DIVIDED TURKEY. CASE STUDY: THE 2013 ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS

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Abstract: The recent anti-government riots have highlighted the schism within the Turkish society, representing an evidence to the dual political orientation of contemporary Turkey, a snapshot of a state of things characterized by diversity, both in terms of values and beliefs, as well as at social and political level. Although, the demonstrators were demanding the resignation of the ruling party, the AKP has not lost its popularity, many Turks continuing to support the Islamic-rooted party, as shown by the pro-government rallies and interviews given by Turkish citizens. Despite the fact that the protests have created panic and doubt regarding the future of Turkey, both at domestic and international level, the events from 2013 are beneficial for the Turkish democracy, citizens assuming the role to restrain and limit the excesses of the ruling authority and conquering their sovereignty after many decades of submission.

Keywords: Anti-Government Riots, Political Schism, AKP, Opposition, Turkish Democracy.

The post-2002 Turkey has evolved a lot,both in terms of economics and politics, without omitting the valuable development of the civil society. The AKP government, led by Prime MinisterRecepTayyipErdoğan, managed to raise the living standards of citizens, which have become increasingly aware of the power they hold and more engaged in the political life. In the meantime, the Turkish national unity, maintained by Kemalist elite during the 20th Century, started to split, transforming the homogeneous society in a multicultural, multiethnic and more democratic society. The Taksim Square anti-government protestshave highlighted the fragmentation of the Turkish society; on the one hand the protesters were demanding the resignation of the government,while on the other handthe supporters ofErdoğanwere organizing pro-AKP demonstrations.

The international media, taking the side of the oppressed protestors, rushed to denounce the dictatorship of Erdoğan,the evolution towards theocracy of the Turkish state under the AKP rule, and the radical Islamism promoted by the government. If previously,the first decade of the AKP governmentwas presented as a model of development for the Muslim world, characterized by the peaceful coexistence of liberal democracy with Islam, substantial economic growth and the Kurdish opening, now the party is booed at global level. The solutions given by international and Turkish thinkers, recall the need to return to the fundaments of the Kemalist regime. Meanwhile, domestically, the vast majority of the AKP supporters remain loyal to the government, despite the incidents of 2013.

Although,the division of the Turkish society and politics between Kemalists and conservative Islamists reached its peak during the spring/summer 2013 riots, the

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fragmentation has been a reality since 2002, when the AKP won the elections[1]. Despite the fact that one of the main objectives announced by Erdoğan's party was joining the European Union, the links of the party leaders with some Islamist parties from the past, raised suspicions at domestic and international level[2], while the idea that the AKP aims to transform Turkey into a theocracy gained adherents, especially among Kemalist.

According to Radu Gabriel Safta and Călin Felezeuthe contemporary Turkish politics and society is divided into two camps: the conservative elites and the democratic reformers. In other wordswe can distinguish between the defenders of Kemalist order, big businessmen (Koc, Dogan, Sabanci), members of the Republican People's Party, senior civil servants, the military and the new Turkish Islamic entrepreneurial class, resulted from the privatization of the 80s together with the AKP party. The confrontation between the two camps is marked by mutual criticism. The secular elite are blamed for their authoritarianism, the establishment of a partial democracy,their anti-European position and the implementation of anincomplete secularization, characterized by state control over religion. The Kemalist elite are often called illiberal oligarchy, opposed to minority rights, freedom of expression and religious rights. On the other hand, Islamists are accused of having a hidden agenda, which promotes the Islamization of Turkey[3]. The AKP has been recently awardedwith some negative elements of Kemalism: authoritarian tendencies and the violation of the freedom of expression.

The social and political schism of Turkey is not a secret neither for the AKP, which emphasized the distinction between "us", the conservative Islamists and "them", the Kemalists, appealing to the religious affiliation. In this regard "we" are the "Muslim Turks" who serve God and "they" are "Secular Turks" who serve Atatürk and the Republic founded by him[4]. "They",the Kemalistshave always opposed the AKP government, and organized demonstrations against Islamists whenever they had the chance. In this regard we can mention the reaction of the Kemalists led by the CHP party, the army and hundreds of thousands of citizens, when AKP nominated its presidential candidate in the person of Abdullah Gül, in April 2007. They protested in several cities in Turkey against the Islamization of Turkey, represented bythe occupation of the presidential seat by an Islamist. However, Gül became the president of Turkey, and the referendum from October showed that 69% of citizens supported the decision of AKP[5].

