

Identity struggle in Turkey from the era of Kemal Ataturk to Recep Tayyip Erdogan

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Abstract:

Modern Turkey has adopted secularism and extreme nationalism as modes of governance and life, resulting in a direct and prolonged conflict with the Turkish people, which has harmed Turkey's progress and prosperity. Adnan Menderes, Togrul Ozal, and Necmettin Erbakan attempted to bring the state closer to the people by granting more freedoms and respect for human rights, and they were mostly successful. However, they were unable to cross the red lines drawn by extremist secularism, which has severely harmed Turkey's freedoms and human rights. With the election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, he attempted to remove the constraints that continued to oppress the Turkish people, and he strengthened democracy, freedoms, and human rights, allowing the Turkish people complete religious and cultural freedom. And Erdogan's strategy in this regard is as follows: 1- Reviving the Turkish people's religious spirit. 2- Changing the law to strengthen democracy. 3- Bringing back the concept of secularism. 4- Case studies and financial success

Keywords: Identity, Secularism, Nationalism, Erdogan - Turkification, Islam.

Introduction

With the end of the Islamic conquest in 1683 AD, weakness began to creep into the Ottoman Caliphate's body, and its strength was fading in the face of Europe's rising power. The voices began here, and the most powerful were those influenced by Western and French thought in particular, calling for the necessity of political reform and keeping up with the demands and changes of the times.

On December 23, 1876 AD, those with a Western orientation were able to force Sultan Abdul Hamid II to amend the constitution in accordance with the Western vision (Al-Sallabi, 2001, p. 404). They were not satisfied, so they increased their pressure and activity until they were able to destabilize the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 AD, led by General Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who rose to prominence during the War of Independence in 1919 AD.

With Ataturk's ascension to power, a new chapter in Turkey's history began, completely different in form and content from the one that came before it. The era of Islam has passed, and the era of Western secularism has arrived, which Kemal Ataturk worked tirelessly to implement and replace horizontally and vertically.

His ambition was not limited to secularizing Turkey; he also attempted to Turkify it by forcing minorities to adopt Turkish culture and abandon their native culture. Turkish culture and language to become Turkey in the last secular method.

The efforts of Adnan Menderes, Togrut Ozal, and Necmettin Erbakan were unable to completely halt this policy, which harmed Turkey and its people. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on the other hand, came along and brought about a fundamental change in the Turkish constitution, like a "miracle in the world of politics," by which he restored Turkey's original identity and the squandered dignity of the Turkish people, who had been subjugated by the military for nearly eighty years.

1. Secularism and the war on Islamic identity

The stages of the conflict between the army and Turkish identity are as follows:

1.1. The era of extreme secularism's rule

From Kemal Ataturk's reign to the end of World War II, the country was characterized by sternness and brutality. This policy was initiated by Kemal Ataturk, who believed that Islam was to blame for the Ottoman Caliphate's backwardness and decline. "The Turkish nation has realized with great joy that the obstacles that had persisted for centuries and prevented Turkey from joining the ranks of civilized nations and walking on the path of progress have been removed," he says (Louis , 2016, p. 323). As a result, we must abandon it and follow in the footsteps of European countries that have adopted secularism as a system of life and governance, according to Ataturk: "The civilization that the new Turkish generation must establish is the civilization of Europe in substance and form, because there is only one civilization, which is the European civilization, which is the leading civilization and the connecting civilization to power and domination over nature, the creation of ma," he says. All nations of the world are compelled to adopt European civilization in order to secure life and consideration for themselves (Nour Al-Din , 1997, p. 26)

For this, he took bold steps such as the abolition of the Islamic caliphate, the exclusion of Islam from power, and, more importantly, he sought to secularize religion and the Turkish people's public and even private lives. In this way, he far outpaced European secularism, even extremist secularism. He prohibited the use of Arabic in the call to prayer, opposed the veil, replaced Arabic letters with Latin letters, closed religious schools, imposed Western dress, adopted the Gregorian calendar, and established gender equality in divorce and inheritance (Shakir , 1997, p. 20). He was in charge of Islamic affairs, including the movement of imams and preachers, and he abolished religious education in schools (Nour Al-Din , 1997, p. 20).

