Unfinished Building: Kurdish Language Rights During the First AKP Ruling Period from November 2002 to June 2015

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Abstract

As an interdisciplinary study employing the methods of comparative politics and constitutional law, this article scrutinizes which minority language rights have been vested in ethnic Kurds during the first AKP (Justice and Development Party) ruling period from November 2002 to June 2015. The study maintains that the Kurds can now exercise various language rights in Turkey (Kurdish broadcasting rights, the right to use Kurdish personal names, the right to use Kurdish place names, the right to use Kurdish in politics and the right to learn Kurdish). But nevertheless, there are still at least two crucial issues with which the AKP government should deal during its second ruling period beginning in November 2015, namely the use of Kurdish as the language of education in public schools (mother tongue education) and the official use of Kurdish.

Keywords: Turkey, AKP, Kurds, Kurdish Question, and Minority Language Rights

Introduction

The conservative centre-right Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) was founded under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in August 2001. Not long after its foundation, the AKP won the 2002 parliamentary election, which was the first of three consecutive victories for the Party. Having ruled Turkey through its majority

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governments from November 2002 to June 2015, the AKP, albeit coming out the first party by far, lost its parliamentary majority in the June 7 general election (258 out of 550 seats), leading to the end of the first AKP ruling period.

AKP leader Ahmet Davutoğlu, who took the leading position after Erdoğan was elected as President of Turkey in August 2014, failed to find a junior coalition partner from among the other parties in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM) – the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), the Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP) and the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) – and therefore handed the mandate back to President Erdoğan. The President then did not hand the duty to another party, and the 45-day period to form a new government officially ended on 23 August 2015, paving the way for the ruling of the first-ever interim electoral Turkish government – which was made up of representatives from the AKP, the MHP and the HDP, as well as some independents – until the November 1 snap election in which the AKP regained its absolute majority in Parliament (317 out of 550 seats). A new AKP cabinet was unveiled just after the election that subsequently received a vote of confidence on November 28, resulting in the official start of the second AKP ruling period under the leadership of Ahmet Davutoğlu from November 2015 to May 2016 and Binali Yıldırım since then.[1]

As an interdisciplinary study employing the methods of comparative politics and constitutional law, this article seeks to understand which minority language rights have been bestowed upon Turkish-citizen Kurds during the first AKP ruling period, comprising of three terms in office (2002-2007, 2007-2011 and 2011-2015). In the history of the Turkish Republic, ethnic Kurds suffered from numerous Turkification policies which were in fact coercive assimilation strategies implemented through the cultural togetherness policy, the official policy of the traditional republican regime. This repressive policy began to be abandoned in the 2000s, when the AKP government initiated a new governmental policy aimed at granting the Kurds various language rights.

While most of these rights are now freely exercised by Kurdish-origin Turkish citizens – e.g. Kurdish broadcasting rights, the right to use Kurdish personal names, the right to use Kurdish place names, the right to use Kurdish in politics and the right to learn Kurdish – the enforcement of some others, such as mother tongue education in Kurdish, is still problematic. There is also another important issue on which the AKP government has kept silent, namely the official use of Kurdish.

This article proceeds in the following order. The first section will present a historical overview of the oppressive attitude of the traditional republican regime towards Kurdish language rights. Having explained the cultural togetherness policy by paying attention to the political history of the Republic, the article will examine the AKP policy on Kurdish language rights in depth. After understanding the essence of the policy, the article will categorize all language rights conferred upon the Kurds into two classes: trouble-free policies and problematic policies. The article will finally look at another issue on which the AKP government has kept silent.

1. Traditional republican regime: cultural togetherness policy

Ethnic Kurds had indeed enjoyed a sort of administrative autonomy over the territory where they constituted the majority (Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia) until the late Ottoman period (Arakon, 2014; Tas, 2013, 2014). After the adoption of the *Treaty of Lausanne* (1923), the founding treaty of the Turkish Republic, however, early republican elites aimed at constructing a new state which would not be a continuation of the Ottoman Empire (Ergin, 2008), though this had not been the case during the War of Independence (1919-22), when the elites were 'seeking statehood for the multicultural entity of Anatolia, heir to the Ottoman Empire' (Ergil, 2000: 124).