Although, as noted above, the AKP has been accused byKemalistsof following and imposing a hidden Islamic agenda since they took over the power, the suspicions concerning theIslamization of Turkey were strengthened by the lifting of the veil ban in universities in 2008[6]. AKP's policy to reintroduce the headscarf divided the Turkish society and the

[1] Şevket Pamuk, „Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey", in Reşat Kasaba, *The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 4, Turkey in the Modern World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, p. 291.
[2]E. Fuat Keyman, Ziya Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World. Global Dynamics and Domestic Transformations*, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, Istanbul, 2007, p. 68.
[3]Radu Gabriel Safta, Călin Felezeu, *Turcia contemporană între moştenirea kemalistă şi Uniunea Europeană*, CA Publishing, Cluj Napoca, 2001, pp. 70-75.
[4]Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003, p. 261.
[5]Yonah Alexander, Edgar H. Brenner, Serhat Tutuncuoglu Krause, *Turkey, Terrorism, Civil Rights and theEuropean Union*, Routledge, New York, 2008, pp. 21-22.
[6]Valorie K. Vojdik, *Politics of the Headscarf in Turkey: Masculinities, Feminism, and the Construction of Collective Identities*, „Harvard Journal of Law and Gender", 2010, vol. 332, no. 2, p. 671, available onlineat http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlg/vol332/661-686.pdf (accessed on: 10 October 2013)

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international community: some were interpreting the proposal as an obligation imposed on women and as a symbol of political Islam, while others welcomed the government's initiative, classifying it as being in harmony with human rights, considering that the lifting the ban will stop the discrimination against women wearing headscarves, allowing them to pursue an education and a career. Moreover, after the lifting of the ban, women who are forced to cover their head, will be able to use the veil as a tool to legitimize their access to the public sphere, the veil becoming a passport to education and career, powerful enough to neutralize the social disapproval.

Given the fact that approximately 2/3 of Turkish women, coming from the conservative middle class, wear headscarves, the measure is justifiable[7]. Also, according to the studies conducted in 2009, 70% of Turkey's population supported the lifting of the veil ban[8]. However, the Constitutional Court abrogated the bill, on the grounds that it would pose a threat to the secular foundations of the Turkish state[9]. Anyway, most of the Turkish universities, allowed the attendance of covered womento their courses, after the government assured the students that they will get support in case of expel or other difficulties[10]. As a result, the AKP has been accused by the Constitutional Court of Islamic practices against the secular principles of the Turkish state,being on the verge of dissolution, while 71 AKP members were fined[11].

One of the worst mistakes of the ruling party, which has increased the ranks of the opposition, was the attitude of Turkey towards the Syrian civil war. Removing Syria from the policy of "zero problems with neighbors" and the demand of the prime minister for intervention in Syria, addressed to the international community, has triggered domestic criticism[12]. As for the Islamic measures, the AKP has been charged with imposing the prohibition of the use of red lipstick to the stewardess of Turkish Airlines, although, so far, the measure has not been applied[13].

Another measure contested and ranked as Islamic, is the prohibition of the promotion and sale of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 18, and their selling in grocery shops after 10.00 p.m., excepting the tourist areas[14]. Meanwhile the sale of alcohol near

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[7]Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Turkey: Situation of women who wear headscarves*, „UNHCR-The UN Refugee Agency", available online at http://www.refworld.org/docid/4885a91a8.html (accessed on: 10 October 2013).

[8]Umut Azak, *Beyond the Headscarf: Secularism and Freedom of Religion in Turkey*, „Turkish Policy Quarterly", 2012, vol. 11, no. 4, p. 93, available online at http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/861/beyond-the-headscarf-secularism-and-freedom-of-religion-in-turkey-winter-2013/ (accessed on: October 10, 2013)

[9]Metin Toprak, Nasuh Uslu, *The Headscarf Controversy in Turkey*, „Munich Personal RePEc Archive", 22 November 2008, p. 48, available online at http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/16052/1/MPRA_paper_16052.pdf (accessed on: 10 October 2013).

[10]Jonathan Head, *Quiet end to Turkey's college headscarf ban*, „BBC News", 31 December 2010, available online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11880622 (accessed on: 8 May 2013).

