

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE PRINCIPLES OF KEMALISM AND ISLAMISM IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF TURKEY

Bella
BOKOVA*

Ph.D. student, Department of Regional Studies, Faculty of International Relations, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, b.re.2016@mail.ru

Manuscript received: 26/03/2024

Revised: 07/05/2024

Accepted: 23/05/2024

DOI: 10.52123/1994-2370-2024-1208

UDC 327.7:327

CICSTI 11.25.15

Abstract. The scientific article is devoted to studying the Turkish political system in the context of transforming ideological views. Special attention is paid to the dynamics of the development of Islamic ideology, and subsequently religious political cells of the Turkish political society. The publication provides a thorough and detailed analysis of the fundamental documents of the Justice and Development Party, the concept of «Strategic Depth», the texts of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and a number of other documents. Based on the use of these sources, the author identifies a number of hypotheses according to which the concept of political Islam in Turkey has developed. To complete the picture presented by the author, information is provided on the participation of Kurds in politics during the period when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power. The purpose of the study is to reveal the peculiarities of the transformation of the Turkish political system from a Kemalist form – a secular path of development to a pronounced religious orientation. As a result of the scientific research, the key factors of changes in the political environment in Turkey have been identified, through the arrival of the Justice and Development Party and the consolidation of Erdogan's power, which led to the formation of a new political vision of the state.

Keywords: Justice and Development Party (AKP), secularism, Islamism, Erdogan, strategic depth, Kurds.

Аңдатпа. Ғылыми мақала Түркияның саяси жүйесін идеологиялық көзқарастардың өзгеруі жағдайында зерттеуге арналған. Ислам идеологиясының, одан кейін Түркияның саяси қоғамының діни саяси ұяшықтарының даму динамикасына ерекше назар аударылады. Басылымда Әділет және даму партиясының құрылтай құжаттары, «Стратегиялық тереңдік» тұжырымдамасы, Түрік Республикасы Конституциясының мәтіндері және басқа да бірқатар құжаттар жан-жақты және егжей-тегжейлі талданған. Осы дереккөздерді пайдалану негізінде автор Түркияда саяси ислам концепциясы қалыптасқан бірқатар болжамдарды анықтайды. Автор ұсынылған мәселе бойынша көріністі толықтыру үшін ӘДП билікке келген кезеңдегі күрділердің саясатқа қатысуы туралы мәліметтер келтірген. Зерттеудің мақсаты - Түркияның саяси жүйесінің кемалистік формадаң зайырлы даму жолынан айқын діни бағытқа айналуының ерекшеліктерін ашу. Ғылыми зерттеу нәтижесінде Әділет партиясының келуі және мемлекеттің жаңа саяси көзқарасының қалыптасуына әкеп соқтырған Ердоған билігінің дамуы мен нығаюы арқылы Түркиядағы саяси ортаның өзгеруінің негізгі факторлары анықталды.

Түйін сөздер: Әділет және даму партиясы (ӘДП), зайырлылық, исламшылдық, Ердоған, стратегиялық тереңдік, күрділер.

Аннотация. Научная статья посвящена исследованию политической системы Турции, в контексте трансформации идеологических взглядов. Особое внимание уделяется динамике развития исламской идеологии, а в последствии религиозных политических ячеек политического общества Турции. В публикации приведен тщательный и детальный анализ основополагающих документов Партии справедливости и развития, концепции «Стратегическая глубина», текстов Конституции Турецкой Республики и ряда других документов. На основе использования данных источников, автор выявляет ряд гипотез, согласно которым получило развитие концепция политического ислама в Турции. Для полноты представляемой автором картины, представлены сведения об участии курдов в политике в период прихода к власти ПСР. Цель исследования – раскрыть особенности трансформации политической системы Турции от кемалистской формы – светского пути развития до выраженной религиозной направленности. В результате научного исследования определены ключевые факторы изменений политической среды в Турции, посредством прихода Партии Справедливости и Развития и упрочнения власти Эрдогана, повлекшее за собой формирование нового политического видения государства.

Ключевые слова: Партия справедливости и развития (ПСР), секуляризм, исламизм, Эрдоган, стратегическая глубина, курды.

* Corresponding author: B. Bokova, b.re.2016@mail.ru

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the strength of Islamism or political Islam has been growing subtly both in Turkey and in other Muslim countries. The relevance of the study is determined by the significant growth of Islamism in the political system of Turkey over the past decades. Political Islam in Turkey is one of the forms of Turkish national identity, which, despite the ideas of secularism and secularism of the state introduced by Atatürk, developed latently in the form of “Tarikat”, the so-called Islamic religious underground groups. Sufi orders or brotherhoods (Tariqatlar) such as the Bektans and Safavis once competed for political power over eastern Anatolia in the Ottoman Empire. Tariqats have survived as important religious and social networks in modern Turkey despite the fact that they were outlawed and could only develop underground during the Republican period. The most famous Sufi communities in Turkish society today are Nakkibendi and Kadiri [1]. Famous Turkish political leaders in Turkey such as Turgut Özal, Najmettin Erbakan, Teyip Erdoğan are supporters of the Nakkibendi Sufi order. It is noteworthy that these associations are considered a very influential and impressive political force due to the support of the top authorities, who were also members of the Sufi brotherhood. Such religious communities have an extensive network of various sub-unities among Turkish society. The well-known Islamic movement “Nur” or “Hizmet”, transformed by Fethullah Gülen from the “Nurjist” movement of Sheikh Said, successfully operates almost all over the world, being financially secure and supported by the West. The Gülen movement develops harmoniously between various religious movements: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Extensive propaganda of Islamic values through the prism of liberal democratic ideas of the West allowed the Gülen movement to cover many territories. Institutions such as Fatih University in Istanbul and extensive networks of schools, hospitals and newspapers, magazines, including the mass-circulation newspaper Zaman, television stations Samanyolu (Milky Way) and Mehtap (Full Moon) adhere to Gülenist views [1]. Also, the Gülen movement,

represented by school institutions, covers the countries of Central Asia and the CIS. The dynamics of the politicization of Islamism from the “Tarikat” to the state party structure are also subject to consideration in the framework of a scientific article.

