

7-1-2010

Management of Ethno-Cultural Diversity in Turkey: Europeanization of Domestic Politics and New Challenges

Ayhan Kaya
Istanbul Bilgi University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/ijli>

The *International Journal of Legal Information* is produced by The International Association of Law Libraries.

Recommended Citation

Kaya, Ayhan (2010) "Management of Ethno-Cultural Diversity in Turkey: Europeanization of Domestic Politics and New Challenges," *International Journal of Legal Information*: Vol. 38: Iss. 2, Article 13.
Available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/ijli/vol38/iss2/13>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarship@Cornell Law: A Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *International Journal of Legal Information* by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Cornell Law: A Digital Repository. For more information, please contact jmp8@cornell.edu.

Management of Ethno-Cultural Diversity in Turkey: Europeanization of Domestic Politics and New Challenges

PROF. DR. AYHAN KAYA*

Turkey has gone through an enormous process of change in the last decade, especially regarding the political recognition of ethno-cultural and religiously diverse groups. The term “diversity” has become one of the catch words of contemporary political philosophy. Diversity, in its recent forms, whether cultural, political, ethnic, or religious, is a byproduct of globalization. Globalization has made the movements of persons or groups in the ethnoscape easier. It is apparent that the management of diversity has posed a great challenge for nation states as well as for the international and supranational organizations such as the United Nations and the European Union (EU).

This paper touches upon the management of ethnic diversity in both national and supranational levels, with particular reference to Turkey and the

* The author is Lecturer at the Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University; Director of the European Institute; he specializes in European identities, Euro-Turks in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, the Circassian diasporic in Turkey, and the construction and articulation of modern diasporic identities. He received his PhD and MA degrees at the University of Warwick. His latest book is on the comparison of contemporary integration, citizenship and integration regimes of Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands (*Islam, Migration and Integration: The Age of Securitization*, London: Palgrave, 2009 April); his other recent books are: *Contemporary Migrations in Turkey: Integration or Return* (Istanbul Bilgi University Press, in Turkish, co-written with others), *Belgian-Turks*, Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation, 2008, co-written with Ferhat Kentel), *Euro-Turks: A Bridge or a Breach between Turkey and the EU* (Brussels: CEPS Publications, 2005, co-written with Ferhat Kentel, Turkish version by Bilgi University), and he has numerous other publications to his credit. He received the Turkish Social Science Association Prize in 2003; Turkish Sciences Academy (TÜBA-GEBİP) Prize in 2005; Sedat Simavi Research Prize in 2005; a Euroactiv European Prize. He is recently engaged in two different FP7 projects called Modernities and Identities in Europe; and Pluralism and Tolerance in the EU.

EU. The thesis makes a distinction between “diversity as a phenomenon” and “diversity as a discourse/ideology” in the Turkish context. The paper claims that the state and various ethnic groups in Turkey have been inclined to employ the “diversity as a discourse/ideology” in the aftermath of the EU Helsinki Summit of 1999, in compliance with the prevailing discourse of “unity in diversity” within the EU circles.

Political Philosophy of Diversity: “Unity-In-Diversity”, “Unity-Over-Diversity”, and “Together-In-Difference”

There are several recent political philosophers who have tried to provide some conceptual and philosophical tools in order to lay out a framework around discussions on diversity. For instance, Will Kymlicka, a liberal-communitarian, attempts to combine ideas of liberal democratic principles as a basis for a cohesive societal structure (*unity*) with recognition of communitarian rights for cultural minorities (*diversity*) within the multinational states (*Unity-in-diversity*).¹ Kymlicka claims that collective rights for minority groups do not contradict liberal notions of politics. Rather, they are pivotal for enabling individual freedoms for the members of the minority group in question.²

On the other hand, Brian Barry, a liberal, warns his readers about the cleavages springing from a multiculturalist approach on the basis that “respect for diversity” is expected to threaten unity, which he argues is necessary for promoting equal distribution among citizens.³ This is not wholly an economic issue, but also one of distributing equal rights. Barry points to the negative consequences of Kymlicka's emphasis on ‘group rights’ when it comes to sectarian religious groups.⁴ He argues that such groups could never be granted group specific rights, if the (liberal) state is to remain true to its ideal of impartiality and neutrality. Barry’s priorities lie at the rule of the majority with respect for individual rights over the principles of group-centered multiculturalism - in other words, a kind of *unity-over-diversity*.