He has attempted to persuade the Turkish people that these options are correct and that they are the best if the Turkish people are to develop and prosper in the same way that Europe has. "... He must show and prove that he is civilized, with his ideas and mentality, and through his family life and way of life," he says to the Turkish people (Louis , 2016, p. 324). "Because we are all, thank God, Turkish, and thus all Muslims, we can and should all be secular," he says (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 54).

However, the Turkish people categorically rejected these ideas and actions because Islam represented their soul and life, and they could not live without it. He resorted to arms at the start of his resistance, and the revolution of Sheikh Saeed is one of the most famous revolutions that threatened Ataturk's rule, but it was brutally suppressed. (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 53)

According to Bernard Lewis, "the old reactionary opposition has been crushed, and there has been no new opposition in returning to the past." (Louis , 2016, p. 360)

The Turkish people resorted to "peaceful and silent" resistance, preserving religion to the greatest extent possible. In front of the tight security grip, which continued even after Kemal Ataturk's death, during the reign of Ismet nönu, who is considered Kemal Ataturk's right-hand man and a loyal friend.

However, the situation improved slightly after WWII, when Ismet Inonu was forced to loosen the security grip and grant some religious and civil liberties to the Turkish people in response to international reality and the rise of the United States of America as the Western world's first power. To protect Turkey's strategic interests, which are linked to American consent.

The Turkish people began to breathe freely, to openly display Islam in public squares, and to publish and print Islamic books and newspapers as a result of this partial reform. Rather, in the 1950s, the Turkish government made religion a compulsory subject in schools in order to win over the religious. (Louis , 2016, pp. 501-503)

In conclusion, the Turkish people, throughout the period of Kemal Ataturk and Ismet nönu, remained in the majority of them maintaining the Islamic identity, defying secularism silently and effectively, and as a result, it was unable to transcend the boundaries of major cities, and only a small group of people, primarily senior officers, politicians, judges, and media professionals, have interests with the state. And businesspeople, "Mustafa Kemal, despite all the measures he took to modernize Turkey, could not kill the overwhelming religious feeling in the hearts and feelings of the majority of the Turkish people," writes Edward Mutter. (Louis , 2016, p. 507)

What can be said about the Kemal Ataturk and Ismet nönu era is that secularism truly triumphed over Islam politically, but it was emotionally crushing before it, and Bernard Lewis attributes this defeat to the fact that: "...Islam has deep roots in the ranks of the Turkish people, and the empire was The Ottoman Empire, from its foundation until its fall, was a state dedicated to the advancement or defense of power and the Islamic religion." Islam had fully influenced Turkish thought, life, and literature through the inherited traditions of classical Islamic cultures, which, despite their transformation into something new and distinct, remain fundamentally Islamic. (Louis , 2016, p. 507)

Here, the ruling class was convinced that uprooting Islam from the hearts of the Turkish people was one of the seven impossibles, and as a result, a group of rational secularists were convinced of the necessity of changing the curriculum, which has now been proven to be a failure.

1.2.Rational secularism era

With Turkey's entry into democratic openness and partisan pluralism, the new politicians, most notably Adnan Menderes, realized that the Turkish people's deepest source of identity is still Islam. As a result, he struck a sensitive chord when he promised the Turkish people that if he won the elections, he would grant him religious freedom and end the persecution of extremist secularism. (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 93)

Menderes was correct in his reading, winning the majority of votes in a flawless and fair election. It was regarded as a fatal blow to secularism and a complete rejection of Ataturk's approach. His party's infernal policy against the Turkish nation's constants.

