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THE IDEOLOGICAL PILLARS OF THE NEW TURKEY

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THESES

- The Justice and Development Party (AKP), which has governed Turkey since 2002, has been engaged in reconstructing the Republic of Turkey in a revolutionary manner. This process is highly dynamic; in 2002–2016 the state was being reconstructed in an inconsistent manner. Furthermore, a broad spectrum of ideas has been employed on the ideological level, and the government's actions have met with resistance from various circles. However, the unsuccessful coup attempt of 15 July 2016 marked a turning point in Turkey's modern history. The changes that began at that time are irreversible, and the process of the construction of a New Turkey gained fresh momentum.

- The most important consequences of the failed coup include the consolidation of power in the hands of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the mobilisation of the section of society who support him and the crystallisation of the canon of values fundamental for the New Turkey. The failed coup can be recognised as a founding myth because it was an emotional social experience which involved a large section of the public, thus offering the government a new mandate to rule the country.

- The political myth of 2016 marks the end of pragmatically drawing upon a broad spectrum of ideas because it defines a precise canon of values for the New Turkey. Its pillars are both the ideas that became widespread under AKP rule and the legacy of modern Turkey reinterpreted. The strength of the new canon of ideas was confirmed during the campaign preceding the constitutional referendum in April 2017 and at the time of the vote itself. The newly created canon of values is coherent, understandable and appealing to the public. The opposition has not developed any alternative version to the events which took place on 15 July 2016 nor a counter-proposal as regards identity. Furthermore, it is watching on helplessly

as the AKP takes over its values. There is no real political alternative to Erdoğan's government at present.

- Turkey is becoming an even more difficult partner for the West after the attempted coup. A strong anti-Western and anti-liberal trend based on a political system strongly relying on one leader is inherent in its founding myth. However, this does not mean that a Turkey with this kind of government model will automatically become a close ally of other anti-Western countries (such as Russia or Iran) and build a camp with them that would be competitive to the West. In this context, Turkey above all emphasises its own sovereignty. Furthermore, it is not looking for points of reference in other countries because it is a model for itself.

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Turkey has been undergoing a thorough transformation under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002. This paper is an attempt to reconstruct its ideological foundations. The transformation on the ideological level entered the decisive stage after the coup of 15 July 2016 which was thwarted by supporters of the government. The coup is treated as a modern political myth that is used by the government to build a comprehensive story of Turkey under its rule and to define the fundamental values and identity of the state.

The interpretation of the modern political myth is based on the classical work of Ernst Cassirer who, starting from the definition of the myth as a "collective desire personified", claims that the myth is an emotion turned into an image. In addition to this, the most essential feature of such modern political myths is the fact that they are elaborated by leaders who, as part of their moves aimed at determining the character and identity of the state, combine elements of emotional and irrational thinking with the skill of using them in a conscious and intelligent manner. Building a comprehensive story of the state cannot be a matter of chance.[1]

Using the interpretation of the political myth as referred to above, an attempt is made in this paper to present how the Turkish government, equipped with the myth of the coup, has consciously capitalised on the real emotions and trauma of citizens over the past year to establish a canonical story of the New Turkey.

This text discusses: the ideological aspect of AKP rule in 2002–2016, when this party drew upon a broad spectrum of ideas in a pragmatic manner; the coup itself as a political myth; and the main part of this analysis is devoted to discussing the ideological

[1] E. Cassirer, The Myth of the State, Yale University Press, New Haven 1946, pp. 280-282.

foundations of the New Turkey. In addition to the literature collected, press materials and films available on the Internet, papers concerning the coup reflecting the official narrative as well as information collected during field studies in Turkey have been used in this analysis.

I. THE AKP'S RULE AS A RECONSTRUCTION OF KEMALIST TURKEY

The rise to power in 2002 of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) which has its roots in the political Islam tradition can be recognised as one of the most meaningful turning points in the history of the modern Turkish state. The party had been formed a year before gained a parliamentary majority and formed a cabinet by itself – it was the first time this had happened in Turkey since the election in 1987.[2] What was an absolute novelty was the fact that a parliamentary majority had been gained by a grouping continuing the traditions of circles that openly contested the secular character of the republic (one of their last political emanations was the Welfare Party – Refah Partisi, which had been banned in 1998). It also disassociated itself from the tradition of political Islam, creating an inclusive political power which was also open to people with liberal views who were opposed to the old Kemalist elites. The party presented itself as a Muslim version of Christian Democrats, treating Islam as a source of inspiration. It combined Muslim religiosity and conservatism with the pro-market orientation of the centre-right which had already been present on the Turkish political scene.

The AKP, which has won every election since 2002, has launched the process of a thorough reconstruction of the Republic of Turkey (which is still underway).[3] This reconstruction has brought such fundamental changes as the disassembly of the Kemalist establishment led by the army and the security structures that

[2] The Republican People's Party (CHP) was the only other party, apart from the AKP (which garnered 32% of the votes), to enter parliament. This meant that none of the political parties that had been present in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey during the previous term managed to make it to parliament this time. This result and the subsequent distribution of the seats were possible owing to the voting regulations setting the election threshold at 10%.

[3] Cf. M. Matusiak, The great leap. Turkey under Erdoğan, *OSW Point of View*, Warsaw, 27 May 2015, https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_51_ang_great_leap_net.pdf

reported to it, a gradual exchange of the political, official and economic elites and, to a certain extent, also of the opinion-forming circles. The Turkish government made all these changes drawing upon a broad range of ideas – from democratisation and appreciation of the social masses through rehabilitation of Islam as the most essential component of the Turkish culture. This means that the AKP in ideological terms remained above all pragmatic, and the order being created anew had no clearly crystallised ideological assumptions. These were compiled, expressed and turned into a kind of canon only as a consequence of the unsuccessful military coup of 15 July 2016.

1. The democratisation and subjectivisation of society

The democratisation of the state was the key issue in the discourse that applied at the beginning of the AKP's rule. For this reason replacing the official version of nationalism which defines the Turkish nation as a secular ethnic community linked with the state[4] with a more capacious, civic concept where the binding factor is Islam meant a fundamental change. Furthermore, a U-turn was made on the level of the ideological foundations of the state as the modernisation model applicable until then was given up (modernisation was understood as selective Westernisation, although it was not clearly stated as such). As part of this model, the conservative masses, deprived of social, cultural and economic capital, were the subject of a top-down modernisation that was being carried out by the 'enlightened' elites.[5] Under AKP rule, the public gained appreciation and was to become an important subject in Turkish politics.

[4] This understanding of the national community became entrenched in the first years of the existence of the republic. For more details, see: S. Cagaptay, Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who Is a Turk?, Routledge, London & New York 2006.

[5] It was pointed out that this model, which was perceived as top-down modernisation, had become worn out already in the mid 1990s. Cf. Ç. Keyder, Whither the project of modernity? Turkey in the 1990s, [in:] S. Bozdogan, R. Kasaba (eds.), Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey, University of Washington Press, Seattle 1997, pp. 37-52. On the other hand, the AKP by ap-

Changes in the institutional order of the republic were being made in the same spirit of democratisation. Turkey, as a candidate for EU membership, began gradually reducing the army's position. In turn, the army had a hostile attitude towards the new government almost from the very beginning of the AKP's rule and threatened it would intervene, viewing this party as a threat to the secular character of the republic. The Turkish army traditionally from the 1960s performed the function of the 'guardian of secularism' and reviewer of the political class. It interfered directly on four occasions – staging coups in 1960 and 1980, and forcing the government to resign in 1971 and 1997. The confrontation that took place at the time of the election of Abdullah Gül for president in 2007 turned out to be a decisive moment in the process of the democratisation of the state and establishing civilian control over the armed forces. One manifestation of the political crisis was the so-called 'e-memorandum'[6] addressed by the army threatening to intervene – it ended in the opposition boycotting the presidential election and holding a snap election which the AKP also won. As the government party regained its social mandate, it was able, in co-operation with the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP), to form the parliamentary quorum[7] and in the end to elect Gül. This, in turn, opened the way to holding two show trials concerning the alleged Balyoz and Ergenekon

preciating the public and making efforts to emancipate the groups that had previously been underprivileged, itself created a modernisation model that was also top-down.