¹ Kymlicka, Will. *MULTICULTURAL CITIZENSHIP: A LIBERAL THEORY OF MINORITY RIGHTS* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

² *Id.* at 46.

³ Barry, Brian. *CULTURE AND EQUALITY. AN EGALITARIAN CRITIQUE OF MULTICULTURALISM* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

⁴ *Id.* at 165.

However, Iris Marion Young, a communitarian, questions this “unity” as a necessary ground for a modern pluralistic society.⁵ Instead, she promotes a “politics of difference,” which aims at recognizing cultural and social differentiation among people in a region. The people, then, do not necessarily need to share the same basic ideals; rather, they ought to focus on reaching agreements and coalitions for solving political problems.⁶ In contrast to notions of segregation and even ideals of assimilative integration, Young postulates a principle of *togetherness-in-difference*.⁷

The positions stated above: liberal-communitarian, liberal, and communitarian, are the most debated political postures with regard to the management of cultural diversities in the context of nation-states. However, there is not sufficient discussion concerning the management of cultural, ethnic, national, religious and civilizational diversity within the European Union. There have been some recent attempts within the European Union Commission that aim at possible scenarios for the future. These scenarios have lately become visible with the circulation of such notions as “unity-in-diversity,” “Europe of regions,” “cultural diversity,” “diversity,” and “European citizenship.” It should also be stated here that the EU Commission seems to favor a Kymlickan “unity-in-diversity” position in order to manage all sorts of diversities.

Diversity as a Phenomenon, and as a Discourse in Turkey: An Ethnically Diverse Land

There are two alternative ways of comprehending the notion of diversity in the Turkish context as well as in other contexts: *diversity as a phenomenon*, and *diversity as an ideology*. The former refers to the coexistence of different groups in a historical process, which comes into play either as a primordial phenomenon as in migration flows through Asia Minor, or as a politically generated phenomenon as in the settlement of various ethnic groups in Central Anatolia by the Imperial (19th Century) and the Republican (20th Century) settlement laws. However, diversity as a phenomenon is not necessarily embraced by ruling powers; sometimes it is denied outright.

⁵ Young, Iris Marion. *A Critique of Integration as the Remedy for Segregation*, in D. Bell and A. Haddour (eds.), *City Visions* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 205-218.

⁶ Id. at 216–217.

⁷ Id. at 206.

The nation-building process in Turkey, starting from the beginning of the 20th century, has gone hand in hand with attempts to homogenize the nation by denying the diverse character of the Anatolian geography. This process is characterized by a kind of heterophobia, resulting from a fear of losing the remaining parts of the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the French Revolution. Contemporary Turkish history is the history of homogenization as in many other examples of nation-building. Hence, diversity as a phenomenon has so far been denied in Turkey by the political elite.

Nevertheless, there are recent signs of recognition of ethnic, religious and cultural differences by the Turkish state. Thus, diversity as a discourse/ideology is gaining momentum in the last few years, distinguished by social and governmental attempts to join the European Union. At first glance, it seems that the shift from the “nationalist homogenisation discourse” to “diversity discourse” results from external factors such as the EU itself. But, a comprehensive analysis of the issue may prompt us to reach another conclusion: that is, the alliance of internal and external factors. In what follows, the discursive shift from homogenisation to diversity will be briefly displayed with the interplay of both internal and external dynamics in the background.