Menderes kept the electoral promises he made to the people. He reinstated the Arabic call to prayer, permitted the broadcast of the Noble Qur'an on Turkish radio, made religion a compulsory subject in the middle school, built and renovated many mosques, increased the salaries of Sharia institution and endowment employees, and permitted the resumption of Sufi path activity (Noureddine , 1998, p. 21).

This freedom gave the Turkish people a breath of fresh air, prompting them to return to Islam in droves, until they reached the strongholds of secularism, such as military barracks and universities, which is a significant achievement in and of itself.

These findings terrified secularism - both civil and military - and regarded it as an existential threat. That is why, under the guise of "protecting secularism," the army rushed to depose Menderes and hanged him. "The army believed that the Islamists wanted to make Turkey a religious state again," Sharif Mardin says (Saleh , 2013, pp. 31-32).

Suleyman Demirel's political savvy led him to adopt the "Menderes Program." He saw his message as a continuation of Menderes' message, causing people to rally around him and religious people to join his "Justice" party. As a result, he won the elections on October 15, 1961 AD and ruled the country until 1971 AD.

To repay the Turkish people's favor, he constructed mosques and religious schools, encouraged Quran memorization circles, sent students abroad to study Sharia sciences, and permitted the printing of religious and historical books (Saleh , 2013, p. 48).

This encouraged the spread of religiosity among the Turkish people, until religious groups gained clout in state institutions such as politics and the press. In a 1967 article, writer Andrew Mango stated, "The ordinary reader of the Turkish press notes that politics there has a clear religious sense." (Saleh , 2013, p. 49)

However, the army did not dare to stage a military coup against Suleiman Demirel in order to protect its internal and external reputation from being accused of being anti-democratic and power-hungry. Necmettin Erbakan founded the first Islamic party in modern Turkish history under the name "National System" in the 1970s, and religious people gathered around it, which strengthened Islamic action and gave it more order and strength.

The spread of the Islamic awakening in the 1970s, on all levels, terrified the secular system. He feared Turkey would become a "second Iran." As a result, the army decided to intervene in order to stop this dangerous tide, which is no less dangerous than the communist tide. They saw an opportunity on September 6, 1980, when Erbakan organized a mass demonstration in support of Jerusalem and General Kenan Evren rebelled against Suleiman Demirel's government. Under the guise of "putting a stop to the Islamic tide in the country." (Saleh , 2013, p. 155)

Following the coup, the American magazine Newsweek published a picture of the coup leader on its cover pages, along with the caption, "The military is stopping the Islamic tide (Saleh , 2013, p. 155)." Following its coup against Menderes, the army repeated its religious policy this

time. It did not oppose religion, so it pretended to respect religion by building religious schools and making religious education a compulsory subject in schools. The danger of this containment is that the army desired an Islamist Turkey, or, to put it more accurately, "Islamic nationalization" (Saleh , 2013, p. 164)

He dealt harshly with Islamists at first, imprisoning Islamic leaders, persecuting religious people, and dissolving their parties, but later abandoned this policy because he needed Islamists to strike the communist and armed Kurdish movement, which had become a serious threat to the state.

1.3.Ottoman era

Tokut Ozal's rise to power in the 1980s, first as prime minister and then as president of the republic, was a watershed moment in Turkey's identity struggle with secularism.

Ozal, who comes from an Islamic background, rejected the policy of guardianship over the Turkish people and attempted to grant him religious and cultural freedom by correctly interpreting the concept of secularism. He called for a re-reading of Turkey's secularism concept to conform to the Western concept, which is not hostile to religion or individual freedom. "We claim that Turkey is a secular state while the state interferes with the appointment of imams, mosque preachers, and the head of religious affairs," he says. In contrast to Europe, private endowments or other institutions separate from the state appoint religious officials, and the state has no right to intervene in these matters. things, and we must emulate them in the future." (Saleh , 2013, p. 172)

As a result, the law prohibited the state from appointing preachers and imams and required them to deliver a unified sermon. It also allowed Islamists to rise to positions of power in the state, including the presidency of the Ministries of Culture, Media, Economy, Education, and the Interior. (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 94)

To reintroduce Turkey to the Islamic world, it established political relations with many Islamic countries, particularly the Gulf states, which allowed Gulf funds to flow into the Turkish economy and produced a wealthy, religious class with an impact on Turkish political life.