6 Cf. K. Öktem, Turkey Since 1989: Angry Nation, Zed Books, London & New York 2011, pp. 153-154. The text of the so-called 'e-memorandum' in Turkish can be found on: https://tr.wikisource.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrk_Genelkurmay_Ba%C5%9Fkanl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1_27_Nisan_2007_tarihli_bas%C4%B1n_a%C3%A7%C4%B1klamas%C4%B1

7 The issue of the required two thirds of the votes in parliament provoked enormous controversies already during the first attempt to elect Gül. After the first vote, the Constitutional Court ruled that the presidential election was invalid due to the lack of a quorum, even though this principle had not previously applied. The Constitutional Court's decision was politically motivated and was a result of pressure from the army and politicians from the secular opposition. During another attempt, already after the election and with the required majority, the AKP pushed through its candidate. Cf. K. Öktem, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

plots during which representatives of the army allegedly planned to abolish the government. These actions were taken by the government in co-operation with the Fethullah Gülen movement. Gülen is an *émigré* spiritual leader and businessman whose influence has extended to such key state institutions as the judiciary and the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (see frame) under AKP rule. Hundreds of the most senior army commanders received long prison sentences in both trials, and the Act on the Turkish Armed Forces (the provisions of which, according to the army's interpretation, gave it the right to intervene[8]) was amended in 2013. Thus the struggle against the army being conducted under the slogans of democratisation resulted in its position being seriously undermined, and changed one of the key elements of the republic, namely the army's supervision of the political class.

2. Towards redefining identity

The key changes that have taken place in Turkey on the ideological level under the AKP include the launching of the painstaking process of redefining the Turkish national identity. Principally, since the AKP took power it has not contested the ideological guidelines of the Republic of Turkey; it has however placed more emphasis than any other government on Turkey's Muslim identity. The ideological foundations were built by drawing on previously existing concepts. One of the key concepts was the so-called 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' which, since the early 1980s, has had the status of a semi-official state ideology. Its goal was to reconcile Turkish ethnic identity with Islam.[9] According to this concept, the Turkish

[8] J. Wódka, Relacje cywilno-wojskowe. Aspekty instytucjonalne, [in:] *Idem* (ed.), „Nowa" Turcja. Aspekty polityczne, gospodarcze i społeczne, ISP PAN, Warsaw 2015, p. 128.

[9] The 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' was a continuation of the historical myths created in the 1930s by Kemalist historiographers who began searching for roots of the Turkish nation in ancient Central Asia to undermine the significance of the Ottoman Empire. In the 1970s, this concept began to be supplemented by an Islamic component, which was manifested in the way history began to be taught at school. Cf. E. Copeaux, Tarih Ders Kitaplarında

identity is composed both of the historical legacy of the Turkish nation, whose roots reach out to the ancient states that existed in Central Asia, and of Islam, the religion of the vast majority of Turks. This official vision of history was established because of the calculations of the army which governed the country in 1980–1983 and was aimed at balancing the influence of the political left (for example, compulsory religion lessons were introduced at schools under military rule). This identity policy was continued by Turgut Özal, the conservative prime minister and in 1989–1993 president, thus contributing to the gradual emancipation of religious circles. While under the rule of the army and then Özal religion was treated as an instrument.[10] Under the AKP the idea of appreciating Islam has been strongly internalised by the ruling class, this being an essential novelty in Turkish politics.

Members of the governing party and its most powerful ally, that is, the massive Fethullah Gülen Movement, originated from deeply religious circles.[11] An additional factor that strengthened their legitimacy and added credibility to their identity narrative was the fact that they originated from the conservative masses known as 'black Turks'.[12] As more and more obstacles in EU accession negotiations occurred, the new elites began gradually promoting an

(1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslâm Sentezine, Çev. A. Berktay, İ. Yayınları, Istanbul 2013.

10 Özal was the first Turkish president in history to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. His piety, otherwise seen as sincere, was at odds with the lifestyle of his wife Semra, who would ostentatiously go around with a glass of whisky and smoking cigars. However, from the point of view of the army and the secular establishment, the president's piety did not pose any threat. Cf. M. Heper, Islam, Conservatism, and Democracy in Turkey: Comparing Turgut Özal and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Insight Turkey, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2013, pp. 141-156.

11 The incumbent president Erdoğan, like Özal, was linked to Naqshbandi brotherhood (Turkish *Nakşibendi*). See: M. Heper, Islam..., *op. cit*.

12 As opposed to the so-called 'white Turks' originating from Ottoman elites who maintained their dominant position in the Republic. See: J. White, Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford 2014, pp. 46-48. The alternative division is the social 'centre' and 'peripheries'. See: Ş. Mardin, Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?, Daedalus, Vol. 102, No. 1, Post-Traditional Societies (Winter, 1973), pp. 169-190.

identity project presented in the framework of the 'Neo-Ottomanism' concept. It envisaged the full rehabilitation of the Ottoman Empire which had been discredited by the republic, and opening up Turkey to the external world. The latter of the elements was clearly in contrast to the isolationism typical of Kemalist Turkey. The government's mandate was additionally strengthened by the improvement of the economic situation, the civilisational leap forward and, as a consequence, the opening up of new ways to social advancement for previously underprivileged sections of society.

The process of the gradual and thorough redefinition of identity that has been taking place in the New Turkey which has been in formation since 2002 can be recognised as revolutionary (in terms of the depth of the changes and not their suddenness). The new elites have become so strong that restoring the republic in the shape that existed before AKP rule is practically impossible. This does not mean that the hegemony of the governing party and the personal power of Erdoğan himself (who has served as president since 2014) have been unchallenged. A schism among the elites was seen in 2013, one manifestation of which was prosecutors linked to the Gülen movement bringing to light a corruption scandal involving the then Prime Minister Erdoğan and members of his cabinet. Another manifestation of the conflict between the AKP and the circles linked to its former ally was the unsuccessful military coup of 15 July 2016 at the time of which a section of the army who, according to the government, were linked to Gülen made an attempt to overthrow the government.

Further purges in the army, state apparatus and education sector were one consequence of the attempted coup. This time they were conducted on an unprecedented scale.[13] In turn, on the ideological level, the coup made it possible to combine into one consistent story the ideas the AKP had thus far been juggling by pursuing its

[13] Around 40,000 people have been arrested, over 100,000 fired, around 2,000 education facilities and foundations have been closed.

pragmatic policy and really changing the state on the institutional level. The coup added a mythical dimension to the revolutionary and irreversible changes. Since the events of 15 July 2016 came as a shock to the greater part of the Turkish public, the character of the coup as a founding myth became even stronger because it touched strong emotions that were experienced in reality. This is a turning point in the construction of the New Turkey and a point of no return – it appears that the alternative in the form of a military government has been finally discredited and the circles linked to the government's former ally have been defined as the greatest threat.

The Fethullah Gülen Movement (Cemaat)

A movement centred around the Turkish spiritual leader Fethullah Gülen (born in 1941). It has no official structure but operates in a coordinated manner. The movement's operation extends to such areas as: education (until 2016, Cemaat's education facilities were located in over 180 countries), business (it has owned banks and entire holdings, including companies controlling entities operating in the media sector) and politics. The beginnings of the movement date back to the 1970s and 1980s. Cemaat is a movement of a religious and social character. It calls for a religious and moral revival and also tolerance, dialogue between religions, the market economy and liberal democracy. Its operation in Turkey was aimed above all at educating modern Muslim elites that would be politically, socially and economically active, and capable of transforming the Turkish republic. In 2002–2013, the movement operated in close alliance with the AKP. Its members worked for the state apparatus (government agencies, the judiciary, structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Prosecutors and judges linked to Cemaat conducted the Ergenekon and Balyoz in close co-operation with the government (in 2008–2012) which ended up in dismissing or handing down lengthy prison sentences to respectively 254 and 325 high-ranking military officers, as well as businessmen and civilian servants. In 2016,

the Supreme Court ruled that both of these had been show trials and the evidence had been fabricated.

An open conflict broke out between Cemaat and the AKP government in December 2013. The schism took place as a result of intensifying frustration inside the movement resulting from Erdoğan's increasing dominance in the state. Prosecutors linked to Gülen revealed a corruption scandal in which members of the cabinet which was then led by Erdoğan were involved. Corruption charges were also brought against the prime minister himself and his son. Since that time, the Turkish government has been ruthlessly combating the movement (for example, in 2015 and at the beginning of 2016, two holdings owned by Cemaat were placed into receivership, and the country's largest daily, *Zaman*, was taken over). Shortly before the attempted coup of 15 July 2016, the general staff reportedly informed the government that hundreds of members of the officer corps had been identified as Gülen's supporters. This struggle reached its peak on 15 July.

Gülen has been resident in the United States since 1999. His teachings are a synthesis of Sufism and Turkish nationalism. Membership of his movement is informal and is based on following the teachings of the leader and obedience to those who are higher in the hierarchy of the movement. Its members predominantly originate from the lower layers of society, and joining the movement offered them the opportunity to receive an education and facilitated their professional career. They are obliged to offer 10% of their income to the community. Secular and Western critics accuse Cemaat of having a hidden agenda as part of which the it allegedly intends to repeal the secular character of the republic of Turkey, and also of anti-Semitism. The Turkish government recognises Cemaat as a terrorist organisation (Fethullahçı Terror Örgütü – FETÖ) that has been forming a 'parallel state' for many years. According to Islamist critics of the movement, these circles back Israel and are a real tool in US policy on Turkey.