The purpose of the research work is to analyze the political transformation of Turkey from secularism to Islamism, in the context of the entry into the political arena of a new player - the Justice and Development Party (AKP) represented by R. Erdoğan. To achieve the research goal, it is necessary to adhere to the following tasks:

1. Explore the reasons and prerequisites for the strengthening of the Islamic movement in Turkish society;
2. Analyze the transformation of the political system of Turkey, in discourse: before the AKP came to power and when the AKP's position strengthened;
3. Study the fundamental documents of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and concepts.

Materials and methods

This article is part of a larger scientific work and is intended to reveal the key elements of change in Turkish society after the death of the first leader of Turkey - Atatürk and the path to the Islamization of the Turkish political system. To write a scientific article, a number of qualitative methods of political analysis were used, in particular historical and comparative analyses. Historical analysis provides contextualization of historical events and processes that have influenced the contemporary state of Turkey and its political dynamics. The advantage of using the historical method of analysis in studying the dynamics of political Islam is determined by a large number of resources, including foreign authors, articles from Russian think tanks and local Turkish authors on political processes in Turkey. Comparative analysis, in turn, allows similar consideration of trends and changes in other countries, which makes it possible to identify general patterns and trends, including processes of Islamization and their evolution in different contexts. The case study method was used to analyze the activities of the AKP in the political power of Turkey, for a comprehensive analysis of the different

aspects of the research object. To study the situation in the past and present tense - retro perspective - comparative analysis and discourse analysis were used. Overall, historical analysis allows us to examine the evolution of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the context of historical events and processes in Turkey, identifying which factors influenced its political trajectory. Comparative analysis with other countries or political movements provides an opportunity to contextualize the development of the AKP and identify its unique characteristics in comparison to similar organizations. Discourse analysis focuses on the analysis of language and ideas used in political debate and communication, revealing the rhetorical strategies and ideological aspects that shape the AKP's identity and political position and their influence on public opinion and perception. The use of methods of political analysis made it possible to display the political activities of the Justice and Development Party, which, despite its initial secularist path, became a new milestone in Turkish statehood and a springboard for Islamism.

Results and discussions

1. The path from Secularism to Islamism of the Turkish political system

After the death of the reformist president, discontent among Turkish society due to the Kemalist policies continued by İsmet İnönü continued to accumulate. Turkey, having been under the rule of the authoritarian regime of Atatürk for fifteen years (from 1923 to 1938), after his death moved into a phase of unstable political functioning and underwent the formation of various ideological concepts, which were detailed in the second chapter of the study. However, Turkey, as a Muslim-majority country that is a secular democracy, is also considered a member of NATO and a long-time ally of the United States, and has long sought entry into the European Union, represents a range of geopolitical interests that are trying to be realized in Turkish public policy. The instability of political regimes in neighboring countries - Iran, Iraq, especially the Islamic Revolution of 1979, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, also led to the growth of Sunni Islam, in opposition to

Shiite Islam established in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thus, the Islamic factor in the state policy of Turkey, as a result of a chain of historical events, began to play a particularly important role in the formation of the modern appearance of Turkish statehood. The current political situation in Turkey has not followed a predetermined path. The post-imperial Kemalist nationalist movement led the Turkish political establishment to seek entry into a pan-European union, the official secular order brought to power an Islamic-leaning political party and the elected democratic government provoked popular rather than military opposition. Thus, functioning at the present stage of development, the political system of Turkey is based on the constant tension of relations between secular and religious political regimes.

Until 1970, the religious Islamic party was merely incorporated into the factions of the major ruling parties. However, starting from the 1970s, Islamic communities began to emerge as distinct political movements under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, who founded the movement Milli Görüş [1]. Turkey, characterized by a cyclical functioning democracy, witnessed a power struggle among Islamic and nationalist parties, intensifying from 1982 onwards. This escalation followed the change in the regime of political power and the issuance of a new Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, which did not restrict Islamist parties in their political choices within the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) [2]. Necmettin Erbakan became the first Islamist leader to be elected as the Prime Minister of Turkey in 1996. The Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), founded by Erbakan, consistently garnered between 6 to 7 percent of the votes in the 1980s, during the successful tenure of Prime Minister Erbakan and President Turgut Özal, who advocated for the integration of Islam into the political life of Turkish society. By the early 1990s, the Welfare Party expanded its base with the support of the population in key cities of Turkey - Istanbul and Ankara - and ultimately became part of the Government. Islamic parties encountered significant scrutiny from Kemalist authorities and were banned or shut down several times.

The first legal Islamic party, Refah, lasted only a year and faced dissatisfaction from the military junta, representing themselves as guardians of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principles. It is noteworthy that the military officer class in Turkey plays a significant role in the state policy. Article 2 of the 1982 Constitution states that Turkey is considered a secular democratic state, adhering to the principle of nationalism as the cornerstone of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's policy, and the Turkish army serves as a guarantor of maintaining the secular regime instituted by Atatürk [3]. Essentially, the Republic of Turkey was established thanks to the military - Atatürk, İsmet İnönü, Karabekir, Ali Fuat, who were graduates of military academies and had participated in numerous military operations. It was through the militaristic direction in policy that Turks in Anatolia were consolidated after World War I. Atatürk is also regarded as a commander and statesman obligated to protect his reforms through the Turkish army. Consequently, in addition to combating various ideological movements, there is also opposition to the militarist regime of state policy, as the military class holds a privileged position. Thus, after the ultimatum issued to Erbakan by the military, the Islamic party movement was banned for several years.