[11]Radu Gabriel Safta, Călin Felezeu, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

[12]Wilhelm Langthaler, *Gezi Park: Between Democracy and Kemalism*, „Dissident Voice", 17 June 2013, available online at http://dissidentvoice.org/2013/06/gezi-park-between-democracy-and-kemalism/ (accessed on: 2 July 2013).

[13]***, *Turkish Airlines reverses lipstick ban for flight attendants*, „Al Arabiya", 10 May 2013, available online at http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/05/10/Turkish-Airlines-reverses-lipstick-ban-for-flight-attendants.html (accessed on: 2 July 2013).

[14]Ceylan Ozbudak, *Getting drunk in Turkey? Think twice*, „Al Arabiya", 1 July 2013, available online at http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/world/2013/06/01/Getting-drunk-in-Turkey-Think-twice.html (accessed on: 2 July 2013).

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schools and mosques was prohibited, noting that the existing establishments in the proximity of schools and mosques will be exempt from the new legal provisions[15].

Corruption is another burning issue of the Turkish Republic, the state being ranked as the 54th of 178 countries analyzedin terms of corruption by Transparency International[16]. However, the last straw which caused the riots was the government's plans to turn Istanbul's Gezi Park into a shopping center, providing also the rebuilding of the old Ottoman barracks, thus sacrificing one of the few green areas of the metropolis. The environmental protests started on May 28th in the former capital, turned quickly into a political protest and expanded in most of the Turkish cities. The repressive methods used by the police to disperse the protestors, namely water cannons and tear gas, intensified the anger of citizens[17]. According to the report released by Amnesty International, the AKP government is guilty of the denial of the right to peaceful demonstrations, violation of the personal freedom and brutal treatment of civilians. The report informs that protesters were persecuted, arrested, beaten or sexually assaulted. The clashes between the police and protesters are counting 8,000 wounded and 4 dead people including a police officer[18].

The anti-government protests have not only rung the alarm bells about the excesses and shortcomings of Turkish democracy, but underlined the fragmentation of the society. Although,the studies conducted by KONDA on 4,000 protestors[19] and by Istanbul Bilgi University, with around 3,000 respondents, show that the vast majority of protesters were not affiliated with any political party[20], the latter revealed that 92 1% of the respondents did not vote in the last election with AKP[21]. Therefore, only 7,9% of the protesters were the electors of the ruling party, a small amount ofthose 50% who voted with AKP in 2011 (giving the fact that the voter turnout was of 84,2%)[22]. The conclusion is logical, the AKP supporters, almost one half of the citizens, kept distance from Taksim Square, while the protesters were representing the other half of the Turkish society, a socially and politically diverse group, in which we can distinuish an important number of Kemalists.

The majority of protesters fromTaksim Square are part of the groups that opposed the AKP since the founding of the party: CHP supporters, anti-capitalists and representatives of

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[15]Thomas Seibert, *Turkey's alcohol law renews accusations of Erdogan's Islamist agenda*, „The National", 26 May 2013, available online at http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/europe/turkeys-alcohol-law-renews-accusations-of-erdogans-islamist-agenda (accessed on: 10 October 2013).

[16]*Corruption by Country/ Territory: Turkey*, „Transparency International", 2010, available online at http://www.transparency.org/country#TUR_DataResearch_SurveysIndices (accessed on: 16 October 2013).

[17]Firat Demir, *Here's What You Need to Know about the Clashes in Turkey*, „Foreign Policy", 1 July 2013, available online at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/06/01/here_s_what_you_need_to_know_about_the_clashes_in_turkey?page=0, 1 (accessed on: 2 July 2013).

[18]***, *Turkey accused of gross human rights violations in Gezi Park protests*, „Amnesty International", 2 October 2013, available online at http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/turkey-accused-gross-human-rights-violations-gezi-park-protests-2013-10-02#.Ukw-pVs3n9U.facebook (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

[19]***, *94 Percent of Gezi Resisters Participate Individually, Poll Says*, „BIA News Desk", 13 July 2013, available online at http://www.bianet.org/english/youth/147543-94-percent-of-gezi-resisters-participate-individually-poll-says (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

[20]***, *Protesters are young, libertarian and furious at Turkish PM, says survey*, „Hürriyet Daily News", 5 July 2013, available online at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/protesters-are-young-libertarian-and-furious-at-turkish-pm-says-survey.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48248&NewsCatID=341 (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

[21]*Ibidem*.

