKP demand. Instead, they want to abolish public control on religious lives in public.

Apart from AKP's demands, the kind of reconciliation between Islam and state is difficult to be reverted. Because it is the outcome of a civil war, and the process of defining religion under public law was also carried out by the newly established Republic, in its most powerful era, just after the declaration of new state in 1923 and the abolishment of caliphate in 1924. Again, apart from Islamist dislike and protest, the problems of religious life are caused by the Unitarian characteristic of the nation-state rather than the principle of laicite. Because, by the acceptance and application of the Unification of Education Law in 1924, Turkey adopted a single model, which would be put to use in all public schools in the country, and all schools, both private and public ones would share same curriculum, and would be tied to the Ministry of National Education. In this way, the law "put an end to the pluralism of minority schools, missionary schools and foreign schools and thereby asserted a centralist, modernist, national education system under the guidance of rationalism and scientism, to establish a new nation with a new identity and with a new unified morality".²⁸ The Islamist critique, in this sense, is not much different in its demands from the Kurdish movement. Both sides share a dislike towards monolithic definitions of the nation-state and have got problems with the 'intended national identity'. The coming crisis of Turkish nation-state -has already come but is being ignored- has a double burden: it is not successful in uniting all in one single national identity, and it does not seem possible to go back to the plurality of the past, any more, either.

If we turn back to the nature of the state tradition in Turkey, -resembling an authoritarian father-, Mardin's detection, which claims that Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Republican regime in Turkey, did not let any opposed ideology which can be rival to religion and thereby Islam remained as the single alternative,²⁹ is still valid and explaining. In addition, it means that Kemalism created its most powerful rival, by itself, ironically. Now, however, Islamism of AKP is struggling with the regime not from the viewpoint of an ideology of *umma*, but rather from the criticism of a lack of

²⁸ Bahattin Akşit, "Islamic Education in Turkey: Medrese Reform in Late-Ottoman Times and Imam-Hatip Schools in the Republic," in *Islam in Modern Turkey*, ed. Richard Tapper (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1991), 161.

²⁹ Şerif Mardin, *Din ve İdeoloji*, 149.

polyphony created by the nation-state. As their critique is not perceived as a sincere one and as laicist intelligentsia does not expect much polyphony under the voice of Islam and with the negligence of public law, AKP needs to secularise its discourse, if it would like to have any peace with the politics in Turkey. As long as AKP does not do this and as long as the representatives of the public law speak in the imperative tone, AKP's votes would remain high. Because the imperative tone of public law is sympathetic for no one, it is perceived as the state power, but not the sanction of the law, and state is and was always like an authoritarian father.

The laicite principle and the kind of reconciliation between religion and state are still discussed in Turkey, and it can be argued that this signifies a problem in secularisation. However, the problem has similarities with the problems of post-secular era of Europe, which is, in Habermas' description, characterised by, "an essential tension between religious communities and a secular environment".³⁰ As Carroll interpreted, Habermas noted that both the 'replacement model' proposing the replacement of religious language by a rational language, and the 'expropriation model' realising the 'takeover of religious language and property' are mistaken in that they conceived religion and modernity in opposition. Habermas suggested the 'translation model' for the ongoing post-secular era.³¹ In this model, secularisation should not be questioned but taken for granted, but religions are, at the same time, able to contribute to the public debate. However, "in order to exert their influence, they need to translate their ideas from a religious discourse into a publicly accessible secular discourse".³² The functioning of such model depends on a mediator between state and religion and Habermas calls it 'democratically enlightened common sense'.³³ Finally, Habermas concludes that religions must "disavow violence as a means for expressing their religious views", and he suggests three basic principles that would constitute democratic potential in a religion: first is that religions should have interreligious dialogue, that means they should take truth claims of other religions into consideration and reflect on them seriously, second, religions should recognise the validity of social science descriptions of modern society, and the third, religions should recognise the legitimacy of the secular basis of the modern constitutional state.³⁴

³⁰ Carroll referred to Habermas' speech about the shifting basis of secularisation theory in contemporary social theory, in Paulskirche in Frankfurt in 2001. For Carroll's interpretation of Habermas, see Anthony Carroll, "What is the Theory of Secularisation?," *Paper presented in the Scribani Conference Antwerp: Roundtable on Ethics and Faith* (September 2004). For the published form of Habermas' address see, Jürgen Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen. Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels*, (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2001).