The Welfare Party was closed, and its leader, Erbakan, resigned. Besides Erbakan's Islamic activities, a similar rise of radically Islamist currents led by Jemaluddin Kaplan under the name "Union of Islamic Societies and Communities" can be traced. Kaplan's radical movement aimed to establish an Islamic Turkish state where the Quran would be the primary law, and Turkey would become a sacred place similar to Mecca. In January 1998, the Constitutional Court imposed a ban on "anti-secular activities" and also restricted the political activities of Erbakan and other Islamic supporters in the political functioning of Turkey for a five-year period. Despite the ban imposed by the new military leadership on Islamist parties, they continued their activities underground, consolidating based on Erbakan's ideological concept of "Millî Görüş"[4]. Islamic parties have recently emerged in various forms, demonstrating their durability and ability to attract an important segment of the Turkish electorate.

However, until recently, they remained primarily an overwhelming movement. One of the largest protests against the infringement of the rights of Islamist organizations, comprised of Sharia supporters, was the rally on May 11, 1997. In Istanbul, a 30,000-strong rally was organized at Sultanahmet Square by 142 Islamist organizations, including the Refah movement. The protesters demanded the preservation of Imam-Hatip schools, an end to the established dictatorship, "Sharia or death." This event was actively attempted to be concealed, leading to an operation called "the case of February 28," as a result of which many protesters were arrested and dismissed from their jobs [4]. Ultimately, following the restriction by the Government of Turkey on the power of the Refah Party, the majority of its ideological supporters formed a new unified community - the Virtue Party (Fazilet). The political activities of Fazilet were also based on the development of Islamic values in Turkish society, although there were different interpretations of the phenomenon of Islam or already politicized Islam among the party's adherents. Russian scholar N.G. Kireev, in his work describing the political processes in Turkey as of the early 2000s, highlighted the division into two wings within the Fazilet party (traditional - led by the former participant of the Saadet movement R. Kutlan and the innovative one led by Erdogan), which ultimately led to its dissolution and the imposition of a ban on the party's activities in June 2001 [4].

Thus, it can be noted that the growth of the politicization of Islam in Turkey is gaining momentum, in addition to the latent participation of religious groups, the creation of party groups with an Islamic bias has begun. However, this activity was observed from the late 70s of the twentieth century to the beginning of the 2000s. The next stage marks the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party.

2. The rise to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP)

The parliamentary elections in November 2002 in Turkey emerged as one of the most significant events in the political history of the state, as the victory in the elections was secured by the party led by the «former» radical Islamist Recep Tayyip

Erdogan, organized on the basis of the Erbakan movement and Fazilet. According to the results of recent national elections, the success of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has Islamic roots, demonstrates the growing influence of political Islam. The ascendancy of the newly formed party with Islamist lineage dealt a significant blow to the three factions that had been in power in the coalition government after the 1999 elections, leading to a substantial shift in political leadership and, for over a decade, ushered in the first single-party majority in the country. The changes in the party system that unfolded in the 1990s underscored the ongoing rise in support for most centrist parties and the quest for a new political leadership in Turkey. As a result of the 2002 elections, some of the key players in the party system of the 1991-2002 era became marginal in electoral and parliamentary politics.

The decline in their functioning sharply contrasts with the dominance of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), which emerged from the elections as the dominant force in Turkish politics. In the November 2002 elections, the AKP won with 34 percent of the votes, enabling the party to independently govern [5]. By July 2007, in the election results, the party garnered an even greater victory, winning 46.6 percent of the votes, which was twice as much as the Republican People's Party, representing the legacy of Atatürk, which came in second with 20.9 percent of the votes [5]. This remarkable achievement for the young party, which had not been on the political stage until August 2001, underscores the emergence of a new form of political Islam, emerging from the political shadows to become the main actor in Turkish politics. Despite defining itself as a "conservative democratic" party rather than an Islamist party, many Kemalists feared that it harbored a hidden Islamic agenda and that the dominance of the AKP posed a threat to the secular principle of Turkish statehood.

The victorious Justice and Development Party embarked on implementing reform projects aimed at EU accession - democratization, judicial reform, strengthening of fundamental rights, good

governance, and minority protection, while also considering it important to maintain and restore genuinely Turkish-Islamic values in the age of globalization. Thus, the party succeeded in restructuring the Turkish state and society through neoliberal economic policies and liberal-democratic discourse. In December 2001, the AKP published sixty-five pages of its program entitled "Development of the Democratization Program," which became the basis of the party's policy after the political elections. It is worth noting that the Justice and Development Party expressed its commitment to Kemalist principles with the words: "Our party welcomes the principles and reforms of Atatürk, which are the most important means of raising Turkish society above the level of modern civilization and considers this as an element of the social world" [5].

Secularism was defined as follows: "a principle that allows people of all religions and beliefs to practice their religions in order to be able to express their religious beliefs and preferences [6]." It was precisely the prioritization of initiatives such as privatization, structural reforms, and integration into the EU that allowed the new leadership to make a tactical shift in its political strategy. After the victory of the Justice and Development Party in the 2002 elections, Erdogan declared that the party's priority was economic stability and EU membership, with an emphasis also placed on solving the social problems of Turkish society, including easing the Kurdish and Cypriot conflicts, which undermined Turkey's authority among the world powers, especially Muslim ones.