[22]***, *TurkeyRuling Party Wins Election with Reduced Majority*, „ BBC News", 12 June 2011, available online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13740147(accessed on: 7 May 2013).

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several parties less influential in the Turkish politics. As shown above, the Turkish society is deeply divided: on the one hand, half the population is backing the prime minister and its party, while the other half is asking for Erdoğan's resignation[23]. Of course, we can also talk about a 3rd group, the Liberal minority, which formerly supported the AKP.

Even in the context of the recent protests, the AKP is likely to remain in charge, due to disorganization of the Liberals. According to Halil Karaveli the problems that took theTurks to the streets are associated with Erdoğan's personality and not with the party. Polls show that the favorite for the 2014 elections is not the current prime minister, but Abdullah Gül, the current president, also AKP member[24]. However, Steven A. Cook believes that Erdoğan will continue to win the elections with considerable percent, pointing out that the prime minister has not only a large number of opponents, but also an impressive number of supporters. Support and the vote of confidenceare due to Erdoğan's multiple achievements. As mayor of Istanbul in the mid 90she cleaned the city and introduced eco-friendly public transportation, while as prime minister, since 2002, he has improved the health system, public transportation and boosted the economy[25].

Consequently, it is not a surprise that during the anti-government protests, pro-AKP demonstrations were held. On 7th June 2013, at his returning from the 4-day tour of North Africa, the prime minister was waited in Istanbul's main airport by around 10,000 fans. Although, some of his supporters admit the mistakes made by Erdoğan, namely theuse of forceon protesters or the law on alcohol, they continue to support it, because of the economic growth, improvement of living standards andthe position of AKP towards the Palestinians[26]. Ten days later, on17th June, at the AKPparty meeting, entitled "Respect for National Will", hundreds of thousands of citizens proved their attachment to the ruling party by attending[27]. Demonstrations in support of the Turkish prime minister were held also in Malaysia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, Yemen and Palestine[28]. Of course, international demonstrations of solidarity with the Geziprotesters were held on a larger scale, people from countries like Moldova, Spain, Canada, Brazil, United States, Austria, Italy, Romania or Greece showing their support with the Occupy Gezimovement[29]. Given the human rights violation and the brutal defeat of peaceful protesters, this evolution was expected.

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[23]Steven A. Cook, *Keep Calm, Erdoğan. Why the Prime Minister Has Nothing to Fear*, „Foreign Affairs", 3 June 2013, available online at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139432/steven-a-cook/keep-calm-Erdoğan (accessed on: 6 June 2013).

[24]Halil Karaveli, *Erdoğan in Trouble His Biggest Challenge Is President Abdullah Gul, Not Liberals*, „Foreign Affairs", 6 June 2013, available online at http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139438/halil-karaveli/Erdoğan-in-trouble?page=2 (accessed on: 6 June 2013).

[25]Steven A. Cook, *op.cit.*.

[26]Ezgi Akin, *Who are Erdogan's supporters? A closer look*, „The Times of Israel", available online at http://www.timesofisrael.com/who-are-erdogans-supporters/ (accessed on: 16 October 2013).

[27]***, *Erdoğan holds second rally as Taksim clashes continue*, „Today's Zaman", 16 June 2013, available online at http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318456-erdogan-holds-second-rally-as-taksim-clashes-continue.html (accessed on: 16 October 2013).

[28]***, *Altı ülkede Türkiye'ye destek mitingi*, „Sabah", 14 June 2013, available online at http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2013/06/14/alti-ulkede-turkiyeye-destek-mitingi (accessed on: 16 October 2013).

[29]*GeziGlobal confirmed events*, „Gezi Global Solidarity", 20 June 2013, available online athttp://geziglobal.tk/ (ultima accesare: 16 October 2013).