Turkey: A Multi-Ethnic Country

Turkey is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country, hosting approximately 50 different Muslim and/or non-Muslim ethnic groups, some of which are Sunni Turks, Alevi Turks, Sunni Kurds, Alevi Kurds, Circassians, Lazis, Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Greeks, Arabs, Assyrians, and others. However, leaving aside the last decade of democratization attempts, the Turkish state has been far from recognizing the ethnically and culturally diverse nature of Turkish society since the foundation of the Republic in 1923.

Ethnic groups in Turkey have been subject to homogenizing state policies, some of which originate from the nationalist Turkish history of 1932, which placed Turks at the center of world civilization. Additionally, the Sun Language Theory (1936) addressing the Turkish language as the mother of all languages in the world, unitarian nationalist education policies (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*, 1924), banning the use of mother tongue and of ethnic minority names, discriminatory settlement policies (*İskân Kanunu*, 1934) *vis-à-vis* exchange populations and new migrants; discriminatory citizenship laws granting citizenship exclusively to Muslim origin migrants, implementing a

Wealth Tax in 1942, particularly to non-Muslims, and internally displaced people of the east and southeast of Turkey.⁸

Retrospectively speaking, ethnic groups in Turkey such as Kurds, Circassians, Alevis, Armenians, Lazis, and Arabs have developed various political participation strategies *vis-a-vis* the legal and political structure and limitations. While the Turkish Republic was being formed in the 1920s, and especially in the 30s, the republican political elite were highly engaged in a strong ideology of majority nationalism, which promoted the formation of an ethnically and culturally homogenous nation. Most of the ethnic groups, then, preferred to incorporate themselves into this nation-state project along with the discourse of a homogenous Turkish nation defined by the republican elite. They abstained from declaring their ethnic identities in public, and thus considered themselves as one of the constitutive elements of the Turkish Republic. The defining distinctiveness of the early periods of the Republic was the Turkification policies,⁹ which imposed the dominance of Turkishness and Sunni Islam as the defining elements in every walk of life, from the language spoken in the public spaces to citizenship, national education, trade, personnel regimes of public enterprises, industrial life and even settlement laws.

Having an Imperial legacy, many of these new regulations and laws referred to a set of attempts to homogenize the entire nation without any tolerance for diversity and difference. It is highly probable that the underestimation of ethnic diversity among the Muslim population of the Republic was because of the preceding Ottoman *Millet* system borrowed by the republican political elite. As known, the *Millet* system of the Ottoman Empire was blinded to ethnic differences among Muslims. All Muslims regardless of their other differences belonged to the one and same “Muslim nation.”¹⁰

These kinds of assimilationist and/or exclusionist state policies eventually shaped the ways in which ethnic groups have developed their

⁸ For a detailed account of those regulations and laws see Aktar, A., VARLIK VERGİSİ VE ‘TÜRKLEŞTİRME’ POLİTİKALARI, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları (2000); Bali, R., CUMHURİYET YILLARINDA TÜRKİYE YAHUDİLERİ: BİR TÜRKLEŞTİRME SERÜVENİ (1923-1945), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları (1999); and Yıldız, A., NE MUTLU TÜRKÜM DİYEBİLENE: TÜRK ULUSAL KİMLİĞİNİN ETMO-SEKÜLER SINIRLARI (1919-1938), İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları (2001).

⁹ For further information on Turkification policies see Aktar (2000).