Despite the political elite's, including Erdogan's, affinity with Islamist currents, the AKP realized the benefits of communicating in the language of modernity and integration with Europe. Erdogan's party project - EU membership was supported by business circles and the wider public, and the emphasis on democracy and human rights allowed the AKP to reassure the military, which was intervening in Turkey's state policy.

In the next point of discussion, for the sake of completeness of the provided analysis of the growth of Islamization in Turkey, a brief discourse on Erdogan's

political activities since the formation of the Justice and Development Party is presented.

3. Erdogan and the formation of the Justice and Development Party

Apart from Erdogan, the founders of the Justice and Development Party include Abdullah Gul, Abdullatif Shener, and Bulent Arinc. Initially, this party was not ideologically homogeneous; it encompassed nationalists as well as Islamists, conservatives, and economic liberals. The abbreviation of the party's name "AK-Parti" (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Justice and Development Party) leads to the word "AK," which also means "pure" or "bright." The Turkish word "adalat" is derived from the Arabic word "adala" (justice). In the Ottoman Empire, the concept of "adala" denoted justice, which the sultan adhered to. As a logo, the party chose a lightbulb, symbolizing brightness and transparency, which the "innovators" aim to bring into Turkish state politics.

The AKP's program is called "conservative democracy" (Muhafazakar Demokrasi): "This is our brand, this is our identity," Erdogan says [6]. The advantage of the new leader Recep Erdogan, unlike his Islamist predecessors (Erbakan and Gulen), was that he decided to separate religion and politics once and for all, defining the party's course as conservative-democratic, embracing the tradition, history, culture, and religious heritage of the Turks. Erdogan's associate Abdullah Gul claimed in an interview that religion is important to party members but on an individual basis, thus not denying the roots of the Justice and Development Party. As a key goal of foreign policy, the AKP confirmed its accession to the EU, as well as its future role as a regional mediator - to become a model of democracy for neighboring Islamic states. All three goals enabled the party to enter the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The differences in ideology between the Justice and Development Party and its Islamist predecessors are real and profound.

The AKP rejects any continuity with parties of "national outlook" and describes itself as a "conservative-democratic" party, even refraining from using "Muslim." The party's charter regulates values such as

democracy, human rights, the rule of law, limited government, pluralism, and respect for diversity. Thus, the AKP's Program describes the "Republic" as the most important acquisition of the Turkish nation and asserts that "the will of the nation is the sole determining force" [7]. The AKP acknowledges and respects all rights of people, such as beliefs, ideas, races, languages, the right to expression, the right to association, and the right to life. It believes that diversity is not a source of societal differentiation but rather the cultural wealth of the nation that strengthens unity and fosters a sense of solidarity within the nation [7]. Regarding secularism, the AKP's program supports it much more than former Islamist parties. Thus, it is asserted that while religion is one of the most important institutions of humanity, secularism is an indispensable condition for democracy and a guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience.

According to the AKP's Program, the party is against the use of religion and ethnic affiliation for political purposes and deems it unacceptable to use religion for political, economic, and other gains, as well as using it as a tool to pressure people with different ideological beliefs. Last but not least, the Justice and Development Party regards Atatürk's principles and reforms as the most important aspect for raising civilization. However, an analysis of the party's main documents - its charter and program - cannot provide a true representation of the intentions and commitment of the Justice and Development Party, as it is possible that supporters may conceal their true intentions to gain broad support among Turkish society. Thus, many radical secularists in Turkey view the AKP with suspicion and suspect that the party's ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic Republic based on Sharia. However, the suspicions of Kemalists turned out to be not unfounded.

During the initial stages of his political career, Erdogan made deliberate efforts to distance himself from Islamic themes, aligning himself with reforms modeled on Western standards. A notable interview published by the Turkish newspaper "Zaman" featured Erdogan stating the obsolescence of the concept of Milli Gorus

(National Vision) and emphasizing the populace's reliance on the party for the democratization of state policies, echoing a sentiment not seen since the era of the Democratic Party under Menderes [7]. In the lead-up to the 1997 elections, Erdogan conducted a comprehensive purge of fervent supporters of the Islamist movement led by Erbakan, expelling 156 active civil servants from the party's candidate list [8].

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) garnered significant support by redirecting its focus towards the periphery, with Erdogan consistently highlighting his roots to underscore the prevailing mistrust of the elite. By engaging with disenfranchised masses and implementing social policies, Erdogan secured a foolproof strategy for prolonged governance. Skillful propaganda campaigns promoting Turkish patriotism, altruism, and assistance to the needy contributed to crafting a positive image of Erdogan as "the voice of the great, oppressed, silent masses" [9]. Consequently, he amassed millions of followers disillusioned by the hollow promises of previous political campaigns.

Since assuming power, the AKP, under its ambitious leader Erdogan, heralded a new era in the history of the Turkish Republic, akin to the transformative period of 1950 when the Democratic Party led by Menderes ascended to power. Gone were the days of political instability characterized by shifting coalitions and military coups, now replaced by a period of political stability ushered in by the AKP. The party's supporters managed to articulate and unite a plethora of viewpoints and currents in their program, adapting to Turkey's unique model of political power characterized by constant ideological shifts. The party's program also underscores the importance of preserving the Turkish society's character, reconstructed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

During the 2007 elections, the AKP attracted attention through successful propaganda efforts involving 200,000 volunteers. Party members reiterated their commitment to the promises made in 2002, showcasing their achievements. Ultimately, the party secured 46.6% of the votes, doubling its previous electoral performance [10].