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Some voices argue that the Turks will choose the 3rd way, the Liberal path, rejecting not only Kemalism, but also the Islamic orientation of the AKP party[30]. This scenario is uncertaindue to the lack of unity and organization of the Liberals. According to FareedZakaria, Turkey is already on the rightpath, and the 2013 protests are a sign of democratic maturity. Zakariadescribes the riots in the light of democratic dialogue, considering that the events will strengthen the Turkish democracy. The author adds that protests in Turkey have nothing in common with the Arab Spring and will not provoke the resignation of the government[31]. Considering that the original purpose of the ecological protests was reached, the Court of Istanbul rejected the plans to redesign Taksim Square[32], moreover, Gezi Park became the subject of an extensive tree plantation[33],and things are getting back to normal.

Regardless of the future political developments, Turkish society remains divided between supporters and opponents of the AKP, with a minority caught in the middle. The interviews conducted with 10 Turkish citizens between 31th May and 2nd July 2013 during the riots revealthe social schism of contemporary Turkey, both between citizens and even at an individual level, by being unable to choose between the main political orientations.

Answering the question "Which is, in your opinion the most glorious period in the history of Turkey?", one person[34] called the period of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, four evoked the early republican era led by Atatürk, two abstained and three named the AKP government. If F.A.[35]characterizedthe AKP government in terms of prohibition, admitting the economic growth mentioned by S.K.[36], A.B.[37] believed that the AKP government has not only stabilized the economy, but has gained the international recognition of Turkey. In the same line of thought, H.T.[38] and Ş.Y.[39] believed that the AKP has improved the health-system and lowered the unemployment rate, while R.F.[40] said that AKP contributed to the pacification of Turkey and S.A.T.[41] concluded that compared with the previous governments, the situation is better under the Islamic-rooted party. On the other side stands H.S.[42], according to whom life under the AKP "is like living between walls made of bricks of religious rules" decrying the violation of freedom of expression, and N.A.[43], who dispraised the lifting of the veil ban in universities. Regarding the headscarf controversy, 9 of 10 people think that wearing headscarf

[30]Wilhelm Langthaler, *op. cit.*.
[31]Fareed Zakaria, *Ask Fareed Zakaria Anything: What's Up In Turkey?*, „The Dish", 4 June 2013, available online at http://dish.andrewsullivan.com/ (accessed on: 2 July 2013).
[32]Lorenzo Baldi, *La corte di Istanbul blocca il progetto di ridisegnare piazza Taksim*, „ Meridiani Relazioni Internazionali", 4 July 2013, available online at http://www.meridianionline.org/2013/07/04/corte-di-istanbul-blocca-il-progetto-di-ridisegnare-piazza-taksim/ (accessed on: 4 July 2013).
[33]Aylin Kocaman, *Gezi protests: Milestone in Turkey's history*, „Arab News", 14 October 2013, p. 7, available online at http://acturca.wordpress.com/2013/10/14/gezi-protests-milestone-in-turkeys-history/ (accessed on: 15 October 2013).
[34]Ş.Y.,Turkish citizen, 1 June 2013.
[35]F.A., Turkish citizen, 17 June 2013.
[36]S.K., Turkish citizen, 31 May 2013.
[37]A.B., Turkish citizen, 3 June 2013.
[38]H.T., Turkish citizen, 31 June 2013.
[39]Ş.Y.,Turkish citizen, 1 June 2013.
[40]R.F., Turkish citizen, 4 June 2013.
[41]S.A.T., Turkish citizen, 1 June 2013.
[42]H.S., Turkish citizen, 4 June 2013.
[43]N.A., Turkish citizen, 31 May 2013.

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is a natural right, but which can be used by certain people as a political symbol. Moreover, R.D.[44]criticized the deficiency of the AKP measure, which lifted the ban of wearing veil only in universities, not in all the public institutions.

The question: "Is secularism threatened under the rule of AKP?" reaches opinion parity: four persons answered yes, other four gave a negative answer, while two respondents couldn't decide themselves. Closely related to the previous question, the answers to the question: "Do you think that the AKP has a hidden agenda and wants to transform Turkey into theocracy?", marks the slight victory of the five respondents who believe that AKP has a secret Islamic plan. Therefore, the AKP government is loved and defied, regarded as a model of development, but also as an agent of theocracy, which threatens the secular foundations of the Turkish state, while the majority welcomes the some of the so-called Islamicmeasures, as the lifting of the veil ban.

We won't deny that the number of the respondents is too small to indicate the pulse of the entire Turkish society. Even so, the interviews represent an evidence of the political, cultural and social schism, in contemporary Turkey, helping us to strengthen the arguments set in the paper. Important to note is that respondents were not chosen based on their political orientation, which came out only after providing the answers.