Ozal was able to lift religious restrictions on the people and create a "second Islamic revival" with his political skill and great economic success.

1.4.Total transformation era

With Erbakan's election to the presidency in 1996 AD, secularism expressed fear of Erbakan and his clear Islamic goals. Erbakan was outspoken in his opposition to secularism, as well as its political and cultural orientation. He was an outspoken opponent of joining the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In exchange, he sought to establish the Islamic market and strategic relationships with Islamic countries (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 94)

If these ideas and projects are successful, they will hasten the fall of the secular regime and return Turkey to its Islamic era in a short period of time. This is what the secularist priests will not tolerate. On December 20, 1996 AD, seven months after the formation of the Erbakan government, General Ismail Hakki Karadey sent a warning letter to the President of the Republic, Demirel, urging him to adhere to secular principles.

Then, on February 28, 1997, he issued a second warning to Prime Minister Erbakan in the form of a memorandum outlining eighteen demands that had to be met. Erbakan was forced to resign on June 18, 1997 after delaying its implementation (Saleh , 2013, p. 319)

This rapid demise of the Welfare Government prompted Erbakan's students to conduct extensive intellectual reviews as well as a thorough reading of Turkish and international reality. It compelled them to alter their political discourse and reform strategy. They founded the Justice and Development Party with a new thought and approach that would eventually lead Turkey successfully for two decades.

1.5. Erdogan's era and self-reconciliation policy

The Justice and Development Party's leaders, Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, were convinced that politics is about flexibility rather than extremism, about attention rather than confrontation, and about concessions rather than rigidity. They were able to effectively solve the problem of identity, which is one of the most complex and difficult problems confronting modern Turkey. By following these steps:

1.5.1. striking the chord of the Turkish nation's spiritual depth

According to Sharif Mardin, a prominent sociologist in Turkey, Islam represents the soul of the Turkish nation and its true depth: "Islam provided the Turkish Muslims with patterns to follow in the cultural, religious, and social fields, and thus it was and still is very important for them" (Axiarlis , 2016, pp. 125-126).

When the Turkish people had completed their Islamic identity, secularism was unable to fill this void or to be the appropriate alternative, because it "consisted only of general commandments and advice, to use the West as an example, and it did not provide anything synonymous and equivalent to the widely used Islamic language, and it did not understand to what extent The existing space-time formations were rooted and had no strategies to present to the masses" (Axiarlis , 2016, pp. 125-126).

Even if it were otherwise, the Turkish people would not accept a religion other than Islam. Islam is the Turkish nation's soul. Corro says: "The exclusion of religious symbols from public schools is understandable and even desirable in the less religious French society. As for Turkish society, it is On the contrary, it's very religious (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 124).

This fact, which had been ignored by most previous governments, was taken notice of and encouraged by the Justice and Development government, according to Eva Neglia Axiarlis, "... However, it appears that the renewed interest in the Ottoman past and Islam in general cannot be attributed or justified solely on the basis of Turkey's growing religious passion or the Turkish people's increasing piety, but rather on the basis of authenticity and identity. The general trend in Turkey encourages a social movement that seeks to reconnect with and restore a true Turkish identity. The rediscovery of the Ottoman legacy of the country under Kemalist control until today is a source of pride for many Turks, as well as a work in which man reconciles with his heritage and thus with himself (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 128).