In 2008, the AKP faced the looming

threat of closure, initiated by the Constitutional Court aligned with Kemalist ideals. Erdogan took drastic measures to eliminate military opposition, leveraging support from the Gulen movement in fabricating cases such as "Ergenekon" and "Sledgehammer" [10]. These legal proceedings targeted individuals associated with an alleged ultranationalist organization named after a mythical Turkish place, implicated in plots to overthrow the government. The "Ergenekon" trial, initiated in early 2008, saw the arrest of 31 retired military officials (some with ties to Turkey's criminal underworld), following the assassination of Dink and the discovery of caches of weapons held by the conspirators, legitimizing the arrests in the eyes of a public concerned about security and stability [10].

A significant event in the "democratization" of Turkey's political landscape was the 2010 referendum on amending the existing constitution. The referendum resulted in 26 amendments to the Turkish Constitution aimed at expanding democratic norms in political governance, thereby facilitating Turkey's accession to the EU. However, the amendments also curtailed the role of not only the military but also the Constitutional Court, which wielded significant political influence in legislative and other matters. Many of the Constitutional Court's powers were transferred to Turkey's Supreme Court, including the authority to convict participants in the 1980 military coup. The referendum held on September 12, 2010, nullified all potential future attempts at a coup in Turkey, signifying the diminishing role of the military in the country's political life [10].

During the local elections in March 2014, the AKP once again achieved a resounding victory. Despite expectations of a decline in support due to tensions with Fethullah Gulen, whose followers tended to support pro-Islamist parties, the AKP garnered widespread support. In August 2014, Erdogan became the first directly elected President, with Davutoglu, Erdogan's close associate, assuming the role of Prime Minister. Erdogan aimed to transition Turkey's political system into a stronger presidential structure. This point is discussed in the final part of the discussion, where an analysis of the adopted document

“Strategic Depth”, developed by Davutoglu, is carried out.

The AKP's electoral success rests on three main constituencies: the rapidly growing conservative population in the poorer neighborhoods of big cities, the rapidly growing new conservative middle class, and parts of the Kurdish population who see Erdogan as the first politician to change the position of the Kurdish population and provide easing on many issues. They all see the Justice and Development Party as the only viable alternative to Turkey's Kemalist Republican People's Party. Among these three segments of the population, Erdogan continues to be very popular. Although there is unmistakable evidence of social changes and measures that need to be taken in favor of an Islamic society, the policy of the present government to change government policies for greater centralization of power is becoming very clear. The history of the relationship between state, society, and religion in Turkey has always revolved around two issues: the interpretation and application of secularism and the role of the state (and army) in it. Since the founding of the republic in 1923, the state has always played a central role in the organization of society. One of the pillars of Kemalism was "statism", which meant the central role of the state and the army. In the first three decades of the republic, the state intervened deeply in the lives of Turkish citizens. After World War II, the relationship between the state and the population continued to be a central theme in Turkish politics, but the relationship shifted and its characteristics changed.

In particular, state control over institutional aspects of religious life and far-reaching state intervention in the private lives of its citizens have faced growing opposition. The power of Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party was supported by religious figures in Turkish society [11]. Gülen's followers have contributed significantly to the AKP's resounding victories over the past decade. It is worth emphasizing that as of 2024, the Justice and Development Party led by Erdogan arrives in a political crisis, due to external and internal reasons. This can be seen in the last presidential elections, where Erdogan won by a small margin. However,

this study aims to explore the dynamics of the growth of political Islam in Turkey in historical discourse.

4. Kurds in AKP politics

When talking about national minorities, we should first turn to the Kurdistan Workers' Party. This political organization was founded in 1978 in the wake of the Kurdish uprising in Iraq. In its ideology, the party combines Kurdish nationalism with social democracy [12]. Its ultimate goal is the formation of an independent Kurdistan in Turkey. The leader and ideologist of the organization is Abdullah Öcalan, who is currently in prison. To achieve this goal, the Kurdistan People's Liberation Army of many thousands was assembled in the southeast of Turkey, which in 1999 was renamed the People's Self-Defense Forces. Since 1984, they have been fighting in the southeast of Turkey, which provoked the introduction of a state of emergency in this territory. Before Öcalan's conclusion in 1999, several truces were concluded, which were systematically violated by both sides. Literally before his arrest, Öcalan called for an end to hostilities and the withdrawal of troops to Iraqi Kurdistan. However, a final cessation of hostilities could not be achieved. The year 2013 seemed to be a turning point in relations between the Kurds and the Turkish authorities. While in prison, the PKK leader called for replacing the armed struggle with a political one. However, Turkey's actions in Iraq since 2015 have led to an escalation of the conflict. Speaking about the Kurds, we must take into account that Öcalan's supporters are approximately 10% of the Kurdish population of Turkey [12, p.14]. The rest agree to remain Turkish citizens while respecting personal rights and freedom of self-identification. Therefore, over the past five years, the Kurdish movement has received a new breath [13]. In 2013, the People's Democracy Party (Halkların Demokratik partisi) was created, the leader of which is Salahattin Demirtaş. Despite its pro-Kurdish character, it can be called supranational, since in its program it covers a wide circle of the leftist movement, since it came out of the Democratic Congress of Peoples, which included a large number of leftist parties. In its program, the PDN opposes any type of discrimination, nuclear

energy, Turkish nationalism and the opening of the border with Armenia. Regarding the future of the Kurds, the party advocates the creation of autonomy within Turkey and support for the assimilation of the Kurds in Turkey [14].

Due to the growing discontent among the Kurdish position and in order to gain support from them, the AKP policy took a number of measures. From 2007 to 2011, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Recep Erdogan, established undisputed leadership in Turkey. Erdogan pursued policies aimed at supporting oppressed populations, including national minorities, not only within Turkey but also sympathizing with Muslim and Turkic societies worldwide. Regarding national policy, numerous steps were taken by the dominant party to soften its approach towards the Kurdish minority, largely in response to international pressure from Western countries demanding democratization measures within Turkish society as a prerequisite for EU accession, a primary goal of Erdogan's administration.