Following the War, the elites began implementing basic principles of Turkish foreign policy, facilitating the realization of the nation-state by which a liberal, pragmatic, rational and secular state system had been desired (Tasdemir and Oner-Ozkan, 2016). The elites initially sought to purify the newly established nation-state from religious values which, according to some early republican politicians, were representing backwardness, philistinism and poverty. On this basis, the Caliphate and Sultanate, both of which had been very significant emblems of Ottoman politics, were annulled, completing the early construction process of a new republican regime in Ankara, the capital of Turkey (Efegil, 2011).

The newly formulated republican government supported a cultural togetherness policy under which Turkish identity was acknowledged as the main source of national unity, and the other non-Turkish Anatolian features were subdued through denial, leading to a controversial rather than accommodative relationship between the Turks and Kurds (Somer, 2004; Yegen, 2004). That is why the early republican history (1924-1938) recorded eighteen Kurdish rebellions in total (Celik, 2010).

Not long after the official promulgation of the new state, members of the clandestine organization '*Azadi*' initiated a mass movement on the grounds of numerous early republican wrongdoings, including many legal restrictions on the exercise of Kurdish language rights, e.g. the ban on the usage of Kurdish in schools. In 1925, this movement turned into the Sheikh Said Revolt that ended with Said's execution on 29 June 1925 (Ergin, 2014; Strohmeier, 2003). The other important rebellious attempts were the Ararat Riot and the Dersim Resistance. The former was launched in 1927 under the leadership of Ihsan Nuri Pasha, who was supported by the *Khoyboun* (Independence), a transnational Kurdish political organization founded in Lebanon. The Riot was completely crushed with Iranian cooperation in 1931. The Dersim Resistance started in 1936 under the leadership of Sheikh Sayyid Riza, who led the Resistance until his death in 1937, and ended in a Kurdish defeat in 1938 (Al, 2015a; Gunter, 2007; Strohmeier, 2003).

As the cultural togetherness policy was originally built upon the principle of aiming to eliminate ethnic features other than those of ethnic Turks, when the Kurds asked for the maintenance of their own ethno-cultural traditions, the central government considered these demands as threats to the territorial integrity and national unity of the Republican State. To put it differently, Ankara defined such Kurdish movements as secessionist rebellions and tried to resolve the issue by means of military measures and coercive assimilation policies.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the republican regime mobilized all its forces to popularize the Turkish language and propagate all ideas and products of the language revolution (O'Driscoll, 2014). As a 'linguicidal' policy initiated in 1927 but peaked in 1937, the 'Citizen, Speak Turkish!' campaign[2] encouraged the use of Turkish while condemning the usage of the other Anatolian languages, including all Kurdish dialects (Kurmanji, Sorani and Zaza). In addition, the Turkish Linguistic Society (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), an important public institution at the heart of the language revolution, was established in 1932 with the goal of generating a cohesive national language that would eliminate non-Turkish (mainly Arabic and Persian) words and influences, and in their place either discover new words or integrate pure Turkish words assembled from different Turkish dialects (Al, 2015b; Morin and Lee, 2010). The Linguistic Society was part of an arsenal of other republican entities such as the Turkish Historical Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*), founded in 1931 with the main purpose of writing and disseminating a *new* national history of the Turks (Hanioglu, 2012; Zeydanlioglu, 2012).

What the traditional regime had desired through making all these attempts was to shape a homogenous Turkish nation that could be easily realized when looking at the early political

standpoints. On 21 April 1925 when he was installed as Prime Minister of Turkey, İsmet İnönü declared that:

> We are openly nationalist […] Besides the Turkish majority, none of the other [ethnic] elements shall have any impact. We shall at any price, Turkicize those who live in our country, and destroy those who rise up against the Turks and Turkdom (cited in Muller and Linzey, 2007: 22).