¹⁰ ‘Muslim nation’ included only the Sunnis, but not the Alevi population in Turkey.

identities and political participation strategies. In order to survive in Anatolia, former generations of ethnic groups preferred to assimilate with mainstream political culture in Turkey, which was dominated by homogeneity, Sunni Islam and Turkishness. The work of Moiz Kohen Tekinalp, a Jewish Turkish nationalist, is illustrative in the sense that he pointed out the main incorporation strategies for non-Turkish ethnic minorities into the political system. He proposed ten “commandments” to the Turkish-Jews for their incorporation with the Turkish nation in the nation-building process:

1. Turkify your names;
2. Speak Turkish;
3. Pray in Turkish in synagogues;
4. Turkify your schools;
5. Send your children to Turkish schools;
6. Get engaged in national issues;
7. Stick together with Turks;
8. Affiliate yourself with the community spirit;
9. Fulfil your duties in the national economy;
10. Be aware of your rights.¹¹

Although, Tekinalp’s commandments may, at first glance, seem to apply only to non-Muslims in Turkey, there is also strong evidence that his commandments may also apply to some Muslim communities, such as the Kurds and Circassians.¹²

Although Tekinalp’s commandments may sound extreme, there is no doubt that several ethnic groups have suffered from obscurity, misrecognition, discrimination, uneven political representation and structural outsiderism. The dominant discourse of homogeneity has been challenged by a few major incidents having both internal and external sources:

- a) rising politics of identity originating from the USA in the 1970s;
- b) Kurdish nationalism, starting in the early 1980s;
- c) Alevi revivalism, gaining momentum in the 1990s; and
- d) the democratization process, stimulated by the Helsinki Summit in 1999, declaring Turkey as a candidate country to the EU.

There also may be several other minor reasons in this respect. But, there is one reason worthwhile explaining: Turkey’s enthusiastic hopes and

¹¹ Landau, Jacob M. *TEKINALP: BİR TÜRK YURTSEVERİ (1883-1961)*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları (1996).

¹² See, Yıldız, *supra* at note 8.

efforts to integrate with the EU in accord with the Helsinki Summit. The post-Helsinki period corresponds to Turkey's willingness to go through certain constitutional and legal changes. These changes also have an impact on the discourse developed by various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups in the country. Therefore, the discursive shift from homogenization to diversity owes a lot to the Helsinki Summit decisions and to the democratization process which accelerated in the aftermath of the Summit. The following section will elaborate on the Post-Helsinki process, which resulted in the intensification of the notion of "*diversity as an discourse/ideology.*"

THE POST-HELSINKI PERIOD: A MODEST TURN TOWARDS DEMOCRATIZATION

Despite political, ethnic and religious predicaments in neighboring countries, Turkey has experienced one of the most stable periods in the history of the Republic. At the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, European heads of state for the first time offered Turkey the concrete prospect of full membership of the EU. This occurred more than four decades after Turkey's application for association with the European Economic Community, in July 1959. The decision taken in Helsinki was in almost directly opposed to that taken at the Luxembourg Summit of 1997, which was designed to crush Turkey's hopes for EU membership. In the aftermath of the Luxembourg Summit, the public response in Turkey was immediate and harsh. Popular nationalism, minority nationalism(s), kemalism, religiosity, occidentalism and euroscepticism all reached their peaks. But, thanks to the Helsinki Summit, this destructive atmosphere in Turkey did not last long.

The EU perspective delivered to Turkey in Helsinki owed much to the letter sent by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit to the German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, in May 1999. The letter was crucial because in it Turkey expressed its willingness to undertake structural reforms in political, social and economic spheres in order to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria. These commitments were optimistically interpreted by the political elite of EU member states, and particularly by the German Green Party and the Social Democratic Party. The letter was sent in the immediate aftermath of the arrest of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, in January 1999. As one can imagine, the capture of Abdullah Öcalan was regarded as the end of a traumatic reign of terror and violence, both for the political establishment and the nation in general.

It is apparent that many ethnic minority groups in western Europe have recently been trying to bypass their host nation states, to which they

have been subjected, by bringing their grievances to EU bodies for resolution. For example, Basques, Corsicans and Catalans have taken their demands on a transnational basis into the European Commission. Likewise, Kurds, Alevis, Circassians and other ethnic minorities in Turkey are also engaged in similar political manoeuvres. In fact, they have rational reasons to do so.