The riots gave the ruling party an important lesson, and particulary toErdoğan, who was condemned for his authoritarian tendencies; that power belongs to citizens, whose will mustbe implemented at political level, otherwise they will fight for their rights. Only the future can reveal to us if the lesson has been learned or not. Positive signals encourage us to remain optimistic. On 30th of September 2013, AKP launched a package of democratic reforms. The government has promised to reduce the threshold from 10% to 5% in order to allow a better political representation of citizens by enabling the political participation of smaller parties; commited to restitute the Mor Gabriel monastery to the Syrian Christians;to renameNevşehir University inHacıBektaşVali University in the memory of an Alevi mystic and the localities according to their original name. In order to promote minority rights the government will alloweducation in mother tongue[45].

The package also includes the abolishing of the so-called "Andımız"[46], the studentoath, delivered every Monday morning and Friday afternoon in elementary schools for 80 years[47]. "Andımız" glorifies the Turkish nation and contains the promise of the youth to follow the path of progress initiated by Atatürk, while ending with the famous phrase "Ne MutluTürkümdiyene"[48],"How happy is the one who says: I am Turkish".The oath was

[44]R.D., Turkish citizen, 2 July 2013.
[45]Hüseyin Hayatsever, *Government takes steps on headscarf, Kurds, electoral system*, „Hürriyet Daily News", 30 September 2013, available online at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-to-lift-ban-on-headscarf-introduce-kurdish-education-with-democracy-package-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=55393&NewsCatID=338 (accessed on: 10 October 2013).
[46]***, *İlkokullarda andımız tamamen kaldırıldı*, „Haber 7", 30 September 2013, available online athttp://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/1080067-ilkokullarda-andimiz-tamamen-kaldirildi (accessed on: 11 October 2013).
[47]Mehmet Ali Berber, *Kamuda başörtüsü yasağı kalktı*, „Sabah", 8 October 2013, available online at http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2013/10/08/kamuda-basortusu-yasagi-kalkti (accessed on: 11 October 2013).
[48]***, *Andımız ve kamuda başörtüsü yasağı kaldırıldı*, „Hürriyet", 8 October 2013, available online at http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/24874592.asp (accessed on: 11 October 2013).

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removed because it ignores minority groups and promotes a racist nationalism[49]. Another important reform from the package is the lifting of the veil ban in public institutions, except the police, judiciary and armed forces[50].

Erdoğanhas overestimated the effect of the reforms, believing that the democratic package will solve the main problems of Turkey, calling the Kurdish issue and the problems of Alevis[51]. But the government's initiative is far from being a magical solution, leaving many questions and unresolved issues. According to the Kurdish journalist, NûcanCudi, AKP has delivered a "half-empty package", deploring the paradox of the reform which allows education in Kurdishlanguage, adding that it will be possible only in private schools. Thereby, the right to education in mother tongue is provided only for the rich. The same author tells us that the AKP tries to "bribe" theAleviminority by naming Nevşehir University after one of the main teachers of Alevism, HacıBektasVeli, while ignoring their claims fora more tolerant, multicultural and multi-religious society[52].

The same opinion is shared by the Turkish novel-writer,ElifŞafak. While admitting that the package represents an important step towards democratization, Şafakthinks that is incomplete, pointing out that most of the inconveniences persist: the Greek Orthodox Seminary of Halki is still closed, theAleviplaces of worship are not recognized and freedom of expression is violated[53]. Faced with mass discontent, Erdoğanassured the public that reforms will continue, the package beingonly a part of a broader initiative[54].

If one part of the population recognizes the value and importance of the adopted reforms, requiring their deepening, the other halfrejects the package, considering it asure way towards a religious state and a menance for the republic established by Atatürk. The theologian BeyazZekerya,believes that the package is like bomb for the national unity, considering the multilingualism promoted by AKP unacceptable. The same hostile attitude towards the language policy is shown byÜmıt Kocasakal, according to whom theeducation in the languages of the minorities violates the Constitution and divides the nation, while Reşit Can, the president of the Diyarbakır branch of the Turkish Veterans, Disabled Soldiers, and Widows of Martyrs Foundation is rejecting the negotiation with the "terrorist" Kurds, who should be eliminated not tolerated[55].