In a similar but more violent vein, Justice Minister Mahmut Esat Bozkurt described the status the Kurds could expect in Turkey as follows:

> We live in a country called Turkey, the freest country in the world […] I believe that the Turk must be the only lord, the only master of this country. Those who are not of pure Turkish stock can have only one right in this country, the right to be servants and slaves (cited in Nezan, 1980: 65).

As more concrete evidence, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's well-known Kurdish report of 1935 supported the idea that an assimilation policy was not only a political scenario of which the republican elites had dreamed, but it was also a crucial requirement to manage the Kurds (Efegil, 2011). Public inspector Abidin Özmen also prepared a very similar official report in which he moreover introduced the Turkish language as the most critical instrument to assimilate the Kurds (Al, 2015b).

Having proclaimed their political standpoints, the state officials already started implementing coercive assimilation policies. In the area of education, the radical nationalist morning oath (*Andımız*) was officially imposed as a duty on all primary school students, who would take a pledge of allegiance to the Republican State at the beginning of every school-day by uttering the vow.[3] Moreover, early textbooks on citizenship education underscored the slogan 'one language, one culture, one ideal' (Ince, 2012: 119). The same textbooks furthermore defined the term 'nation' as a socio-political community 'formed by citizens, bound by a unity of language, culture and ideal' (*ibid*: 119). As for language education, the textbooks described Turkish as the most beautiful, easiest and richest language on the globe whilst mentioning nothing about the other Anatolian languages and dialects. Finally, the textbooks emphasized the importance of 'being born a Turk, living as a Turk and dying as a Turk' by saying 'how happy is the one who says I am Turk' (*ibid*: 121).

In addition to these Turkification policies implemented in the domain of education, various other coercive assimilation policies were introduced: governmental appointments in the Kurdish-occupied regions were filled with ethnic Turks (Kurban, 2003); numerous boarding schools were constructed in the same regions with the task of educating Kurdish

pupils in an environment that physically separated them from their cultural habitat (Yegen, 2009); a significant number of Kurdish-origin individuals were forcefully deported from their historic territories and settled in Western Turkey, where Turkish culture is dominant (Ensaroglu, 2013; Yegen, 2007); the use of languages other than Turkish in schools and courts was prohibited (Kuzu, 2016); the use of non-Turkish surnames was banned (Yegen, 2009); the Kurds were defined as 'Mountain Turks', and accordingly the use of the word 'Kurd(s)' was penalized (Kurban, 2003; Zeydanlioglu, 2008); and all individuals who applied to be employed in the public sector or in the army and its academies were required to be of pure Turkish race (Kurban, 2004).

While suffering from these assimilation policies during the single-party period, ruled by the CHP from 1923 to 1945, the Kurdish people experienced many more such repressive policies in the second half of the twentieth century, when Turkey had witnessed three military interventions. Just after the 1960 *coup d'état*, the Kurdish-origin names of numerous Kurdish-populated towns and villages were replaced with Turkish ones. In addition, many journals publishing articles on Kurdish linguistic and cultural characteristics, including New Path, Origin of the Tigris, Tigris-Euphrates, Voice and World of Peace, were all prohibited (Gunter, 1988). Not long after the 1971 junta, giving non-Turkish names to newborns was banned (Moustakis and Chaudhuri, 2005; Yegen, 2009). Following the 1980 coup, the military regime introduced a ban on the explanation, publication and broadcasting of ideas and opinions in any language other than Turkish. The regime also confiscated books, films and newspapers pertaining to Kurdish people or their culture (Hughes and Karakas, 2009; Yegen, 2009).

For the first time in the history of the Republic, the cultural togetherness policy was governmentally criticized by President Turgut Özal in 1992, when he announced that Turkey should have abandoned all assimilation policies due to their destructive impacts upon the multicultural character of the Anatolian Peninsula (Candar, 2013; Robins, 1993; Yucel, 2016). Following the sudden death of Turgut Özal in April 1993, however, Turkey re-embraced the cultural togetherness policy and did not take any serious steps to abrogate Turkification policies until the early 2000s, when the AKP came to power.