"When describing itself as a conservative party, the Justice and Development Party actually responds to a broad desire among many Turkish believers for Islam and Turkey's Ottoman

heritage to be valued and respected, not obliterated," says Fuller. "This desire is implicit in the actions and words of a large number of party supporters." (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 127) As a result, he resolved to "heal the permanent social wounds perpetuated by the Turkish state and suffered by the Turkish people."

Recep Tayyip Erdogan used this genuine emotion to win elections and pass his reform projects through Parliament. A study conducted and published by a prominent Turkish daily newspaper not long after the Justice and Development Party was elected and took power revealed that 75 percent of Turkish people believe the veil ban should be lifted (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 124).

1.5.2. Raising the Turkish nation's awareness of its original Islamic identity

The Justice and Development Party was eager to connect the Turkish people to their identity and glories, by reminding them of their glorious history and great leaders, by encouraging religious education, increasing the number of memorizing sessions of the Noble Qur'an, building mosques, teaching the Arabic and Ottoman languages, and the sermons delivered by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who always mentions the It condemns his party's leaders and members, as well as their honesty and hard work.

All of these factors contributed to the large impact on the people, particularly the youth, who found inspiration and success in the Justice and Development Party's government.

1.5.3. The failure of secularism

Turkey has tried most imported ideas, including socialism, capitalism, and nationalism, all of which have failed to build a modern, developed, and stable state, and the Turkish lira is the best example of this. Despite Turkey's enormous potential and the long period of rule by those regimes.

While the Justice and Development Party government was able to accomplish much in a short period of time and in the face of many obstacles. Impressive outcomes and unprecedented successes in every area.

These successes endeared the government to the people, prompting them - in all their sects and groups - to be influenced by the religiosity of the Justice and Development government's leadership, as well as its support in elections and the constitutional reforms that it implemented, in order to strengthen the original Turkish identity.

This radical shift in convictions prompted Erdogan to take the initiative to strengthen democracy and amend laws that restrict religious freedoms.

1.5.4. Restoring the correct understanding of secularism

The Justice and Development Party government attempted to rethink secularism in order to conform to the Western concept of personal freedom. According to the party platform, "our party regards religion as one of humanity's most important institutions, and secularism is a prerequisite for democracy and a guarantee of religious and thought freedom." It also rejects secularism's interpretation and distortion as an enemy of religion. Secularism is a principle that allows people of all faiths and creeds to freely practice their religion and express their convictions and religious life, but it also allows those who do not have religious beliefs to organize their lives in this

manner. Secularism, in this sense, is a freedom and social peace principle. (Axiarlis , 2016, pp. 91-92)

He also emphasized that democracy entails accepting the opposing viewpoint, coexisting with it, and not imposing guardianship over it. The party defined itself as "a new political movement that embraces democratic, conservative, and liberal principles, which is why it was a middle ground between Kemalism, which trampled on democratic principles, and the totalitarian Islamic regime." "The party seeks to restore an original collective identity to the Turkish people through the ideology of conservative democracy." (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 121) "The party contends that religious freedom is a fundamental democratic right of citizens, at least because Islam, according to the party, is a prominent feature of the Turkish social fabric and an indispensable element in daily life for a large segment of Turks." (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 123)

1.5.5. Amend laws

In response to popular pressure and the Justice and Development government's conscientiousness and duty in establishing freedoms and consolidating human rights, Erdogan stated a year after taking office in 2003: "The issue of the veil is not only a problem of the Justice and Development Party, but rather a problem that concerns all of Turkey" (Ilhamy , 2016, p. 133). He tossed the ball to society, and he believes in political intelligence. In 2005, Erdogan announced that his government had "begun to study the veil law in order to secure more religious freedom for citizens." (Ilhamy , 2016, p. 133)

The party proposed a number of amendments to Parliament, including allowing women to wear veils in government buildings. The law was approved by Parliament, but the Constitutional Court struck it down again, as did issues concerning the equality of students in imams and preachers schools with other students seeking admission to universities. (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 96)