The EU has recently declined the use of the minority discourse due to the escalation of minority problems in Europe, especially in the aftermath of the dissolution process of the former Yugoslavia. As could be clearly seen in the Accession Partnership Document, which maps out the requirements of Turkey in the integration process into the EU, the term “minority” has been replaced with the term “cultural diversity” in order to celebrate “unity in diversity.” Corresponding to some threats as well as to practical needs within the western European context, the discursive shift from “minority” to “cultural diversity” also has its reasons peculiar to the Turkish context in which the use of the term “minority” carries the risk of provoking certain groups in one way or another.

Parallel with the discursive shift from “minority discourse” to ‘cultural diversity,’ the rising currency of the understanding of the “Europe of Regions” has also made an impact on the management of political, economic and social disparities with regard to less-developed regions. Many Kurds, for instance, are attracted by the notion of a “Europe of Regions,” capable of providing the context for political accommodation between the Turkish Republic and the Kurds.¹³ Similarly, other ethnic and/or religious groups such as the Alevis, Circassians, Georgians and Lazis are also captivated by the democratic quality of the EU, which denounces cultural homogeneity and celebrates cultural diversity. Consequently, ethnic group associations in Turkey have already abandoned minority politics in the face of the currently changing political discourse in the West.

There is strong evidence in Turkey that some political actors within the state apparatus have demonstrated their willingness toward recognizing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity; and that minority claims are no longer predominantly considered to be a threat to national security, but to be a quest for justice by at least a part of the political and military establishment. This shift in the ways in which the state perceives minority claims has brought about essential repercussions in the public and the state bureaucracy. For instance, the Minorities Commission, which was secretly

¹³ Yavuz, M. Hakan. “Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,” NATIONALISM AND ETHNIC POLITICS, Vol. 7, No. 3 (August 2001): 1-24. See also, Ekinci, Tarık Ziya. AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ’NDE AZINLIKLARIN KORUNMASI SORUNU, TÜRKİYE VE KÜRTLER. İstanbul: Sümer Yayıncılık (2001).

formed in 1962, was banned in 2004 and replaced with the Civil Committee on Minorities. The new Committee is composed of central and local government representatives, but does not include any military personnel. This discursive shift is also visible in the discourse of the Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, Interior Minister and the Chief Negotiator for the Accession Talks with the EU.

Virtuous Circle

The EU perspective offered in Helsinki has radically transformed the political establishment in Turkey, opening up new prospects for various ethnic, religious, social and political groups. Kurds, Alevis, Islamists, Circassians, Armenians and a number of religious and ethnic groups in Turkey have become true advocates of the EU in a way that affirms the pillars of the political union as a project for peace and integration. The EU provides great incentives and motivation for numerous groups in Turkey to reinforce their willingness to coexist in harmony. What lies beneath this willingness no longer seems to be the *retrospective past*, full of ideological and political disagreements among various groups, but rather the *prospective future*, in which ethnic, religious and cultural differences are embraced in a democratic way. The EU currently appears to be the major catalyst in accelerating the process of democratisation in Turkey.

The conclusions of the European Council, summoned in Copenhagen in December 2002 states that “if, in December 2004, the European Council, on the basis of a report and recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey has fulfilled the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey ‘without delay’.” However, the political establishments and the general publics in each EU country are aware of the fact that Turkey’s membership in the Union will further stimulate discussions about “European identity” and “the limits of Europe.”

There have been recent heated public debates on Turkey’s EU membership in several countries, mostly disfavoring membership of a large state like Turkey with its overwhelmingly Muslim population and socio-economic conditions below the European average.¹⁴ Some arguments point out the socio-economic disparity between Turkey and the EU, some underline the Islamic character of Turkey, and some emphasize Turkey’s undemocratic

¹⁴ Kubicek, Paul. “Turkish Accession to the European Union: Challenges and Opportunities,” *WORLD AFFAIRS*, Vol. 168, No. 2 (Fall 2005): 67-78.

and patrimonial political culture, whilst others even raise the clash of civilizations in order to reject Turkish membership.