2. AKP policy on Kurdish language rights

The AKP policy on Kurdish language rights is built upon the 1992 Kurdish Report of the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP), which was prepared by the Party's Istanbul Provincial Head under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who would set up the AKP in 2001. As a document welcoming multiculturalism, the RP report underscored that the Republic could not accommodate its Kurdish-origin citizens by imposing various assimilation policies upon them. According to the report, most Turkish-citizen Kurds did not ask for an independent Kurdistan throughout the history of the Republican State; instead, what they demanded was to freely practice their language and culture, thereby justifying that bestowing language rights upon ethnic Kurds was not an issue which would eventually threaten the territorial unity of the Republic. The report thus stood up for the abolishment of the cultural togetherness policy and the removal of all legal obstacles to the exercising of Kurdish language rights (Kolcak, 2015b).

The AKP, which took up the reins of government upon its landslide victory in the 2002 parliamentary election, began implementing a governmental policy consistent with the essence and spirit of the RP report. Having repeatedly welcomed the multicultural nature of Anatolia, Prime Minister Erdoğan, during his official visit to the Kurdish-dominated city of Diyarbakir in August 2005, not only condemned the cultural togetherness policy, but he also announced that the AKP government would progressively eliminate all barriers to the use of Kurdish dialects (Mitchell, 2012). Although this announcement was regarded as the beginning of the process in which the Republic would tolerate different Anatolian linguistic and cultural characteristics, the first concrete stride was made after the 2007 parliamentary election in which the AKP reiterated its previous success and secured its absolute majority in the TBMM (Guzeldere, 2008; Nykanen, 2013).

The new AKP government embarked on a policy of democratization, known as the 'Democratic Initiative' (*Demokratik Açılım*), aimed at improving the standards of Turkish democracy through eliminating traditional barriers to the exercise of globally-respected freedoms, e.g. freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of peacefully assembly and association. As an umbrella concept, the Democratic Initiative encompassed several subcategories dealing not only with the general democracy-related problems of the Republic, but also with the matters of different cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities inhabiting in Turkey such as (i) the Alevi Opening (Alevi *Açılımı*), (ii) the Armenian Opening (*Ermeni Açılımı*), (iii) the Caferi Opening (*Caferi*

Açılımı), (iv) the Greek Orthodox Opening (*Yunan Ortadoks Açılımı*), (v) the Roma Opening (*Roman Açılımı*) and (vi) the Kurdish Opening (*Kürt Açılımı*).

The Kurdish Opening, which was officially announced in May 2009, was renamed as the National Unity and Fraternity Project (*Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi*, MBKP), after the opposition parties in Parliament, except for the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP), had criticized the democratization project on the grounds that it would result in the national fragmentation of the Republic (Ayata, 2011). While the MBKP was still in operation, the AKP also launched a new governmental policy once it secured its absolute majority in Parliament upon its landslide victory in the 2011 general election, namely the Peace Process (*Barış Süreci*), seeking to disarm the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkêran Kurdistan*), a terrorist organization initiating a warfare against Turkey in 1984 with the main goal of creating an independent Kurdistan in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia (Villellas, 2013).[4]

In the light of these two official governmental policies (the MBKP and the Peace Process), the AKP government attempted at dealing with many, but not all, language-related issues of the Kurdish people during its first ruling period. Whilst the Party succeeded in resolving a significant number of issues, there are still some problematic areas. We can indeed examine the entire AKP policy on Kurdish language rights through a three-fold classification: the first category is the one encompassing trouble-free AKP policies; the second category is the one specifically scrutinizing the problematic AKP policy, namely mother tongue education in Kurdish; and the last category is the one on which the AKP has kept silent: the official use of Kurdish.

AKP policies on Kurdish language rights (2002-2015)

- **Trouble-free policies**
  - **Kurdish broadcasting rights**
  - **Kurdish personal names**
  - **Kurdish place names**
  - **Kurdish in politics**
  - **Kurdish language courses**
- **Problematic policy**
  - **Mother tongue education**
- **AKP silence**
  - **Official use of Kurdish**

Figure 1. AKP policies on Kurdish language rights (2002-2015).