This move to overthrow one of Turkish secularism's postulates enraged the secularists, who saw it as a coup against Ataturk's secular heritage and a way to change the secular face of the state, so they organized demonstrations to draw attention to their presence (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 96). Rather, the crisis reached a head in mid-March 2008, when a lawsuit to ban the party was filed before the Constitutional Court, but the court decided to keep it and be satisfied with cautionary decisions (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 96)

The Justice and Development government continued its political maneuvering until it was successful in passing legislation allowing female workers in public institutions to wear the veil on September 30, 2013, as well as schoolgirls beginning in the fifth intermediate grade in 2014. In terms of alcohol and intoxicants, the party worked to limit their availability, and on May 33, 2013, parliament passed legislation restricting the consumption and advertising of alcoholic beverages, prohibiting alcohol sales companies from sponsoring any activities, and limiting the places where such drinks can be consumed. Alcohol sales are prohibited between ten o'clock at night and six o'clock in the morning, in addition to a ban on broadcasting series, films, and music videos that glorify alcohol consumption, and images of alcohol will be distorted in the same way that images of cigarettes are blurred. (Ilhamy , 2016, p. 134)

1.5.6. Turks disappointed with joining the European Union

Turkey applied for membership in the European Economic Community, which is now known as the European Union, in 1959, and again in 1987, and its file was accepted as an appropriate country to enter the European Union at the Luxembourg Summit in 1997. The Helsinki Summit in 1999 then considered it, without distinction, a candidate country for membership in the European Union. (Al-Ati , 2010, p. 97)

Formal negotiations to join the European Union began in 2005, and Turkey made concession after concession until all legal requirements were met, but to no avail. This rigid stance convinced Turkey that the West would never accept its membership in the European Union as long as it was Muslim. As a result, it began to move east, opening up to the Islamic world, where it was greeted warmly.

It also warned those affected by Western culture that the West only wants them to follow it, and that preserving one's identity is a sign of strength, while abandoning one's identity is a sign of weakness. Cornell and Carvelli argue that Turkey's role as a regional power is heavily dependent on its ability to overcome its "existential division" issue of religion. Only when Turkey is at peace with itself can it assume the role of a regional power, which the West, led by the United States, encourages. Many of them were prompted to reconsider the issue of identity and secularism as a result of this. (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 126)

2. Secularism and counter identities

2.1. Minorities and incomplete citizenship

Despite being its founder and pillar, Kemal Ataturk believed that the Turkish race was marginalized and did not benefit from the Ottoman Caliphate. As a result, he resolved to restore the Turk's achievement by adopting nationalism as a method of governance.

Its greatest disadvantage is that it divided the sons of one nation into two opposing factions, portraying one as a religious brother and the other as an enemy to be humiliated and eradicated. This is what he said in 1924 when he referred to non-Turkish speakers as "potential enemies" of the country (Bozarlan , 2009, p. 55). The 1938 constitution did not recognize Turkey's ethnic and religious diversity, and considered all residents to be Turks, as stated in Article 88 of the constitution, "All residents of Turkey, regardless of religion or nationality, are Turks" (Issa Hamed , 1992, p. 359).

For this, he began to persecute Turkic minorities, with the Kurdish minority being the most persecuted in Turkish Republic history. It was forbidden to speak Kurdish, and Kurds were forced to speak Turkish, and the slogan "In his reign" was raised, O citizen... Learn Turkish. He also shut down Kurdish schools, organizations, and book printing. (Issa Hamed , 1992, p. 374)

They were denied the right to development and happiness. Between 1925 and 1930 AD, inspectors from the Ministry of Interior prepared dozens of internal reports that divided Turkey into two regions, north and south of the Euphrates. Priority was given to the north, which was to be shielded from all Kurdish da'wa contact. In the second region, which is clearly identified as Kurdish, everything had to be done to deprive it of its Kurdish identity, including displacing Kurds and establishing Turkish settlements. This policy resulted in the enactment of the Settlement Law on June 21, 1934, with the goal of increasing the population of Turkish culture

in the Kurdish regions. "Minorities should be run as colonies separate from the national body and represented by this same body," Kamali Alasai used to say. (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 60)