II. THE COUP ATTEMPT AS THE FOUNDING MYTH OF THE NEW TURKEY

1. A coup turned into a political myth

The attempt to overthrow Erdoğan's government made on 15 July 2016 by a section of the army was the most serious upheaval in Turkish politics since the last coup in 1980. The unsuccessful coup resulted in a sudden intensification of the political struggle. In turn, the coup itself has provoked numerous controversies.[14] In the context of Turkey's transformation under the AKP's rule discussed in this paper, the most important is the official version of the developments promoted by the government. This version shows the mythical character of the developments in July 2016 which are turning into a symbolic birth of the New Turkey. The coup is presented as the most important turning point in the process of reconstruction of the state and the redefinition of its identity.

The developments of July 2016 are turning into a political myth because certain meanings have been attached to them and because Erdoğan and his inner circle are elaborating an official narrative that plays on emotions that were really experienced in connection with belonging to the national community and also with the attitude to the Turkish state. The image of the community, which is consciously being built on these developments, fits in with the

[14] There is no hard evidence that the coup was inspired by Gülen himself, although it appears to be indisputable that his supporters participated in it. Furthermore, the secular opposition has highlighted some unclear threads in the investigation, even claiming that the government might have known about and managed the coup. These claims were raised in the most open manner by the leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. He was the first to tackle this issue above all for the needs of the campaign ahead of the referendum concerning the introduction of the presidential system. Nevertheless, this was the first act of open contestation of the version of events promoted by the government. See: R. Arslan, Kılıçdaroğlu: 15 Temmuz kontrollü darbe girişimidir, BBC Türkçe, 2 April 2017, http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39478777

definition of the modern political myth presented in the introduction. Firstly, the emotions experienced by the masses and the sacrifice have been transformed into a specific image, a canonical story that includes a vision of the state, nation and leadership, and the significance of sovereignty. All this creates a clear vision of a Turkey thoroughly reconstructed under AKP rule. Secondly, the tools the government has at disposal are crucial for creating this vision: the media it controls and the ability to hold rallies attended by thousands of people during which government leaders (above all the president) have direct contact with their supporters. In this manner the close community between the government and the public is manifested, revealing they are connected through a shared heroic experience. President Erdoğan, alongside the entire government elite, can be recognised as a leader who skilfully manages the emotions of the masses.

The myth of the prevented coup is becoming a founding myth because it defines the fundamental values on which the new order (being created since 2002) is based. These values are defined on the basis of specific events that took place during one night. They include heroism and sacrifice. All this in the months that followed the coup was expressed in numerous commemorations, such as posters with photographs of those killed seen in city streets, renaming the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul and the Kızılay underground station in Ankara as '15 July Martyrs' and, finally, the removal of the Atatürk monument in Rize (where Erdoğan's family originates from) and plans to replace it with a monument commemorating the victims.[15]

[15] This case still does not equate to a systemic campaign targeted against images of Atatürk, which are widespread in Turkish public space. Nevertheless, the fact that this change has been made in the city from which the incumbent president comes may be treated as a sign of changes in remembrance policy or, at least, as a test for the direction of reforms being carried out in this area. Rize'de Atatürk anıtı kaldırıldı, yerine '15 Temmuz Şehitler' anıtı konulacak, *Diken*, 22 December 2016, http://www.diken.com.tr/rizede-ataturk-aniti-kaldirildi-yerine-15-temmuz-sehitler-aniti-konulacak/

According to the official narrative, what should be recognised as unquestionable values and the key achievements of the New Turkey under construction were defended during the coup. These include: democracy (a legally elected government was defended), the sovereignty of the nation (people took to the streets to defend their subjectivity by themselves), the legitimacy of the leadership (which belongs to Erdoğan alone who leads the country as a sovereign), civilisational progress (that would have been thwarted by the plotters of the coup who were guided by their individual interests) and, finally, the fatherland and the nation (closely linked to one another and traditionally strongly sacralised in Turkey). Thus the coup myth reveals the defenders and the enemies of the New Turkey. To thwart the coup, it was necessary to make a sacrifice, but at the same time this makes it possible to finally determine what the order being built is.

2. The attempted coup of 15 July – the official version

The official version of the events of 15 July 2016, in factographic terms, does not differ much from what has been reconstructed on the basis of independent sources. The mythical dimension of the coup and its failure is manifested in the official interpretation propagated by both the government in various statements and the pro-government media.[16] This version, elaborated in the weeks that directly followed the unsuccessful attempt to take over power has become entrenched and has since then been only slightly corrected.

In the official narrative, the coup began on Friday 15 July. The general staff received information about a planned conspiracy at

[16] Examples of this include the following publications: July 15: Gülenist Coup Attempt, Report, Daily Sabah Center for Policy Studies, Issue 3, July 2016, http://i.tmgrup.com.tr/dailysabah/2016/08/04/f4594dbe-dfce-4fa8-a47c-d2a3a83b67ba/1470290089676.pdf, Temmuz 2016. Dakika Dakika FETÖ'nün Darbe Girişimi, Anadolu Ajansi 2016 (published in co-operation with Turkish Airlines).

around 4 p.m. The coup plotters were acting in haste because their plans had been revealed by the National Intelligence Organisation (MIT). This is why the main action began at around 10 p.m. and not overnight as had been planned. They occupied strategic locations in Istanbul and Ankara, such as bridges over the Bosphorus, Atatürk Airport in Istanbul and General Staff buildings in Ankara. The airspace of Turkey's two largest cities was controlled by units of rebellious air forces. Additionally, military facilities in Ankara and intelligence headquarters were attacked, and the chief of staff was taken hostage. Around midnight, the plotters stormed into the building of the national television TRT, where they forced the announcer to read a statement from the newly established Peace at Home Council (Yurtta Sulh Konseyi).[17]

The plotters argued that the legal order of the republic was being regularly and permanently violated under the present government. In their opinion, AKP rule leads to an escalating erosion of the state and poses a threat to the principle of secularity of the republic and the entire legal order. Furthermore, it antagonises the public by intensifying religious and ethnic feuds and, finally, causes internal destabilisation, one manifestation of which is increasing terrorism.[18] The council established by the plotters, according to their rhetoric, was expected to guard all the values that had been trampled underfoot under AKP rule. The council itself, representing values of a universal nature, followed the rule established by the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk 'Peace at Home, Peace in the World' (*Yurtta Sulh, Cihan'da Sulh*), which served as an inspiration for its name.[19]

[17] See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QF3ngGDZT64

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] The name, like the quoted maxim, was a reference to the first years of the republic's operation. They were expressed in the Turkish that was in use before the language reform, which was intended to strengthen the symbolic aspect of the putschists' actions. The fundamental principles and values of the Republic of Turkey reportedly had the 'purest' form in its first years of existence.

The attempt to take over power was thwarted as a result of the massive mobilisation of the government's supporters which was possible owing to the dramatic address made by the president via mobile phone soon after his escape from the Marmaris resort where he was on holiday.[20] According to the official narrative, the president left the hotel only 15 minutes before the putschists who intended to capture him were scheduled to break into the room. Additionally, appeals were made from minarets for people to take to the streets in Turkey's largest cities. It had already been announced by then that the coup had not been plotted by the whole army but only by one of its rebellious parts which was inspired by the Gülen Movement, Erdoğan's bitterest enemy at present. The appeal in which the president asked the entire nation to defend the government from the conspirators resulted in massive demonstrations in protest against the coup. In this way soldiers who had to carry out the orders of the organisers of the coup faced the dilemma of whether they should shoot citizens of their own country.

As a result of the attempt to take over power, 249 people were killed and over 2,000 were injured. The putschists also bombarded the parliament where deputies from all political parties were gathered. Each of the groupings immediately condemned the coup, and the soldiers were gradually being disarmed by the protesting crowds and began to surrender. The coup attempt was finally over in the morning on 16 July, and the chief of staff was freed at around 8 a.m. Isolated pockets of rebellion still survived one day longer in bases in cities in eastern Turkey (Malatya and Kars) which had been meant to provide support to the actions in Istanbul and Ankara.

[20] Recording of Erdoğan's appeal: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4D-56etTJJI

3. What does the official version imply?

The thorough reconstruction of the Turkish state underway since 2002 and the appreciation of the public which indirectly resulted from it had previously been taking place as part of the dynamic but also painstaking process of a kind of 'passive revolution'.[21] The change happening through permanent political struggle and the social and economic processes that have taken place over the past fifteen years could not be manifested in the form of a concrete event that would symbolise what Turkey and it its citizens have gone through since the AKP took power. Immediately after the coup was crushed, Erdoğan himself called it a 'gift from God' which could be interpreted in many ways. However, the most essential in the context that interests us is the fact that the coup finally discredited the enemy and equipped the government with a concrete symbol of its struggle for the New Turkey and the ability to compile the fundamental ideas on which it can be based. These ideas are, above all, unity of the state and nation, the leadership inseparably linked with them, rhetorical enmity towards the West and, above all, a clearly defined domestic enemy.