2.1 *Trouble-free AKP policies*

Trouble-free AKP policies on Kurdish language rights can be categorized under five main subtitles: i) Kurdish broadcasting rights, ii) Kurdish personal names, iii) Kurdish place names, iv) Kurdish in politics, and finally v) Kurdish language courses. Let us now study each of these trouble-free policies in order.

Kurdish broadcasting rights

The first attempt at liberalizing Kurdish broadcasting rights had already been made before the AKP came to power. Article 9 of the *Statute of Turkey* (SoT) 4709/2001 – a constitutional reform package adopted with the purpose of fulfilling the so-called Copenhagen Criteria for European Union (EU) membership – removed the ban on the use of languages other than Turkish in the expression and dissemination of thoughts and ideas in the media. This constitutional amendment laid the foundation for Kurdish broadcasting rights in the following years.

For the first time in the history of Turkey, the SoT 4771/2002, an EU harmonization law becoming effective in August 2002, allowed for the use of 'languages and dialects traditionally spoken by Turkish citizens in their daily lives' in the broadcasting media (art. 8(a)). To implement this statutory provision, the Supreme Board of Radio and Television (*Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu*, RTÜK) issued an executive regulation in December 2002, when the AKP had just taken up the reins of government.

The RTÜK Regulation of 2002 was very restrictive legal document which permitted solely the state-funded Turkish Radio-Television Corporation (*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu*, TRT) – to broadcast in Anatolian languages and dialects other than Turkish, including Kurdish dialects (Kurmanji, Sorani and Zazaki), Arabic, Armenian, Bosnian, Lazuri and Circassian (art. 5(2)). The Regulation, moreover, introduced time limitations on such broadcasts: for TV broadcasts, two hours weekly, but at most forty-five minutes daily; and for radio broadcasts, four hours per week, not exceeding forty-five minutes per day (art. 5(6)). Furthermore, it restricted the scope of broadcasts by ruling that TV and radio programmes in such languages and dialects might only be made in the areas of culture, music and news (art. 5(3)). Finally, the Regulation required complete and consecutive Turkish translation for radio programmes and Turkish subtitles for TV broadcasts (art. 5(6)). Hence, while the

constitutional and statutory bases were established, the use of Kurdish dialects in the broadcasting media was still very restrictive when the first AKP government was sworn in.

The AKP government firstly enabled private TV channels and radio stations to broadcast in Anatolian languages and dialects other than Turkish by means of Article 14(2) of the SoT 4928/2003, an EU harmonization law entering into force in July 2003. The RTÜK then issued a new executive regulation to enforce this new statutory provision in January 2004. The RTÜK Regulation of 2004, despite allowing for private broadcasting, did not remove the restrictions introduced in the former regulation: the restriction upon the scope of broadcasts; the time limitations with a revised version (for radio five hours per week, not exceeding an hour per day; for TV, four hours weekly, but at most forty-five minutes daily); and the requirement for Turkish translation and subtitles for broadcasts.

Under this restrictive framework, both the public-funded TRT and private media providers began airing programs in Kurdish dialects. In June 2004 the TRT commenced its broadcasting in the Kurmanji and Zazaki dialects of Kurdish with some additional time limitations: radio broadcasts beginning at 6 a.m. and lasting for thirty minutes on Wednesdays and Fridays; TV broadcasts lasting for forty-five minutes on Wednesdays and Fridays.[5] Having completed all the regulatory requirements, three private media groups – Gün TV, Söz TV and Media FM – were also authorized by the RTÜK to broadcast in Kurdish dialects in March 2006. Just three months later, in June 2006, the RTÜK continued softening its restrictive policy through enabling the authorized media groups to air concerts and movies beyond the time limit (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 2006).