In 2002, the Parliament approved a comprehensive package of reforms aimed at reducing tensions among various ethnic groups in the country. Despite vehement opposition from some nationalist-leaning deputies, the package was endorsed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The package included the complete abolition of the death penalty, lifting restrictions on the development and teaching of the Kurdish language in schools, resuming Kurdish-language radio and television broadcasts, and providing for a more lenient approach to public demonstrations [15].

In general, despite the direct connection with the Kurdistan Workers' Party and the personal support of Ocalan, who is in prison, the party includes representatives of various national minorities in the country. Thanks to this, the party began to quickly gain popularity and today is considered the third most influential party in Turkey. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, it managed to cross the 10% barrier, as a result, the AKP was unable to obtain a majority, gaining about 40% [16]. Since it was impossible to form a coalition government, re-elections were scheduled for November 1, 2015. Despite the fact that the AKP received more than 50%, the

People's Democracy Party retained its membership in parliament, and Demirtaş himself received 9.7% in the 2015 presidential elections. However, at present, the People's Democracy Party can be called the only real political opposition to the authorities. Considering that Kılıçdaroğlu refused to stand as a candidate in the 2019 presidential elections, Demirtaş was Erdogan's main opposition competitor.

The problem of the Kurdish issue remains on the agenda for a long period. The prospect of resolving the Kurdish issue lies in the very attitude of Turkish society towards it. In many ways, the majority of Turkish citizens consider the liberalization of policies towards the Kurds, and even more so the granting of autonomy, unacceptable, referring to the behests of Atatürk, thereby adhering to the nationalist concept in state policy. Many Turkish citizens believe that the maintenance and general existence of Kurdish nationalism threatens national unity within the state.

Thus, the Turkish people, as well as the political establishment, will develop according to the nationalist concept developed under Atatürk, rather than begin building a new national policy based on the principles of multiculturalism and multiethnicity. This statement is reflected in the new concept of national security of the country adopted by the National Security Council in 2005. The Concept states that in Turkey there is only one nation - the Turks.

5. Modern transformation of Turkey: AKP policies and Davutoğlu Concept

Turkey's path to establishing democracy and borrowing from the behest of the first President of the Republic of Turkey, Atatürk, ultimately allowed the leadership led by Erdogan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu to shape a new course of public policy. Over the past decades, Turkey has undergone many changes in government policy due to emergencies such as the Cold War and military tutelage of the political system by Western countries. During these years, Turkey experienced four military interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997 and several other coup attempts. Various ideological currents, developing separately from each other and trying to become the main political force in

Turkey, after a short hegemony are overthrown by other ideological concepts. The motivation for such military coups was to protect the "Republic", the "nation", "secular values" and the "state ideology" - which was based on Atatürk's Principles. The target of military interventions varied from communists (1980) to Islamists (1997) depending on who was perceived as the enemy of the state at that time. Perhaps it is precisely the Turkish model of political development that has its own uniqueness, since the Turkish statehood, being in the middle geopolitical position, contains a mixture of various forms of political, national and state functioning [16].

The Justice and Development Party, better known as the AK Party, has ensured its dominant position in the Turkish Majlis for three electoral terms. Since 2002, the Justice and Development Party, positioning itself as a moderate Islamist, adhering to the democratic values bequeathed by Atatürk and also continuing active work to bring the Turkic peoples closer together, has enjoyed support among the Turkish people for 15 years [17]. After the second victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2007, Erdogan's position was further entrenched in Turkish state politics. In order to strengthen his political influence in Turkey, Erdogan needed to take a number of measures to centralize power in the state. First of all, Erdogan pursued the goal of weakening the military-general stratum of Turkish society, which had previously become the main force for overthrowing the existing regimes (1960, 1971, 1980). Since the Turkish army is considered the second army in NATO and is famous for its structure and large numbers, limit its influence in the person of the National Security Council (NSC) of Turkey, consisting of generals raised on the ideological views of Atatürk, in the first stage of the party's activities from 2002 to 2007 year was almost impossible. However, the party's second victory opened up new opportunities for the implementation of Erdogan's ambitious project to consolidate power in his hands. Also, in addition to the goal of reducing the role of the army and Kemalist politicians in Turkey, the goal was to prevent restrictions against Islam that were implemented after 1997. The party decided to lift the ban on wearing

headscarves in public places. In 2008, a majority in parliament voted for the ban, but the Constitutional Court decided to reverse the matter. Only in October 2013, after the 2011 elections in which the Justice and Development Party won for the third time with a huge victory, the bill was approved and in the same month the first female deputy appeared at a meeting of Parliament wearing a headscarf. Consequently, Erdogan's party gained full power only during the third term, when Erdogan became the head of the Government [17].