The official version of the coup presents the events of 15 July above all as a rebellion of a small section of the army that was carried out hastily because the conspiracy had been disclosed by the MIT. The group's actions were inspired by Gülen who, should the coup have been successful, was planning a triumphal return from emigration in the USA, just like the arrival of Ayatollah Ruhollah

[21] This process was noticed already towards the end of the preceding decade when changes resulting from the subjectivisation of the lower, principally conservative and religious layers of Turkish society, became visible. These changes resulted from the AKP's mobilisation of religious circles, and they have taken place both on the symbolic level and as a consequence of Turkey fully entering the mechanisms of the global market economy. See: C. Tuğal, Passive Revolution. Absorbing Islamic Challenge to Capitalism, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2009.

Khomeini to Iran in 1979.[22] The fact that Gülen lives in Pennsylvania, and Washington has refused to extradite him, additionally strengthens the anti-Western aspect of the government's rhetoric which, in turn, is an essential component of the founding myth of the New Turkey. The anti-Western approach expressed in the myth is reinforced by the fact that Western states have failed to offer due support to the government and, furthermore, they will not accept the fact that the coup attempt was inspired by the Gülen Movement. This concept has been both employed by the government and expressed in grassroots initiatives.

Statements given by the former aide-de-camp of the chief of staff have been presented as the key and main proof that the coup was staged by the Gülen Movement. He admitted that he had met members of the movement towards the end of the 1980s and had since then been supported by them on subsequent levels of his military career. He successfully concealed his links with the movement, thus avoiding repressions he would have suffered from the Kemalist circles predominant in the army.[23] The coup is presented as a treasonable attempt made by the president's bitterest enemy, which removes the odium from the army per se. The symbols employed by the conspirators and the references to the first republic thus became defiled. Thus this is treated as illicit, if not 'blasphemous' use of the symbols that are the foundations of the Turkish Armed Forces by the circles which previously ruthlessly combated the army.

The drama inherent in Erdoğan's escape and his subsequent speech broadcast by the commercial TV station CNN Türk is especially strongly emphasised. Combining the dramatic story of the president and his supporters who made the highest sacrifice in

[22] July 15..., *op. cit.*

[23] Cf. the profile of a putschist developed on the website of the pro-governmental daily *Yeni Şafak,* http://www.yenisafak.com/15temmuz/levent-turkkan-itiraflar

defence of the democratically elected government helps build the image of the unity of the leader and the nation, the most vivid and dramatic manifestation of which is joint resistance to the tyranny a successful coup would reportedly bring.

According to the official narrative, thwarting the coup of 15 July is an undeniable triumph of both the Turkish nation and of the state and its leader which are closely linked to the nation. The nation won thanks to its readiness to make the greatest sacrifice, and the president is presented as a heroic leader.[24] Thwarting the coup also means the triumph of the Turkish state and its institutions. This is proven by the role played by the intelligence services in disclosing the conspiracy, and the loyal section of the army, police and gendarmerie which also played a key, if not particularly highlighted, role in crushing the coup.

[24] The official narrative built this way is also reflected in works created after the coup and published on social media. One example is the work *15 July Democracy March* by Hanefi Söztutan, the recording of which between 3 August 2016 and 8 June 2017 was watched on YouTube over 9,825,000 times. See translation of the lyrics:

"On the hot night of 15 July,
The treacherous rebellion set the country on fire,
Then the whole nation stood up,
All families, old and young, took to the streets,
A blow to democracy was dealt, the nation was taken by surprise,
Since now liberty or humiliation!
The sound of millions of feet shook this place,
Hands holding the flags, mouths shouting takbir ('God is great!' – M. C.), they rushed ahead,
We are the witnesses of the epos of democracy!
We are the martyrs whose deaths raise from the dead another thousand!
The chief commander gave the order: Take to the streets!
Take the flags, defend the Holy Fatherland!
In the name of the love of the Nation, the Fatherland and God we stood eye to eye with death,
The whole world was dismayed seeing this,
The traitors sowing death from land and sky,
A multitude of souls faced death flying flags,
One lay his head in the path of a tank, another in front of a barrel,
Once again screaming in defence of democracy"

The recording is available on the website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amucDzLL2IY

The mythical dimension of resistance to the illicit takeover of power in the state by a force that principally contradicted the values that were defended began to emerge immediately after the situation had been brought under control. A mass rally was held on Sunday, 17 July in Istanbul during which speeches were given by the leaders of all political parties (with the exception of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party – HDP), the chief of staff and the president. The rally was a manifestation of the unity of the nation and the state. Since this moment, the government's attempts to turn the coup into one of the key and most heroic deeds in the history of the Turkish nation have been repeated on various occasions. In this story, the crushing of the coup is placed in the same rank as the independence war (the victory is commemorated on 30 August), the setting up of the republic, and a number of Turkish triumphs seen throughout the entire history of the Republic of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. In this discourse, 15 July is to be recognised as an event the scale and heroism of which matches all these triumphs, including the conquest of Constantinople. Its impact as a myth becomes even stronger since for many it contains the element of their own heroic experience. This, in the conditions of the currently created New Turkey, is expected to cause a widespread internalisation of the symbols and values inherent in it.

4. Rabia – the New Turkey in four fingers

The unity of the nation and the state, as well as the character of the New Turkey is manifested through simple but capacious and equivocal symbols. The main one of these is *Rabia*, a gesture borrowed from Egypt as a reference to the protests of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood overthrown by the army in 2013. This gesture was in use before but it has gained additional strength since the coup. *Rabia* is expressed by stretching out four fingers of the right palm[25]

[25] In Arabic 'Rabia' means four, and the name of the gesture originates from the name of the Rabaa al-Adawiya square in Nasr, Egypt, where the protests of supporters of the overthrown government and President Muhammad Morsi began in 2013.

and has gained a new meaning in the Turkish context. Erdoğan and his aides claim that *Rabia* signifies 'One Nation, One Flag, One Fatherland, One State' (Turkish *Tek Millet, Tek Bayrak, Tek Vatan, Tek Devlet*). The gesture itself appeared in Turkey after the overthrow of the Egyptian government and was used as a manifestation of the Turkish government's solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood. Immediately after the coup, the government embarked on entrenching the official interpretation, which has re-emerged on many occasions during President Erdoğan's rallies throughout the campaign preceding the referendum in April. According to this interpretation, 'One Nation' is the indivisible and supra-ethnic community. 'One Flag' – its red colour is the blood of the martyrs killed, and the crescent and the star signify independence. 'One Fatherland' is above all the land sanctified with the blood of the martyrs. 'One State' means the government and its apparatus which must remain strong, united and undivided to resist the attempts of its enemies.[26]

The new order interpreted this way is expected to be a distinctive feature of present-day Turkey. Borrowing a motif originating from the Middle East and its Turkish interpretation have two overriding goals. Firstly, *Rabia* is a manifestation of opening up to the region. The fact that it has been borrowed precisely from Egypt is expected to show the inalterability of Ankara's policy towards the region.[27] This means above all solidarity with the Brotherhood itself but also supports Turkey's appeal to establish political patronage over the Sunni residents of the Middle East. Secondly, the *Rabia* gesture is being nationalised owing to the interpretation where the four fingers signifying unity symbolise

[26] See the recording of the rally: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWIr_tWrKbE

[27] For the ideological framework and Ankara's determination in implementing the guidelines of this policy regardless of adversities see: S. Ananicz, Alone in virtue. The 'New Turkish' ideology in Turkey's foreign policy, *OSW Point of View*, Warsaw, 27 April 2015, https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_49_ang_alone-in-virtue_net.pdf

ideas internalised by Turkish society. Thus *Rabia* is a symbol that brings together the national idea and religion. Thus it refers to the potential represented by Islam, the religion of most Turks. All this is supposed to make the republic governed by the AKP distinct from the old order which has been consistently undergoing disassembly by the party and its leader since they came to power. The Islamic interpretation of Turkish identity is expected to be the main binding factor for the heterogeneous society and the main interpretation factor for the ideas which are the foundations of the New Turkey.

III. THE PILLARS OF THE NEW TURKEY

The government wants post-coup Turkey to be an 'improved' version of the republic. Equipped with a new founding myth, the government has embarked on actions aimed at strengthening the myth and, along with it, completing the transformation of national and state identity. The campaign preceding the referendum concerning the amendment of the constitution and the introduction of the presidential system was the most important test for the new language and way of speaking about the New Turkey. During the campaign, the public was mobilised to build a new order by drawing upon a number of fundamental values and ideas on which it is supposed to be based.