The AKP dramatically accelerated its liberalization policy over broadcasting in Anatolian languages and dialects other than Turkish during its second term in office (2007-2011), when the Democratic Initiative and accordingly the Kurdish Opening became one of the central subjects to the governmental agenda of the Party. The new AKP-dominated Parliament (341 out of 550 seats) passed the SoT 5767/2008, adopted with the purpose of amending the *Law on the Turkish Radio-Television Corporation* (SoT 2954/1983), thereby enabling the TRT to broadcast in any language or dialect other than Turkish for twenty-four hours a day (art. 6(5)). In the enforcement of this statutory provision, the TRT founded a new state channel in late 2008 which would air programmes in the Kurmanji, Sorani and Zazaki dialects of Kurdish for twenty-four hours a day, namely TRT-6 (later renamed as TRT KURDÎ). This public-funded channel has been broadcasting in these dialects since January 2009, and its content involves Kurdish-centred programs broadcast on Kurdish history,

culture, literature and cuisine, as well as various general interest programs broadcast on news, debates, health, religion, travel and cartoons for children.

As a continuation of the liberalization policy, in November 2009, the RTÜK adopted a new executive regulation which removed all the restrictions upon the use of Anatolian languages and dialects other than Turkish in the broadcasting media. Not long after the adoption of the 2009 Regulation, in February 2010, the RTÜK authorized fourteen media organizations to broadcast in Kurdish dialects – Aksa FM, Aktüel TV-Radio, Can TV- Radio, Cemre FM, Çağrı FM, Gün TV-Radio, Radyo Ses, Radyo Net, Söz TV, Nur FM and TV 21 (Onderoglu, 2010).

The regulatory permission was then guaranteed in a statutory manner in March 2011, when the new media law of Turkey (SoT 6112/2011) entered into force. As the basic law of the Turkish media, the SoT 6112/2011 directly allows for the use of languages and dialects other than Turkish in the broadcasting media (art. 5). The number of TV channels and radio stations broadcasting in the dialects of Kurdish has substantially increased since the adoption of the new media law. There are now a significant number of media service providers airing programmes in Kurmanji, Sorani and Zazaki for twenty-four hours a day.[6] Hence, we can conclude that Kurdish broadcasting rights are now freely exercised without any constitutional, statutory or regulatory restrictions, rendering the AKP policy on Kurdish broadcasting rights a trouble-free one.

Kurdish personal names

The 1971 military regime had prohibited the use of Kurdish personal names on the grounds of having politically offensive meanings (art. 16(4) of the *Civil Registry Law* (SoT 1587/1972)). In removing this prohibition, the AKP government amended the above provision through the SoT 4928/2003, Article 5 of which read that newborns might be given non-Turkish names should they comply with the moral values of the Republic and not offend the public. The enforcement of this statutory provision was, however, restricted by the 2004 Circular of the Ministry of Interior Affairs which prevented those names incorporating non-Turkish letters – Q, W and X (common in Kurdish) – from being used. This executive order indeed had to exclude non-Turkish letters from being used due to the fact that Article 222 of the Turkish Penal Code (SoT 5237/2004) was criminalizing the use of non-Turkish letters (from two to six months imprisonment).

While many Kurdish names were out of order owing to the presence of the aforementioned punishment, Article 16(e) of the so-called '2013 Democratization Package' (SoT 6529/2014), one of the most important fruits of the Kurdish Opening that eliminated various bans on the exercise of Kurdish language rights after coming into effect on 13 March 2014, annulled Article 222 of the Turkish Penal Code, thereby liberalizing all Kurdish personal names including those incorporating non-Turkish letters.

Since the revocation of the relevant article of the Penal Code, the Ministry of Interior Affairs has been allowing Kurdish parents to give their newborns Kurdish-origin names, such as Bawer, Bedirxan, Berwan, Ciwan, Dijwar, Jiyan, Pelewan, Rojbin and Xwezan, rendering the AKP policy over Kurdish personal names a trouble-free policy (Kolcak, 2015b).

Kurdish place names

As a requirement of the cultural togetherness policy, non-Turkish place names, including those of towns, villages, lakes, hills, mountains, rivers and valleys, had been changed throughout all the traditional republican era. This oppressive policy took its roots in the 1913 Ottoman Decree on Turkifying Armenian, Bulgarian and Greek Place Names (*1913 İskân-ı Muhacirin Nizamnamesi*) (Konuksever, 2009). Although the original version of the Decree did not include any provisions requiring the alteration of Kurdish place names, the early republican regime began Turkifying Kurdish-origin place names during the single-party period, when the Turkification process was being completed through decisions taken by Provincial Councils (Dogan, 2012).