Nobody can deny the fact that it will be difficult for the EU to absorb Turkey in the short term. However, a more constructive discourse needs to be generated with regard to Turkey's full membership in order to revitalize one of the fundamental tenets of the EU, that of "a peace project." There is no doubt that a peace project requires constructive rather than destructive criticism. The discourse developed by the Independent Commission on Turkey is constructive, and thus deserving of praise.

The decision taken by the Union on 17 December 2004, and reconfirmed on 3 October 2005, to start accession talks with Turkey immediately, has also reinforced the Turkish public's faith in the EU. What is even more important in Turkey is that "the peace project" discourse has become quite popular and political. One comes across articles in the newspapers and speeches on TV and radio that address the EU as a peace project that has been able to settle the deep-rooted animosity between Germany and France and, more recently, between Germany and Poland. It is believed that the EU is not only a peace-making political union, but also one that exports peace.

The 1999 Helsinki Summit decision prompted a great stream of reform in Turkey. In fact, the country underwent more reform in just over two years than during the whole of the previous decade. Several laws were immediately passed in the National Parliament to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. These included the right to broadcast in one's mother tongue; freedom of association; the limitation of military impact on the judiciary; more civilian control over the military; bringing extra-budgetary funds to which the military had access within the general budget of the Defence Ministry; removing military members from the High Audio Visual Board (RTÜK) and the Board of Higher Education (YÖK); removing military judges from the State Security Courts (DGM) and eventually the abolition of those Courts; the extension of civil rights to officially recognized minorities (Armenians, Jews and Greeks); reformation of the Penal Code; the abolition of the death penalty; release of political prisoners; the abolition of torture by the security forces; and greater protection for the press. Furthermore, strict anti-inflationist economic policies have been successfully enforced along with the International Monetary Fund directives; institutional transparency and liberalism have been endorsed; both formal nationalism and minority nationalism have been precluded; and socio-economic disparities between

regions have also been dealt with. However, much remains to be done and to be implemented.

The EU perspective has also provided the Turkish public with an opportunity to come to terms with its own past, a Turkish “*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*” (coming to terms with the past). Two widely debated and polemical conferences on the “Ottoman Armenians during the Demise of the Empire” and the “Kurdish Question” were organized at the Istanbul Bilgi University, on September 25-26 2005 and March 11-12 2006 respectively, a point to which we shall return later. Although the judiciary acted favorably towards the lawsuits claimed by some ultra-nationalist lawyers, both conferences paved the way for public discussion of two subjects that had hitherto been taboo in contemporary Turkish history.

Another international conference was hosted (26-27 May 2005) by the Istanbul Bilgi University’s Centre for Migration Research, on the theme of the emigration of Assyrians who were forced to leave Eastern Anatolia in the aftermath of the foundation of the Republic in 1920s. Assyrian-origin participants from various European countries including Sweden, Germany, France and Belgium openly expressed their excitement at seeing the radical democratic transformation that Turkey had recently gone through. Another conference, on the theme “Meeting in Istanbul: Past and Present,” held June 30 – July 2, 2006, was organized by the Greek-origin minority in Istanbul, to bring together intellectuals from the Anatolian-Greek diaspora and the Greeks of Istanbul. Apart from the fact that such conferences could be organized in contemporary Turkey without encountering any major public intervention, the latter conference was even hosted by the AKP-affiliated Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. All of these legal and political changes bear witness to the transformation of Turkey regarding its position *vis-à-vis* the notion of *diversity*. This transformation corresponds to a discursive shift, which officially recognizes Turkey as a multicultural country. That is to say that *multiculturalism is no longer just a phenomenon in Turkey: it is also an officially recognized legal and political fact.*

Vicious Circle

From 17 December 2004 to 3 October 2005, when EU state and national government leaders decided to start negotiations with Turkey, tensions began to rise between nationalist, patriotic, statist, pro-status-quo groups on the one hand and pro-EU groups on the other hand. This was the time when the *virtuous cycle* of the period between 1999 and 2005 was replaced with the *vicious cycle* starting from the late 2005. A new nationalist

wave embraced the country, especially among middle-class and upper middle-class groups. The electoral cycle of presidential and general elections, witnessed militarist, nationalist and Eurosceptic aspirations coupled with rising violence and terror in the country.