The New Turkey has no codified rules unlike the early Kemalist Republic whose foundations were expressed in the 'six arrows' of Kemalism.[28] 'Improving' the Republic per se is nothing new – the belief shared by Muslim elites that it is necessary to thoroughly revise Turkish identity (one manifestation of which has been the increasing popularity and presence in public discourse of the ideology known as 'Neo-Ottomanism'[29]) has been the driving force of the changes taking place since 2002. However, post-coup Turkey, as regards its ideology and identity is being born above all through mediation between the elites and the public. In turn, the public operates with a specific mixture of categories created by the 'old' republic and those characteristic of the present elites. A broad range

[28] These were 'republicanism' (*cumhuriyetçilik*), 'populism' (*halkçılık*), 'nationalism' (*milliyetçilik*), 'secularism' (*laiklik*), 'statism' (*devletçilik*) and 'reformism' (*inkılapçılık/devrimcilik*). For more information see: A. Szymański, Między islamem a kemalizmem. Problem demokracji w Turcji, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warsaw 2008, pp. 56-72.

[29] 'Neo-Ottomanism' is usually understood through the prism of the political concept elaborated by the former minister of foreign affairs and prime minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, being an ideological basis for the Turkish political, cultural and economic expansion in the countries which were historically linked to the Ottoman Empire. As regards Turkish identity, this category originates from the protest traditions of Turkish Islam dating back to the 1960s. Cf. H. Yavuz, Social and Intellectual Origins of Neo-Ottomanism: Searching for a Post-National Vision, *Die Welt des Islams*, No. 53 (2016), pp. 438-465.

of motives and living ideas that will form the basic content of the New Turkey have occurred in Turkish political life over the past year. Four of these, which can be recognised as the main pillars of the New Turkey, will be analysed in this paper. A separate place is reserved for Islam, which in this context functions not so much as one of the 'pillars' of the present Turkish identity but rather as the main binding factor of the diversified Turkish national community.

1. The first pillar: the Nation

Since the beginning of its rule, the AKP has demonstrated an ambivalent attitude towards the Turkish nation in its Kemalist interpretation. The coup has made it possible for the government in a way to seal the process of 'regaining' the nation and to weave this idea into its own identity project. The process of combining the previously existing national idea with the creation of New Turkey has, however, been conducted in a very inconsistent manner. The AKP treats the Turkish nation as a holistic idea. This makes it possible to draw upon both those elements that have been inherited from the Kemalist Republic and the inclusive project the present Turkish elites were promoting in certain periods of their rule.

The traditions of the Turkish national idea date back to the late 19th century. Since that time, nationalism in Turkey has undergone a dynamic transformation. However, the definition of the Turkish nation as a political community of all citizens of the Republic of Turkey and those who speak Turkish has been entrenched since the beginning of the existence of the Kemalist Republic. The community is strongly linked to the state, which suggests that the Turkish model of nationalism has a political (civic) character. However, in practice, the community has been defined through the prism of ethnic identity (as part of which minorities should become assimilated), and most of its members are Sunni Muslims.[30]

[30] Traditionally, 'secularised' Islam, understood as cultural and traditional membership of the Sunni community controlled by the state, has been the

For over a decade of its rule, the AKP has opposed ethnic nationalism, viewing it as a category that excludes non-Turkish Muslim minorities.[31] At the same time, it has been promoting the broader model of a political community in which citizenship and religion are the main categories that bring together the diversified Turkish public. This also gave rise to the project of replacing the word *Türk* (Turk) in public discourse with the word *Türkiyeli* (resident of Turkey). However, at least since 2015, the government has been propagating a model in which ethnic Turkish nationalism is treated as an effective tool of social mobilisation. This is a result of both temporary political conditions[32] and the internalisation of nationalist views by a majority of the public, as well as traditional sentiments inside political Islam circles from which the AKP hails.[33]

Since the coup, the AKP has been weaving in and out of ethnic nationalism and its own version of the definition of a national community. For example, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, to show respect to the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which had helped the AKP garner the sufficient number of votes needed

binding factor of the national community in the Republic of Turkey. Turks, in the common understanding, are above all Sunnis speaking Turkish, then Sunni ethnic minorities, then non-Sunni Turks, while only recognised national minorities, i.e. Christian Greeks and Armenians, and Jews, have been pushed outside the margin of the national community. S. Cagaptay, *op. cit.*

31 For example, as recently as in 2013, Erdoğan in his numerous speeches claimed that the AKP was a grouping that "kept nationalisms under the thumb' and serves all the residents of Turkey who formed one nation, regardless of their ethnic background. S. Şenyüz, Erdoğan: Milliyetçilik ayak altında, *Hürriyet*, 18 February 2013, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-milliyetcilik-ayak-altinda-22621388

32 The Kurdish conflict that was rekindled in 2015, the gradual takeover of the nationalist ideological offer by the AKP and subsequent co-operation with nationalists in the work on constitutional reform.

33 For example, Tanıl Bora, who studies the Turkish political right, claims that political Islam in Turkey is traditionally combined with nationalism. The Muslim community (*ummah*) is important provided that Turks as heirs of the Ottoman Empire are in its centre. T. Bora, Türk Sağının Üç Hâli. Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakârlık, İslâmcılık, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, pp. 97-147.

for the constitutional referendum, called Turkish nationalists 'brothers' and made the 'wolf' gesture, which is used by radical nationalists and is associated with the Neo-Fascist organisation Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*).[34]

However, the present government over the past year has made a number of efforts aimed at winning the support of minorities. The poor results of these efforts show how difficult it is to build an inclusive model of the nation. One clear example of these limitations is the policy towards Alevis, the country's largest religious minority (15–30%). Traditionally, Alevis, whose rituals and beliefs originate from Shia Islam, traditional Anatolian mysticism and elements derived from other non-Islamic religions, suffered from severe repressions in both the Ottoman Empire and the republic. They also fell victim to massacres committed by the Grey Wolves and Islamists who accused them of supporting Communists. Erdoğan and Yıldırım in their speeches called them 'brothers', saying that the traditional Sunni-Alevi antagonism was a harmful religious schism (*fitne*).[35] Apparently, these efforts were aimed above all at attempting to convince Alevis to support the presidential system. However, no proposal for including this minority in the framework of the newly defined national community has been presented, and Sunni Islam remains its essential element.

As regards the Kurdish issue, it can be stated with high probability that there is no return to the openness policy of 2009–2013. Yıldırım himself was the most active during the campaign ahead of the referendum in the areas inhabited predominantly by Kurds.

[34] Yıldırım makes 'Grey wolves' symbol in Turkish parliament, *Sigma*, 22 February 2017, http://www.sigmalive.com/en/news/international/152479/yildirim-makes-grey-wolves-symbol-in-turkish-parliament#.dpuf

[35] Cf. Yıldırım: Alevi kültürüyle iç içe büyüdüm, *BirGün*, 21 March 2017, http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/yildirim-alevi-kulturuyle-ic-ice-buyudum-151888.html

He was promoting the supra-ethnic community model there.[36] These efforts had very limited effects. Most Kurds voted against amending the constitution,[37] and thus also against the New Turkey concept. This means that country's largest ethnic minority no longer believes in the slogans of Turkish-Kurdish unity.

The issue of granting citizenship to some of the Syrian refugees living in Turkey comes as a kind of test to the AKP's attempts to redefine the Turkish nation as discussed in this text. It was raised for the first time at the beginning of July 2016 and almost immediately met with strong resistance from a section of society.[38] However, the issue was resumed at the beginning of 2017, but this time when Erdoğan spoke about the naturalisation of Syrians, he tried to make it part of 'patriotic imagery'. He claimed that very well-adapted individuals, such as engineers and doctors, were among the refugees and that they should "work as sons of this nation".[39]

Since various versions of the interpretation of the national community exist among the Turkish public, the official canon being created by the government is intended to be of a holistic nature,

[36] Both the prime minister's friendly gestures towards the nationalists and his engagement in the campaign in the areas inhabited by ethnic Kurds in Turkey are signs of the high degree of ambiguity of the AKP's policy. This is linked to the implications that the prime minister has Kurdish roots although he has never admitted this since taking office.

[37] Cf. the results of the referendum on amending the constitution in the provinces of south-eastern Turkey, where Kurds form the majority (Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Siirt, Şırnak, Hakkari, Van, Ağrı, İğdır, Ağrı, Tunceli), http://secim.hurriyet.com.tr/referandum-sonuclari-2017

[38] This provoked, amongst other things, an anti-Syrian campaign on social media. However, from the government's point of view were the riots that took place in the conservative city of Konya were the most painful. Konya is the cradle and the model centre of New Turkey. As a consequence of the riots there, two people were killed. Semih Idiz, Erdogan's citizenship offer fans flames of anti-Syrian sentiment in Turkey, *Al-Monitor*, 12 July 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/turkey-syria-refugees-anti-syrian-sentiments-on-rise.html#ixzz4jDzN8UbX

[39] Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan 'vatandaşlık' açıklaması, *Hürriyet*, 6 January 2017, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogandan-vatandaslik-aciklamasi-40328957

highlighting the elements that allude to Islam. In the discourse promoted by the AKP, the category of 'sacred nation' (*aziz millet*), which had appeared in statements of AKP politicians even earlier, has been further strengthened. The community has its heroes (*gaziler*) and martyrs (*şehitler*).[40] In this context, the Turkish nation is understood as a compact community of the residents of Turkey. It is especially in Erdoğan's speeches that the definition of the nation as a community of all the residents of Turkey, without dividing them into separate ethnic groups, is highlighted. Thus on the one hand this can be interpreted as a return to the model that applied in the first decade of AKP rule. On the other hand, manifesting an identity other than Turkish and competitive to it is still treated as violation of the principle of unity and indivisibility of the nation (this concerns above all Kurds).