Today, the Republic of Turkey has not been able to achieve the desired democracy, despite numerous examples of European democracies. In relation to the Cyprus crisis and the Kurdish problem, namely the failure to respect the democratic rights of the population, the EU Delegation has repeatedly issued warnings to the Turkish side. However, there are many reasons for this situation. Former Chairman of the Turkish Court of Appeal, Professor Sami Selcuk, in his research work entitled "Republic, Modern Democracy and Turkey's Transformation" (Republic, Modern Democracy and Turkey's Transformation) highlights the problems of instability of the Turkish political system and the inferiority of democratic norms [18]. According to the professor, Türkiye first of all made the wrong choice of example for building democracy. Since during the presidency of Atatürk, the French Republic was recognized as a model of an ideal national state, many principles and norms were observed by Atatürk based on this example. However, looking at France, one gets a not so positive impression of the ongoing state policy, since in France the royal power has been overthrown three times since 1789 and power has twice returned to the same royal family, the republican system has been destroyed four times, and currently The French Republic is now experiencing its "fifth" period. There have been nine coup attempts in France, and the country has changed its constitution fifteen times [19]. Consequently, the entire destroyed structure of this country was transferred to the structure of the Turkish state, and therefore the seeds of today's negative events were unconsciously planted back in that period by the political community. The conflict in modern Turkey is between those who

advocate maintaining the old structure and those who advocate shaking up that old structure and forming a new one. One can observe a confrontation between adherents of Kemalist principles, which are largely misunderstood and misinterpreted by modern politicians. It should also be noted that Davutoğlu's Concept of Strategic Depth criticizes the idea of Kemalist liberation from the Islamic world and emphasizes the importance of Turkey's participation on the Middle East front. The key aspect of this Concept in the formation of Turkish ideology is related to overcoming barriers between East and West, since Turkey is part of both sides and the combination of Western (democratic) and Eastern (conservative, traditional) principles, thereby creating a new model for the development of Turkish society and public policy. The theoretical implementation of this concept is observed in the modern political activities of the Justice and Development Party.

The "Strategic Depth" concept underscores the significance of Turkey's Ottoman heritage and its historical and cultural connections. The theses formulated in Davutoglu's monograph are considered crucial assets that could enable Turkey to become a regional power. His concept is based on three methodological principles: developing a new foreign policy course based on contemporary realities of international politics, adopting a flexible approach to addressing Turkish policy issues, and ensuring systematic Turkish state policy.

Additionally, the concept outlines five institutional steps:

1. Striking a balance between democracy and security.
2. Maintaining "zero problems with neighbors."
3. Utilizing preventive diplomacy in Turkey's foreign policy.
4. Pursuing a multidimensional foreign policy course.
5. Engaging in rhythmic diplomacy [20].

Davutoglu's development received favorable attention from the leadership of the ruling party, particularly Erdogan, elevating Davutoglu to the role of Erdogan's advisor on state, particularly foreign policy matters. This paved the way for Davutoglu to first serve as Turkey's Minister of Foreign

Affairs and later as Prime Minister in 2014.

The "neo-Ottomanism" concept reflects Erdogan's ambitious project of establishing unwavering leadership for the Republic of Turkey on a regional and later global scale. Moreover, Davutoglu's "Strategic Depth" concept is part of broader debates in Turkey about the legacy of the Ottoman Empire, which has undergone reinterpretation among Turkish society in recent years. While Kemalists have long criticized the Ottoman Empire's role, viewing it as an obstacle to Turkey's modernization, many Turks have begun to perceive the Ottoman period in a more nuanced and positive light [21].

Conclusion

In summary, the provided text offers a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of Turkish politics and foreign policy under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). It outlines Erdogan's initial efforts to distance himself from Islamist themes and embrace Western-oriented reforms, marking a departure from his earlier association with Islamist fundamentalism. The text highlights Erdogan's consolidation of power through strategic political maneuvers, including the expulsion of Islamist elements from the political arena and the suppression of military opposition.

Furthermore, it underscores the AKP's success in garnering widespread support by appealing to disenfranchised segments of Turkish society and implementing social policies aimed at addressing economic challenges. Erdogan's adept use of propaganda and nationalist rhetoric has enabled him to cultivate a positive image as a champion of the people, solidifying his position as a dominant political figure in Turkey.

The narrative then shifts to the emergence of Ahmet Davutoglu's concept of "neo-Ottomanism" as a guiding principle in Turkish foreign policy. Davutoglu's vision advocates for a proactive and multidimensional approach that leverages Turkey's historical and cultural ties to assert its influence regionally and globally. This strategic reorientation reflects a departure from the Kemalist paradigm and signals Turkey's ambition to reclaim its status as a

major player on the world stage.

Moreover, the text discusses the implementation of Davutoglu's doctrine through policies aimed at fostering regional stability, enhancing economic cooperation, and promoting Turkey's soft power abroad. It also examines the internal debates sparked by the "neo-Ottomanism" concept, with some questioning its implications for Turkey's secular identity and others embracing it as a progressive reinterpretation of the country's historical legacy.

In conclusion, the text provides valuable insights into Turkey's political trajectory under Erdogan's leadership and the AKP's pursuit of a more assertive and visionary foreign policy agenda under the influence of Davutoglu's "neo-Ottomanism." It underscores the complex interplay between historical legacies, domestic politics, and international ambitions shaping Turkey's role in the 21st-century geopolitical landscape.

Looking ahead, the future trajectory of Turkish politics and foreign policy is likely to be shaped by several key factors, influenced by the legacies of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and the ideological framework of "neo-Ottomanism" articulated by Ahmet Davutoglu. Here are some potential forecasts:

Continued Polarization: Turkey is likely to remain polarized along political, ideological, and societal lines, with Erdogan's supporters and opponents entrenched in their respective camps. The government's authoritarian tendencies, coupled with crackdowns on dissent and opposition voices, may exacerbate social divisions and hinder prospects for political reconciliation.

Persistent Regional Ambitions: Erdogan's aspiration for Turkey to assume a more assertive role in regional affairs, guided by the principles of "neo-Ottomanism," is expected to endure. This could entail continued efforts to expand Turkey's influence in the Middle East, North

Africa, and the Balkans, as well as closer engagement with Turkic and Muslim-majority countries.

Foreign Policy Challenges: Turkey will face a complex array of foreign policy challenges, including tensions with traditional Western allies, such as the United States and European Union, over issues like human rights, democracy, and regional conflicts. Balancing relations with Russia, Iran, and other regional powers while maintaining ties with NATO and Western partners will require deft diplomacy.