The fight between the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the other statist political parties, backed by the army, crystallized during the presidential election in May 2007. The AKP had nominated the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül, as presidential candidate, but Mr. Gül did not fit the expectations of Turkey's traditional political and military establishment and he failed to reach the required two-thirds majority in the assembly sitting. This failure resulted from the fact that the presidential post has a rather symbolic importance in Turkey since it was first occupied by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. However, the establishment argued that, as someone with pro-Islamist values and a wife who wears a headscarf, Mr. Gül was inappropriate for the office of president. The conflict even led to military intervention in politics on 27th April 2007, an intervention notoriously labelled "e-intervention" because of the way it was announced on the web page of the Chief of Staff. However, the nationalist and militarist alliance against the AKP was unsuccessful in the general election and on 22 July 2007 the party won a landslide victory, with 47 % of the votes cast. Following the elections, Abdullah Gül was also elected to the Presidential office.

It could simply be concluded that, instead of heeding the nationalist and militarist electoral campaigns, based on a parochial, local, anti-global and anti-European discourse that aimed for "nationalist closure," the Turks opted for Europeanization, globalization, stability and progress. However, this time the EU was not in a state of being a light house for Turkey again. This is why, the political divide present at the top of the Turkish State is now being turned into a social divide between *moderate Islamists* and *secular fundamentalists*, involving a wide variety of political and non-political actors such as the political parties, parliament, judiciary, army, academia, non-governmental organizations, media and business circles.

The social and political divide in Turkey has both internal and external sources. The divide actually seems to have economic reasons as the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (JDP), has so far represented the interests of newly emerging middle class groups with rural origins and conservative backgrounds, who are competing against the established middle and upper middle classes with urban backgrounds. The divide also springs from the fact that the legitimate political center is now accessible to several

social groups, including not only laicists, republicans, Kemalists and liberal business circles, but also Muslims, Kurds, conservative business circles and several other groups. International sources of the divide are namely internal crisis of the European Union, enlargement fatigue of the Union, ongoing instability in the Middle East, changing American interests in the region, the rise of political Islam as a reaction to the ongoing Islamophobia in the world, and the global evocative ascendancy of civilizationist/culturalist/religious discourse.

Conclusion

In the post-Helsinki period, the government has essentially given up exclusionist nationalist policies and has become rather inclined toward inclusionary policies *vis-à-vis* ethnic and religious groups. The Helsinki Summit essentially refers to the acknowledgment of the notion of “diversity as an ideology.” Furthermore, the Helsinki decision was very decisive in turning the Kurdish minority and other ethnic groups into being more collaborative with the Turkish political system, and in making ethnic groups raise their concerns to the EU delegation in search for democratization in many respects. These are the signs in Turkey that some political actors within the state apparatus have demonstrated their willingness to recognize ethnic, cultural and religious diversity; and that ethnic groups in general have gone through a discursive shift from “minority discourse” to “diversity discourse.” Some of the state actors and several ethnic groups have also implicitly and explicitly expressed their approval of the Kymlickan position of “unity-in-diversity.”

Thus, there seems to be a direct link between the discursive shifts of the European Union and those of Turkey. Nevertheless, I should point out that, in this paper I have specifically discussed the Kymlickan position with respect to both Turkey and the EU. The two other positions by Brian Barry and Iris Marion Young are also worthwhile to discuss in a greater depth as they both correspond to some other fault lines in the Turkish context as well as in other cases, such as the central and eastern European candidate countries.