The views shared by a significant section of the Turkish public is the strongest proof of the difficulties the AKP's initiatives have encountered. One example of the incessant conflict between the inclusive and the pro-Islamic projects of the community is the incident that took place in late June 2017 in Düzce in western Turkey. A *Rabia* monument was erected on the initiative of the mayor, a member of the AKP. He presented this as a symbol of the unity of the Turkish nation and the ideological unity that had allegedly emerged after 15 July. Since the symbol has been constantly used by the president and the prime minister in their public appearances, and thus its Turkish interpretation has become entrenched, there are plans to build more of these monuments.[41] However, this initiative met with opposition from members of the Idealist Hearths (*Ülkü Ocakları*), the youth organisation of the Nationalist Movement Party, who covered the monument with the blue

[40] These motifs appear on many occasions, for example, in the campaign songs where the vote for introducing the presidential system in the referendum was equated to a kind of tribute to the heroes and martyrs. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vac_IkE3HxQ

[41] Düzce'ye 'rabia' heykeli dikildi, *BirGün*, 21 June 2017, http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/duzce-ye-rabia-heykeli-dikildi-165927.html

pan-Turkic flag with a wolf's head. The organisers of the protest argued that *Rabia,* being the symbol of the Muslim Brotherhood, is Arabic and thus alien to the Turkish culture. At the same time, they emphasised that they did not oppose the ideas manifested by it but they insisted on adding a fifth element, namely the reference to the one language.[42]

The existing national identity is thus transforming through constant mediation between the majority of the Turkish public (who stick to nationalist sentiments) and the government's project treating the nation as a combination of political and ethnic identity in which Islam is an essential element.[43]

The principle of the sovereignty of the nation, which was an achievement of the Kemalist Republic, plays a key role in the dialogue between the government and the public. The mass rallies of national unity convened immediately after the attempted coup were held under the slogan 'Sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation!' (*Hakimiyet kayıtsız şartsız Milletindir!*). The same slogan, which is present in the buildings of parliament and in the Atatürk mausoleum in Ankara, constantly re-emerges during the public speeches of the president and other politicians.

[42] Ülkücüler, Düzce'ye dikilen Rabia heykelini bastı, *BirGün*, 22 June 2017, http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/ulkuculer-duzce-ye-dikilen-rabia-heykelini-basti-166061.html

[43] For example, Fatih Yaşlı, a pro-opposition political analyst, claims that the category of the Turkish nation is currently being gradually Islamised. The Turkish word *millet,* even though it had been used for more than one hundred years by Turkish nationalists and, above all, Kemalists, has been easily taken over by the forces linked to political Islam, since originally, in the Ottoman Empire, it meant above all a community of the faithful. Therefore, it can be reconciled with political Islam, which cannot be said about the Turkish neologism *ulus* introduced by Kemalists. C. Semercioğlu, Akademisyen Fatih Yaşlı: Şeriat anayasada yazmayacak ama fiilen uygulanacak, *Diken*, 28 October 2016, http://www.diken.com.tr/akademisyen-fatih-yasli-seriat-anayasada-yazmayacak-ama-fiilen-uygulanacak/

The idea of the nation is thus a key element of the New Turkey, where the government owes it power to having been elected by a majority of the citizens and, according to official discourse, its role is to serve the people. The nation is the source of the government's legitimacy because it has massive support. Taking over the strictly modern concept, as the principle of sovereignty of the nation is, guarantees the continuity of the system to the government and also adds credibility to the project being implemented. It is intended that it will maintain its republican character, however, with the difference that in the official narrative, the AKP is the first power in Turkey's history to fully implement the principle of sovereignty.

2. The second pillar: the State

The state is the overriding value in post-coup Turkey. Its citizens defended it from conspirators. Thus the idea of the state's primacy is inherent in the coup myth. The New Turkey is intended to be, above all, a continuation of the ages of statehood tradition and its crowning achievement. In its new form, it is expected to be a strong and sovereign state, and to both guarantee welfare to all its citizens and carry out tasks that reach far beyond its borders. On the one hand this means a continuation of the tradition initiated already in the Kemalist Republic, however, supplemented with elements that are clearly at odds with it. These include, above all, opening up to the external world (giving up the self-sufficiency and isolationism of the old republic) and drawing upon Islam. Thus the AKP is collecting the ideas inherited from Kemalist Turkey, adding a new dimension to them, reinforced by the fact that the state being built by the present government and its citizens had to fight a decisive battle with its enemy. The survival of the project depended on its outcome.

The state is strongly sacralised in the Turkish republican tradition. This was already visible in the first decades of the republic's existence, when it was being proven that Turks had set up states in all the lands they had arrived throughout their history long

before the Ottoman Empire was built. According to some myths which have the status of 'scientific facts', they have built over one hundred states throughout history.[44] In this context, the Turkish state is a carrier of a highly developed civilisation, order, organisation and lawfulness. In the Kemalist version, the main function of this mythologisation of the state was to lower the historical rank of the Ottoman Empire and to create a secular, nationalist narrative as an opposition to overarching Islamic ideals. The circles originating from political Islam and thus opposing discrediting the Ottoman Empire have, however, taken over part of the ideas where the Turkish statehood has a longer history than Islam itself.

In the narrative elaborated by the AKP, the mythology created in the republic is in a way re-Islamised. The present government on the one hand draws on the achievements of the aforementioned 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' as part of which Turkish history is developing along two tracks. References are made to historic Turkic countries, some of which existed before the ancestors of modern Turks accepted Islam as their religion.[45] On the other hand, it is believed that Islam is an inseparable element of Turkish culture.[46] Islam is also inextricably linked to Turkey's history and, in the context of the present elite's interpretation of the state, it provides another argument for the idea of a strong state which is perceived as an entity of a sacral nature which needs to be worshipped.[47]

44 T. Bora, Milli Tarih ve Devlet Mitosu, [in:] *Idem*, Medeniyet Kaybı: Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm üzerine Yazılar, İletişim Yayınları, Istanbul 2006, pp. 43-65.

45 Cf. Erdoğan receiving foreign guests in the Presidential Palace (*Ak Saray*) in the company of 16 warriors representing 16 historic Turkish empires, including Huns, Blue Turks and others. See: Karşılama sırasındaki 16 asker ne anlama geliyor?, *Yeni Akit*, 12 January 2015, http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/karsilama-sirasindaki-16-asker-ne-anlama-geliyor-46473.html

46 J. White, Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks, Princeton University Press, Princeton and New York 2014.

47 The author's conversation with an AKP activist, Ankara, 28 April 2015.

In the present discourse, Turkey has a mission that reaches beyond its borders. Despite the objective conditions which seriously restricted the implementation of the neo-Ottoman project (above all the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the continuing military conflicts in Syria and Iraq), the Turkish government, at least on the level of declarations, has not given up its ambitions of building a state that will be the leader of the Muslim world. One proof of these ambitions is a political broadcast shown during the campaign preceding the referendum entitled 'Turkey is larger than Turkey'.[48] The scenes of this spot are located subsequently in the Arab countries of the Middle East, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Bosnia, France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, and the final scene shows children reconstructing the defence of Anatolia during the War of Independence (1920–1922). In this way the image of Turkey is presented as a state that protects the Arab and Sunni residents of the Middle East, a partner, a model and a patron for the world's largest Muslim countries (such as Pakistan). Furthermore, the film presents Turkey as the strongest Turkic state and a power which has made an essential contribution to the history of humanity (a Turkish taxi driver in Paris has to explain this to his French customer who wrongfully disregards this contribution). In each of the countries presented in the broadcast, Turkey is treated with esteem or gratitude. It is a mixture of neo-Ottoman (Arab Middle East and Bosnia), pan-Islamic (Pakistan[49]) and also pan-Turkic motifs. All these are fastened with the clip of hollow references to history that are intended to manifest the greatness and heroism of Turks and to legitimise Turkey's presence in Europe (the Turkish diaspora in Europe as an effective political instrument).

[48] *Türkiye Türkiye'den büyüktür*, http://www.ahaber.com.tr/webtv/yasam/turkiye-turkiyeden-buyuktur

[49] Notwithstanding the present friendly relations existing between Turkey and Pakistan, it should be kept in mind that Muslims from India were among those who especially strongly insisted that Mustafa Kemal should give up the idea of liquidating the caliphate. Conservative and religious circles in Turkey still remember this.