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

In case of Turkey, AKP owes its existence and success to the 'replacement model', which was put to use since 1700s³⁵ in the process of secularisation in Turkey. Islam tries to turn back and speak in its own language, and AKP associates itself with Islam, these days much more than the past. In the first period of its power, my impression was that AKP was in the process of learning to 'translate its language into a secular one'. Unfortunately, it immediately, turned back to the beginning and employed such a discourse of 'suffering' of which we are familiar with from the history of Islam: the discourse about the community of suffering believers. The radical solution to the problem would be that AKP might remember that it is not a religious community but a political party in a democratic political system, although it has organic relations with religious communities. This is not as difficult as it is seen because we all witnessed that AKP was able to do this in its first period of power.

In conclusion, the near future of Turkish politics will be determined by the strength of the 'democratically enlightened common sense'. On the other hand, for the ones who did not and would not vote for AKP, the problem should be the four cases of violence referred above, rather than 'shadowboxing' with AKP discourse. Because it became clear that neither AKP nor its voters have much curiosity about what Islamist violence want while targeting at laicite defenders or non-Muslim Turkish citizens or non-Muslims living in Turkey.

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Abstract

Fatma Sündal

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN AKP YEARS IN TURKEY: THE CONDITION OF ISLAMISM, TURKISH ISLAM SYNTHESIS, AND ISLAMIST VIOLENCE

AKP (Justice and Development Party) can be accepted as the last and most powerful representative of Islamism in Turkey. The party came to power alone, after the general elections in 2002 and in 2007. Within its first period of power, AKP claimed divergence from its extreme Islamist views and it gained trust among the majority of intellectuals. Furthermore, some socialist and liberal intellectuals supported most claims of AKP, in its first period of power. In the second period, AKP's discourse began to have references to *şeria* law, more frequently; and finally, it lost the support of liberals and socialists. We witnessed some important and mysterious assassinations in the years 2006 and 2007 before the 2007 elections; and pre-elections period of 2007 was

characterised by legal issues, which put AKP in a 'suffering' position, once more. This essay is an effort in re-evaluating the tension between Islamism and laicism and some political issues of AKP years of Turkey, including four chosen acts of violence against laicite defenders or non-Muslims.

Key words: Secularisation of Consciousness, Islamism, Islamist Violence, Democracy, *Turban* Ban, *Şeria* Law, Turkish Islam Synthesis.

Резиме

Фатма Сундал

ШТА СЕ ДОГАЂА У ГОДИНАМА ВЛАДАВИНЕ АКП-а У ТУРСКОЈ: СТАЊЕ ИСЛАМИЗМА, ТУРСКА ИСЛАМСКА СИНТЕЗА И ИСЛАМИСТИЧКО НАСИЉЕ

Партија АКП („Партија правде и развоја“) самостално је преузела власт после општих избора одржаних 2002. и 2007. године. У првом периоду своје власти, АКП је тврдила да се дистанцира од екстремних исламистичких ставова и задобила је поверење већине интелектуалаца. Штавише, неки интелектуалци социјалистичких и либералних опредељења подржали су већину захтева АКП током поменутог првог периода власти ове партије. У другом периоду, АКП почиње, све чешће и чешће, да се позива на шеријатско право. Коначно, ова политичка партија губи подршку либерала и социјалиста. Били смо сведоци неких значајних и мистериозних убистава током 2006. и 2007. године, пре одржавања избора те године. За период пре избора 2007. године карактеристична су била правна питања, која су ставила АКП, још једном, у „положај жртве“. Овај чланак представља покушај да се изврши ре-евалуација неких политичких питања која су се јавила током периода власти АКП-а у Турској, међу којима ћемо поменути и четири посебна случаја насиља против оних који су бранили лаицизам или против немуслимана.

Кључне речи: секуларизација свести, исламизам, демократија, забрана турбана, шеријатско право, Турска исламска синтеза.