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[49]Kaya Genç, *Good riddance, Turkish school oath – but reforms don't go far enough*, „The Guardian", 1 October 2013, available online at http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/01/turkish-school-oath-reforms (accessed on: 11 October 2013).

[50]Carol J. Williams, *Turkey lifts ban on Islamic head scarves, veils in civil service jobs*, „Los Angeles Times", 8 October 2013, available online at http://www.latimes.com/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-turkey-head-scarves-veils-20131008, 0, 2209845.story (accessed on: 11 October 2013).

[51]***, *All will be surprised by democracy package: Turkish PM Erdoğan*, „Hürrıyet Daily News", 27 September 2013, available online at http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/all-will-be-surprised-by-democracy-package-pm-erdogan.aspx?PageID=238&NID=55230&NewsCatID=338 (accessed on: 14 October 2013).

[52]Nûcan Cûdî, *When demagogy replaces democracy: AKP's empty package*, „ANHA", available online at http://www.hawarnews.com/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=463:when-demagogy-replaces-democracy-akps-empty-package&catid=1:news&Itemid=2 (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

[53]Elif Şafak, *Ankara fails to deliver on democracy*, „The Guardian", 4 October 2013, available online at http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/oct/04/ankara-fails-deliver-democracy (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

[54]Hüseyin Hayatsever, *op. cit.*.

[55]***, *Turkey Reacts Against AKP 'Package'*, „Aydınlık", 4 October 2013, available online at http://www.aydinlikdaily.com/Turkey-Reacts-Against-AKP-%E2%80%98Package%E2%80%99-809 (accessed on: 15 October 2013).

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It is obvious that the Kemalist legacy is still very strong in Turkey, as it shows the position taken by certain citizens towards the reforms. Ethnic and religious minorities are still regarded with suspicion by ultranationalists, being associated with separatism and national fragmentation. Meanwhile, the AKP's religious policy is analyzed in terms of religious fundamentalism. An important segment of the population rejects any reform that is not compatible with the Kemalist principles, or the Turkish society needs to overcome exactly the shortcomings of Kemalism, including dictatorship, violation of press freedom and minority rights.

On the other hand, the AKP becomes more authoritarian, by lendingsome negative elements fromKemalism, while paradoxically makes further steps towards democracy, constrained by the EU and lately, by the Turkish citizens. On the side of AKP we can find the conservative and religious groups, and until recently, Turkey's Liberal elite. Turkey's contemporary political portrait is limited in terms of color: black and white and a little gray, the last category being threatened with disappearance. Whether you are pro-AKP or you declare yourself against the ruling party, the middle way is not approved, being suspected of a certain political affiliation. Moreover, there is a tendency to stigmatize the opposing camp, to attribute them all the problems Turkey is facing. The Turkish society is divided in a Manichaean manner not only by the Turkish citizens but also by the external observers. In the context of the antigovernment riots, AKP was representing the Evil and the protesters the Good, the international press and the Turkish citizens forgetting that Turkey has lived its most liberal decade under the ruling party, and the long series of coups and the authoritarian character of the Kemalist regime.

As shown by the former ambassador, human rights activist, Craig Murray, saying that the protesters are good and the government is bad in a civil conflict,is a heritage of the Western interventionist policy, according to which the international community must intervene to eliminate evil. Civil conflicts are more complicated, Good and Evil being found on all the involved sides, while the altruistic citizens are manipulatedand taken into a sick game of interests[56]. The situation is similar in Turkey, both the government and the opposition have positive and negative intentions.

In this hostile political climate the democratic dialogue is undermined. Citizens and parties must find a middle path, leaving behind the mutual stereotypes, according to which the AKP opponents are fascists while the supporters of the ruling party are fundamentalists. Society must cooperate and negotiate for a democratic and prosperous future. Turkey must continue its evolution on the alley of democracy and freedom, while its citizens must exercise their sovereign role, by intervening whenever the principles of liberal democracy are violated, especially now, when the EU promises seem empty, Europe being unable to influence the political elites of Turkey.

[56]Craig Murray, *TalkingTurkey*, „Craig Murray", 2 June 2013, available online at http://www.craigmurray.org.uk/archives/2013/06/talking-turkey/ (accessed on: 16 October 2013).

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