This policy produced severe intolerance of the Turkish race, until one of them, the poet "Kamalcalar," one of the authority's official poets, reached the authority to elevate the Turkish race to the ranks of divinity "a race that deserved divinity (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 57)." This policy rejects the other, promoting many phrases such as "Turkey for the Turks loved it or left it (Hermann , 2012, p. 82)

In 1925, Prime Minister Ismet Pasha Inonu responded to a British diplomat by saying: "We are nationalists, and nationalism is a factor in our cohesion; in front of the Turkish majority, the rest of the elements have no influence; we must turkify the people of our country at any cost, and we will exterminate those who oppose Turks and Turkish nationalism. What we ask of all those who want to serve the country is that they be Turks first and foremost, and believe in Turkish nationalism." (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 55)

In the columns of the Kemaliye newspaper during the Kurdish Ararat revolution in 1930, Mahmud Asaad Bozkurt, Minister of Justice, stated, "My idea is the following. Let everyone know, friends and enemies, that they know well that the master of this country is the Turk. Those who are not impudent Turks have only one right in the Turkish homeland, It is the right to be slaves." (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 56)

The President of the Republic, Jamal Gursial, has asked to "spit in the face of anyone who classifies or describes someone as a Kurd," (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 56) a significant departure from the Ottoman Caliphate's approach to governance, which prioritized religious brotherhood over ethnic brotherhood. This injustice was not tolerated by the Kurds, who revolted against the Turkish Republic seventeen times between 1925 and 1938 (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 97). But they were defeated, and the Turkish state punished them and treated them as colonizers, depriving them of their right to economic development, besieging them militarily, and barring tourists and foreigners from entering their areas until 1965 (Issa Hamed , 1992, p. 374). This enslavement compelled the Kurdish people to retake arms as an irreversible option in the 1980s, led by the Kurdistan Workers Party.

Instead of abandoning its policy of suppressing the Kurdish people and fighting for their identity, the army insisted on continuing with it, and on the military solution as an irreversible option. During the 1980 coup, "the military declared that any ideological affiliation other than Kemalism, any Athenian affiliation other than Turkish, and any religious affiliation other than Sunni is a delusion." (Bozarslan , 2009, p. 97)

In 1994, prominent Kurdish parliamentarian Leyla Zana was imprisoned for ten years for wearing a tie with the Kurdish colors yellow, green, and red in her hair and swearing an oath in Kurdish, saying, "I will do my best so that the Kurdish and Turkish people can live together in a democratic framework." (Hermann , 2012, p. 198)

During the civil war that lasted from 1984 to 1999, more than ten thousand villages in the country's southeast were forced to relocate, and more than three million people were forced to relocate. The war claimed more than thirty-seven thousand lives. (Hermann , 2012, p. 195)

Given his Kurdish origins and Islamic background, Ozal attempted to end the Kurdish issue peacefully, but he was assassinated before achieving national reconciliation. And what he actually accomplished was to lift the total prohibition on the use of the Kurdish language. When Erbakan became Prime Minister, he attempted to grant Kurds full citizenship, but was unable to do so due to his lack of control over the army.

Thus, the Kurdish problem persisted, and governments were unable to resolve it, because the secular and military leadership was obstinate in rejecting the political solution, which serves the Kurds better and transforms them into a political and economic force that threatens Turkey's future unity and strategic interests.