Economic Uncertainty: Turkey's economy faces significant challenges, including high inflation, currency volatility, and a growing current account deficit. The government's management of economic policy, including fiscal discipline and structural reforms, will be crucial in addressing these vulnerabilities and ensuring sustainable growth.

Democratic Backsliding: Concerns about democratic backsliding and erosion of institutional checks and balances are likely to persist. Continued restrictions on freedom of expression, media censorship, and political repression could further undermine Turkey's democratic credentials and lead to increased international scrutiny.

Potential Leadership Transitions: The AKP's dominance in Turkish politics may face internal challenges, including succession struggles and fragmentation within the party. Erdogan's grip on power could weaken over time, potentially leading to leadership transitions or shifts in political dynamics.

In conclusion, while Turkey's future is marked by uncertainties and challenges, including domestic polarization, regional instability, and economic vulnerabilities, it presents opportunities for constructive engagement, reform, and recalibration of foreign policy priorities. Navigating these complexities will require strategic foresight, pragmatic decision-making, and a commitment to upholding democratic values and norms.

References

1. Yavuz, M. Hakan. Islamic political identity in Turkey. // Oxford University press.-2003. - ISBN 0-19-516085-1.
2. Angel Rabasa, F. Stephen Larabee // The rise of political Islam in Turkey. //The Rand Corporation/National Defense Research Institute, 2008,113 pp., -ISBN 978-0-8330-4457-0.

3. Oficial'nyj sajt Velikogo Nacional'nogo Sobraniya Turcii. Tekst Konstitucii 1982 goda [Elektronnyj resurs]. - URL: <https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/index.php/EN/yl/> (date of access: 25.12.23).
4. Ali Çarkogʻlu, Ersi n Kalayciogʻlu "Turkish democracy today. Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society. // I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd. -2007.
5. Oficial'nyj sajt Partii spravedlivosti i razvitiya. Programma partii. [Elektronnyj resurs]. - URL: http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/akparti/parti-programi#bolum_ (date of access: 15.12.23).
6. Lashnits Tom. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Major World Leaders. // Chelsea House Publications-2005. - ISBN 0-7910-8263-6.
7. Epoha pravleniya v Turcii Partii spravedlivosti i razvitiya: promezhutochnye itogi i prognozy (2002-2015) // Otv. red. N.YU. Ul'chenko, I.I. Ivanova / Institut Vostokovedeniya RAN. - M.: IV RAN; Izdatel' Vorob'ev A.V., 2017.
8. The Politics of Turkish Democracy: İsmet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi-Party System, 1938-1950 // John M. VanderLippe Albany, State University of New York Pres. – 2005. - ISBN 0-7914-6435-0.
9. Soner Cagaptay. The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey.// Bloomsbury Publishing. -2017.
10. Vertyaev K.V. "Kurdskij vopros v politike Turcii (konec XX - nachalo XXI veka). M., 2007.
11. Angel Rabasa, F. Stephen Larabee // The rise of political Islam in Turkey. //The Rand Corporation/National Defense Research Institute, 2008,113 pp., -ISBN 978-0-8330-4457-0.
12. Lebskij M. Kurdy. Poteryannye na Blizhnem Vostoke.- M.:2016, s.35
13. Mosaki N.Z. Tureckaya obrazovatel'naya politika i assimilyacionnye processy u kurdov // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie №5, - 2012. C. 99.
14. Haritonova O.G. Centr – periferijnyj raskol sovremennoj Turcii // Politicheskaya nauka, 2024 №1. DOI:10.31249/poln/2024.01.07
15. Soner Cagaptay. The New Sultan: Erdogan and the Crisis of Modern Turkey.// Bloomsbury Publishing. -2017.
16. Dement'eva A.O. Oppozicionnye organizacii i ih detal'nost' v sovremennoj Turcii // Stolypinskij vestnik №6.- 2023.
17. Yabancı B. Fuzzy Borders between Populism and sacralized politics: mission, leader, community and performance in 'New' Turkey // Politics, religion & ideology. – 2020. P. 92-112. - DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2020.1736046>.
18. Selcuk Sami. Republic, modern democracy and Turkey's transformation. // BILGESAM, Report No. 23, İstanbul.-2010, 62 p.
19. Fuat Keyman and Sebnem Gumuscu. DEMOCRACY, IDENTITY AND FOREIGN POLICY IN TURKEY Hegemony Through Transformation // . – 2014. - 978-0-230-35427-2.
20. Davutoğlu Ahmet. Stratejik Derinlik:Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu. // Küre Yayınları. -2001.
21. Mehdiyev E.T. "NEO-OTTOMANISM" IN THE REGIONAL POLICY OF TURKEY. // MGIMO Review of International Relations. 2016;(2(47)):32-39. <https://doi.org/10.24833/2071-8160-2016-2-47-32-39>.

ТҮРКИЯНЫҢ САЯСИ ЖҮЙЕСІНДЕГІ КЕМАЛИЗМ МЕН ИСЛАМИЗМ ПРИНЦИПТЕРІНІҢ КҮРЕСІ

Бэлла БОКОВА, аймақтану кафедрасының докторанты, Л.Н.Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Астана, Қазақстан, b.re.2016@mail.ru.

БОРЬБА ПРИНЦИПОВ КЕМАЛИЗМА И ИСЛАМИЗМА В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ СИСТЕМЕ ТУРЦИИ

Бэлла БОКОВА, докторант кафедры Регионоведение, Евразийский национальный университет имени Л.Н. Гумилева, Астана, Казахстан, b.re.2016@mail.ru.