The idea of the state in the New Turkish version is thus a combination of moves proposed by the AKP, such as giving up Kemalist self-reliance and isolationism, and replacing them with expansionism, as well as a whole array of ideas that were born in Turkey in the late 19th century (echoes of pan-Islamism) and the first half of the 20th century (such as references to the War of Independence and pan-Turkism) and, finally, anti-Westernism shared by Kemalist and Islamic circles that have been reinterpreted and presented in a vivid and modern form.

While all the ideas presented above, when taken separately, have competed with each other throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey, now they are being combined in the New Turkey, and this is expected to form a renewed identity of the Turkish state. The idea of the renewal of the state and the implementation of its mission are the overriding goals. It is the state that is supposed to express the will of the nation, to protect it from its enemies' intrigues and to claim Muslims' rights worldwide. Thus it is a state that is just as serious and majestic as the early republic.

3. The third pillar: the Leader

The figure of the leader is closely linked to the idea of the state. The idea of a strong leadership is deeply entrenched in the Turkish culture. Increasing affirmation and the elevation of the figure of Erdoğan has been observed in post-coup Turkey; this is done partly through references to Atatürk interwoven with ideological elements of the New Turkey, of which Erdoğan is an architect. This image of the president has been strengthened by the 15 July myth. It was he who led the nation to victory in the struggle with the conspirators; and it is under his rule that Turkey is expected to become a powerful state again. The leader's heroism at the time of the coup and his unity with the nation which was manifested during the decisive confrontation additionally strengthened his legitimacy. The president is the central figure of the order currently being constructed. The constitutional reform passed in the

April referendum envisages vesting the president with executive power and in fact with control of the judiciary.[50] Along with a thorough reconstruction of the political system which means replacing the parliamentary-cabinet model with a presidential one, the formal strengthening of Erdoğan's position in the state is a solution of great symbolic significance. The president is expected to be the face and the strongest emanation of the state in the New Turkey. He is commonly viewed as a guarantor of stability, citizens' welfare and Turkey's strength. Like the state itself, the leader is also an object of a cult in Turkey.

The president's strong position, which is becoming formally and symbolically entrenched, is both an effect of Erdoğan's personal characteristics (such as political instinct, the consistent building of his position in the party and the resulting indisputable esteem) and of much deeper cultural factors.[51]

At present, the Turkish leader's cult is both consciously being built by himself and as a result of the grassroots initiatives of his supporters. As regards Erdoğan's own conscious building of his position, the intentional references to Atatürk are the first thing that need to be noticed. The incumbent president's attitude to the founder of the republic, at least on the level of declarations, remains ambivalent. Like the traditional books of Islam in Turkey, Erdoğan worships Mustafa Kemal[52] as a commander of the Otto-

[50] K. Strachota, The constitutional referendum – another step towards a New Turkey, *OSW Commentary*, 28 April 2017, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2017-04-28/constitutional-referendum-another-step-towards-a-new-turkey

[51] These factors include above all the patriarchal model of Turkish culture where the head of the family has a strong position. Respect and indisputable obedience are owed to him. This model is transferred to the level of the public vision of the state, which is manifested in the cult of leaders. M. Evin, D. Kandiyoti, Ataerkillik artık bir yönetim biçimi, *Milliyet*, 19 October 2013, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ataerkillik-artik-bir-yonetim/gundem/detay/1778732/default.htm

[52] It has been noticed in Turkish public opinion for a long time that Erdoğan, when speaking about the founder of the republic, avoids saying his surname

man army who waged holy war against the Western Christian occupiers. He has also made a whole array of references to specific events in Kemal's biography which were linked to the crucial moments in the history of the Republic of Turkey. One example may be the fact that he visited Samsun and Erzurum at the beginning of the referendum campaign, which was an open allusion to Kemal's actions organising the resistance movement right before the War of Independence.[53] This is expected to mean that Erdoğan's policy has the character of a thorough reconstruction of the Turkish state and society on a scale comparable to the reforms conducted in the first years of the republic's existence. Erdoğan is expected to become a 'new Atatürk', being the main builder of the renewed state. The cult of the founding father is gradually being replaced with the cult of the present president, the most recent manifestation of which was the premiere of the biographical film *Reis* ('Chief') that took place on 3 March 2017, on the ninety-third anniversary of the abolition of the caliphate by Kemal.[54]

As regards the grassroots initiatives, the developing cult of Erdoğan has been expressed in panegyric songs and video clips which are created as a tribute to him. Erdoğan is extolled in them as a long-awaited leader who has become the voice of the previously suppressed religious masses and a defender of the Turkish state. In such works he is depicted as 'the one who explains the Word of the Truth' (*Söz-ü Hakkı anlatan*), 'the nightmare of the treacherous brutes' (*hayin zalimlerin korkulu rüyasi*) or 'the lion of *Ummah)* (*Ümmetin arslani*).[55] The cult expressed via such works is

and would rather call him 'Gazi Mustafa Kemal'. The main meaning of the title 'gazi' means defender of the faith.

53 А. О. Осипян, Смена идеологии в Турции: культ Ататюрка уступает места культу Эрдогана, Институт Ближнего Востока, 28 February 2017, http://www.iimes.ru/?p=32823

54 *Ibid*.

55 Cf. the song *Yeni Erdoğan Marşi* (The new march to Erdoğan) by A. Sinanoğlu, which was watched over 1,900,000 times on YouTube between September 2016 and June 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FJdX51x_bY

based on attributing to him the features typical of an ideal Muslim leader and the use of phrases that are traditionally reserved to describing Atatürk, such as 'the Heroic Commander-in-Chief' (*Kahraman Başkomutan*).

This kind of cult of Erdoğan in Turkey itself is treated on the one hand as the government expropriating the models of the old Turkey which the AKP used to combat at the beginning of its rule (above all, the cult of Atatürk which took absurd and para-religious forms).[56] However, it is believed to mean something more. According to the commentator Fatih Yaşlı, the present cult of Erdoğan, along with the presidential system being introduced, are an attempt to turn into reality the utopian vision of the 'State of Sublime Leadership' (*Başyücelik Devleti*) elaborated by the Islamist poet, writer and thinker Necip Fazıl Kısakürek,[57] who is popular in government circles and one of the most uncompromising critics of the secular system of the Republic of Turkey. As part of this utopia, the Islamist state would be governed by an 'Sublime Leader' (*Başyüce*) who would be elected not in a general election but by a special 'Assembly of the Sublime' (*Yüceler Kurultayı*).[58] Only some of the members of the assembly would be elected, and the main features that would decide on membership of the assem-

[56] The opposition views this cult as re-creating 'the only man's regime' (*Tek Adam rejimi*), this being a reference to the popular biography of Mustafa Kemal written by Şevket Süreyya Aydemir with the same title (*Tek Adam*). See: M. Akyol, Coming soon: Erdogan 'The Chief', *Al-Monitor,* 13 February 2017, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/turkey-erdogan-movie-boost-cult-personality.html

[57] Necip Fazıl Kısakürek (1904–1983), a thinker linked to the Sufi brotherhood Naqshbandiya. His views were a combination of radical Islam, Turkish nationalism (also taking racist forms), anti-Semitism and radical criticism of the West, communism and capitalism. According to critics of the present Turkish government, Necip Fazıl's teachings are still an inspiration to the most conservative circles inside the AKP. See: A. Hür, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek'in 'öteki' portresi, *Radikal*, 6 January 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/ayse-hur/necip-fazil-kisakurekin-oteki-portresi-1115579/

[58] F. Yaşlı, Türk tipi başkanlık mı Başyücelik Devleti mi?, *BirGün Gazetesi*, 1 March 2017, http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/turk-tipi-baskanlik-mi-basyucelik-devleti-mi-148731.html

bly would be piety and the knowledge of Islam. However, this project is strongly in contrast to what Erdoğan currently presents as the foundation of his legitimacy, i.e. 'the will of the people' (*milli irade*) and the principle of the sovereignty of the nation. According to the utopia, the latter of the principles could be cancelled, being an innovation imported from the West, and replaced with the principle of 'sovereignty which belongs to the Truth' (*Hakimiyet Hakkındır!*) taken from the mystical interpretation of Islam.

4. The fourth pillar: the struggle for a better tomorrow

The coup myth is a strong sign that the order being built in Turkey requires an incessant struggle. The Turkish public is mobilised for this struggle, and this mobilisation is taking place as a result of both the discourse generated by the government and the existence of hostile forces per se. The New Turkey project (inspired by the rehabilitated Ottoman past without rejecting the nationalist version of the history of the Turkish nation elaborated in the republic) in principle envisages turning to the future where, however, various dangers are lurking. Therefore struggle is inherent in the construction process.