2.2. Justice and Development Party government and full citizenship rights for the Kurds

Erdogan was aware of the threat the Kurdish problem posed to Turkey's renaissance, which is why he sought to hasten its resolution, and for this reason, the Justice and Development Party included "Minority Rights" in its platform. It is also required to protect the rights of followers of various religions as well as the rights of those who do not profess any religion, and the program also denounces ethnic and religious politics, describing it as the misappropriation of ethnic and religious emotions and feelings for political purposes. (Axiarlis , 2016, p. 129)

It also states that "no structure can provide freedom for individuals or peace for society unless it is founded on people's free will.... No individual or institutional oppression is acceptable." The belief of individuals living in a community that their rights and freedoms are respected is the most important component of trust in a society. This belief is the driving force behind the social and economic dynamics. Furthermore, respect for individuals' rights and freedoms is required for the establishment of social peace and stability, as well as the people's acceptance of a democratic system. (Axiarlis , 2016, pp. 131-132)

When his party took power, Erdogan opposed the ultra-nationalist concept of exclusion of the other. He defined nationalism as "meaning serving the country and the nation" and considered discrimination to be contrary to the concept of nationalism, stating that "every element that discriminates is not national." He also initiated economic development in Kurdish regions in ways you may not have been aware of, including support for infrastructure, health, and education. He also granted them cultural rights, such as the right to broadcast programs in Kurdish." (Hermann , 2012, p. 85)

Erdogan's first reward from the Kurds came in the form of six Kurdish provinces in the 2004 elections, which came as a huge surprise to the public. (Hermann , 2012, p. 199)

In a speech in 2005, Erdogan emphasized that citizenship is a right for all citizens, declaring, "There is no discrimination in this country." We are all Kurdish, Turkish, Circassian, Georgian, Abaza, Bosnian, and whatever other ethnicities you can think of. We are all Turkish Republic citizens." Nationalists argue, "Those who produce politics based on ethnic origins will not be able to guide this country." (Ilhamy , 2016, p. 138)

Among the courageous measures taken by Erdogan was the opening of the field for political action to Kurds, as well as their inclusion in the party and the government. In the 2007 elections,

the Justice and Development Party had eighty Kurdish deputies out of a total of three hundred and forty. (Hermann , 2012, p. 203)

As a result, the Kurds, like their Turkish brothers, gained full rights under the Justice and Development government. However, these rights are insufficient until the security issue is completely resolved. That is why, in 2008, he declared that the military solution was a bad decision that had failed. And he gave the intelligence a green light to talk to the PKK, which enraged the then-President of the Republic, "Cesar," and the generals, and when they confronted him at a National Security Council meeting, he declared to them, "The state must win its citizens, and his government rejected in April 2006 the request of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which Seated by generals alongside ministers, the state of emergency has been restored in the Kurdish republic. (Hermann , 2012, p. 203)

However, the army did not oppose the government's policy of justice and development with the Kurds because they were convinced that the continuation of the military option threatens the state's existence, and that equality in citizenship among the people is what ensures the state's unity and progress.

3. Conclusion

Since Kemal Ataturk forced the Turkish people to change their Islamic identity to a Western identity, Turkey has experienced a sharp cultural conflict. Because he believed it was the cause of the Ottoman Empire's backwardness and fall.

He was not only fighting the Islamic identity, but also all identities that contradicted the Turkish identity. He waged war on the Kurds in particular, forcing them to change their customs and languages.

For eight decades, the Turkish and Kurdish people resisted fascist policy, and the only time they tasted freedom was during the reigns of Menderes and Ozal, who sympathized with their people and sought to change reality through constitutional and legal reforms. These reforms were paid for with their lives.

However, Erdogan and his associates arrived and were able to lift most of the restrictions and break many of the forbidden taboos by reviving the Turkish people's religious depth, amending laws, restoring the incorrect concept of secularism, and influencing the people with their religious biography and economic success.

They were also able to liberate the Kurdish people from previous governments' oppression by granting them full rights like the rest of the Turkish people, opening political and economic space for them, and extending channels of dialogue with armed opponents.

The Justice and Development government used this rare political skill to overcome the problem of identity and the Kurdish issue, which has been one of Turkey's most serious problems for eight decades, burdening and draining its capabilities.

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