The economic success from which broad swathes of the Turkish public benefited during the first two terms of the AKP's rule and the unprecedented civilisational advancement and subjectivisation of these masses still form one of the central elements of the narrative generated by the government.[59] One motif constantly recurs in the numerous speeches of Erdoğan and his aides: the AKP government is meant to serve the public. Thus it is the antithesis of all previous governments – above all Kemalists who represented the interests of the old elites that functioned in the 1990s

[59] This was also one of the main motifs of the campaign ahead of the constitutional referendum. Erdoğan in each of his speeches specified the number of schools, universities and hospitals built and infrastructural investments implemented on a vast scale under AKP rule. For more information on the civilisational leap under the AKP see: M. Matusiak, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-31.

and implemented the narrow interests of the party, thus leading to political destabilisation and economic crisis. The discourse generated by the government and its popularity will not change even as a result of numerous turbulences, such as the slowing down of the Turkish economy, and halting and clearly regressing the democratisation process.

The changes introduced over the past fifteen years have met with strong resistance from the enemies of the project. The main enemies include the Gülen Movement, which is viewed as something like a sect and an existential threat to the state, followed by various terrorist organisations, such as the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its splinter groups as well as Islamic State, the groupings responsible for the wave of terror that has been sweeping across Turkey since the middle of 2015. Preventing the negative consequences of this struggle is possible solely by strengthening the state. The terror and the unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the government are the price that had to be paid for a thorough reconstruction of the state.

The appeal for the struggle for a better future is principally expressed in two forms, which could be observed during the campaign preceding the April referendum. The first one involves frequently comparing the opponents of the presidential system to PKK, Islamic State and the Gülen Movement, which AKP politicians were making almost all the time throughout the campaign.[60] Here, the price of building the New Turkey is the blood of the coup victims, the soldiers killed in the south east of the country and those who have died in terrorist attacks. All of these are the heroes and martyrs of the New Turkey. The second form in which this struggle is manifested is positive and means turning to the future. This was best expressed in one of the political broad-

[60] Cf. Erdoğan: Kandil'dekiler, PKK, FETÖ 'Hayır' diyor 'Hayır' diye aldatılanlar ne anlama geliyor?, *Hürriyet*, 23 March 2017, https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-kandildekiler-pkk-feto-hayir-diyo-40404737

casts aired during the campaign, where tribute to the victims was combined with the promise of a brighter future. The New Turkey honours its heroes (*Tüm Şehitler ve Gaziler için*), and the last lines "for a brighter future, for children, for our tomorrow, all together for a Powerful Turkey!" (*Aydınlık bir gelecek için, Çocuklar için, Yarınlarımız için, Hep birlikte Güçlü Türkiye!*) were sung by Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım's granddaughter.[61] Thus one of the central places in the new discourse is reserved for a positive message highlighting the civilisational progress made under the AKP's rule. Its continuation may only be guaranteed by sealing a renewal of the Turkish state.

The struggle 'for a better tomorrow' can be seen as a re-interpreted principle of the revolutionary reformism that was introduced in the 1930s. According to this principle, the new order being created from top-down is to be constantly renewed because change is the essence of doing politics. In this context, the AKP is explicitly recognised as a revolutionary grouping that has made the greatest changes in the Turkish state since the establishment of the republican system; and the changes have to be continuous, i.e. they should not be confined to achieving temporary goals.[62]

[61] See: http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/iste-ak-partinin-referandum-sarkisi/haber-599759

[62] Cf. Erdoğan's speech on the occasion of his regaining the AKP leadership. It includes statements on the revolutionary nature of the party and the continuing construction of the new order which is to begin with the renewal of the party itself: Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: AK Parti devrimci bir partidir, *Haber Turk*, 30 May 2017, http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1513038-cumhurbaskani-erdogan-ak-parti-devrimci-bir-partidir

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS

The process of disassembling the Kemalist order and the simultaneous construction of the New Turkey has been underway in Turkey for fifteen years. Both the failed coup and the actions taken as a consequence of it are irreversibly changing the character of the Turkish state. These moves include purges in the state apparatus and the success of the constitutional referendum on the grounds of which a strong presidential system will be introduced. The victory over putschists in this context is the most essential turning point in the construction of the new order and forms its ideological core. The crystallised ideological canon will evolve, but the founding myth of victory over enemies and the defence of the state constructed anew will remain unchanged.

As a result of the processes initiated after 15 July 2016 more than half of Turkish citizens have become strongly consolidated – they are supporters of the government who guarantee it a stable majority. They are the beneficiaries and co-authors of the changes which have been taking place since 2002. They, the leader and the state are one. The shared experience is strong, emotional and generational. This allows them to turn to the future and continue building the new order. In comparison with all this, the AKP's opponents are dispersed and focused on defending themselves. Since they have no alternative proposal, the perspective of a democratic government change in Turkey is at present very distant, if this is likely at all. The construction of the new order is far from over, but the AKP and its supporters have reached a landmark. A sudden breakdown cannot be ruled out here. However, if this is the case, the most likely scenario would be a powerful mobilisation of the government's supporters, and any attempt to impose a political change on them by any minority would bring chaos to the state.

The entrenchment of the new canon of ideas above all means that a thorough reinterpretation of the state and national identity has taken place in Turkey. The present identity of the state and the

related community is a synthesis of the key motifs of the Turkish political imagination that have previously been mutually exclusive – both those proposed by the AKP and the ones that existed before it. These include the rehabilitation of the Ottoman period and merging this with the legacy of the republic, the achievements of modernisation and anti-Westernism, democratisation and authoritarian tendencies, Islam and nationalism. Turkey is becoming a point of reference for itself. Furthermore, it is Turkey that is expected to become the source of civilisational and political standards for other countries. This model is relatively flexible and balanced. The Turkish nation is a pillar of the New Turkey, and this idea has not been undermined by the experiments made so far. Contemporary nationalism is no longer Kemalist nationalism. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to recognise it as inclusive to an extent that would allow the minorities to be made part of it. Islam plays an important role as a key identity-building element and an inseparable part of the renewed Turkey's landscape. However, at present it cannot be said by any means that a religious state, let alone a form of theocracy, is being formed as, for example, in Iran. In turn, the fact that the system strongly relies on the leader does not mean that the leader does not have to make efforts to maintain public support and to constantly renew his mandate. Proof of the latter was the campaign preceding the constitutional referendum which was exhausting for Erdoğan.

From the AKP's point of view, conflicts are inherent in governing Turkey. This boosts the mobilisation of the government and the public, and intensifies political dynamics. For this reason, the political situation inside Turkey will be developing around conflicts for a long time still – both within the government camp (even though the conflicts are not disclosed to the general public, they are a fact and cause endless renewals and reshuffles in the party) and against the Gülen Movement, PKK and Kemalist and left-wing circles.

More than fifty years since it joined NATO (and two centuries since the launch of the modernisation processes), Turkey seems

finally to be distancing itself from the West, which is no longer a point of reference for Turkey in the areas of culture and politics. The new republic is replacing liberal democracy with a sovereign democracy model. Democracy of the state is only plebiscitary. Anti-Westernism is explicitly articulated – the West's actions are perceived as openly hostile. This allows the public to be consolidated around popular slogans (which concerns both AKP supporters and Kemalists) and gives fuel for strategic moves in foreign policy – Turkey intends to consistently build and reinforce its position as an equal partner in contacts with the West (and also other players). Relations with the West are expected to be continued on the principles of partnership. Rhetorical tension, such as in relations with Brussels and Berlin over the past two years, are becoming the norm. Furthermore, following the slogan 'Turkey is larger than Turkey', actions will be continued to reintegrate the Turkish diaspora in Europe which is expected to become an instrument of political pressure. One year since overcoming the coup, Ankara's disappointment with the West's stance and the sense of threat it poses have intensified. This will mean temporary pragmatic cooperation with the USA and the EU, though this will be interwoven with harsh conflicts. Relations with Russia will also develop in a similar manner. Turkey will make efforts above all to protect its sovereignty and avoid dependence on any of the powers.

After 15 July 2016 Turkey is still open to Islam but this openness is accompanied by a clear determination of boundaries for Islam itself. Religion plays a mobilising role in Turkish politics, strengthens the government's mandate and has also been employed in the process of redefining the national identity. Furthermore, the ambitions of making Turkey a point of reference for the Middle East and the Islamic world have not been abandoned. Nevertheless, the main enemies of the New Turkey include the Gülen Movement and Islamic State which draw upon Islam. The issue of citizenship for Syrian refugees has also been raised. However, the government has been acting cautiously as regards this issue, above all taking into account the interests of the Turkish public who have

been clearly voicing their views. It can be assumed that the AKP will not take any actions that would be contrary to the will of most ethnic Turks, but will rather take a careful 'pedagogical' position to soften anti-Arab resentments and prejudices among the Turkish public.

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