While acquiring a semi-statutory character with the 1940 Decree of the Ministry of Interior Affairs on Changing non-Turkish Place Names, the Turkification process obtained a full statutory status with the *Law on Provincial Administration* (SoT 5442/1949) under which a two-fold procedure was introduced: the non-Turkish names of towns and cities shall be Turkified through acts of Parliament; and the non-Turkish names of the other places, including villages, neighbourhoods and streets, shall be Turkified by the Ministry of Interior Affairs who shall initially receive the advisory opinion of the Provincial Council on the alteration issue concerned (art. 2(1)(d)). In implementing this statutory provision, almost twenty-eight thousand non-Turkish place names – Arabian, Armenian, Circassian, Greek, Kurdish, Lazuri and Syriac – were changed from the 1950s to the 1970s, particularly by the Expert Committee on Altering Names (*Ad Değiştirme İhtisas Komisyonu*), which was a steering commission established by the Ministry of Interior Affairs (Inal, 2012).

There was no official attempt at restoring the original place names during the eighties and nineties, and this pattern was followed by the AKP government during its first (2002-2007) and second (2007-2011) terms in office. Following its third consecutive victory in the 2011 general election, however, the AKP government incorporated a provision paving the way for a restoration process into the Democratization Package (SoT 6529/2014). Article 16(a) of the Package abrogated Article 2(1)(d) of the SoT 5442/1949, and enabled a two-fold procedure for restoring the original place names: the restoration of the original names of towns and cities; and the restoration of the original names of the other places, including villages, neighbourhoods and streets. The former procedure follows the path set out in Article 2(1)(a) of the SoT 5442/1949: the names of towns and cities can solely be changed through acts of Parliament. As concerns the latter procedure, it is a three-step bureaucratic process: Provincial Councils and Municipal Assemblies shall initially make an official congressional decision upon the restoration of an original place name; this decision shall then be submitted to the Ministry of Interior Affairs; and finally the Ministry shall endorse the decision of such local councils and assemblies.

An active restoration process has been pursued since the spring of 2014. The first Kurdish-origin place name was restored in May 2014, when the village of Vergili was renamed as Becirman. In November 2014, the Ministry of Interior Affairs endorsed the decision of the Van Metropolitan Municipal Council to restore 704 Armenian- and Kurdish-origin place names, including those of villages, neighbourhoods and streets. In December 2014, the original names of four villages in the Kurdish-dominated city of Siirt were restored. In addition to these completed cases, many places in the Kurdish-populated cities, e.g. Agri, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Sanliurfa and Sirnak, would soon retrieve their Kurdish-origin names. Having made their official decisions on restoring numerous Kurdish-origin place names, the Provincial Councils and Municipal Assemblies settled in the aforementioned cities have already submitted the decisions to the Ministry of Interior Affairs via the Provincial Governorships, the representatives of the central government at the local level, and the last bureaucratic step is still in progress that is the endorsement of the Ministry (Kolcak, 2015a, 2015b).

Kurdish in politics

The use of languages other than Turkish in making political propaganda had been prohibited by the traditional republican regime through the statutory provision in Article 43(3) of the *Law on Political Parties* (SoT 2820/1983). This article was still in force during the first

(2002-2007) and second (2007-2011) terms of the AKP government, when many politicians were still being punished on the grounds of speaking non-Turkish languages during their electoral campaigns. In June 2008, for instance, Orhan Miroğlu, a Kurdish-origin politician, was found guilty on the basis that he had used a banned language during his electoral rally in the city of Mersin (*Radikal*, 2008).

The prohibition was eventually removed by Article 16(b) of the Democratization Package (SoT 6529/2014), which annulled Article 43(3) of the SoT 2820/1983. Since the annulment of this statutory provision, three nation-wide elections have been held in Turkey (the 2014 local elections, the 2015 parliamentary election and the 2015 parliamentary snap election). During the campaigns of these elections, all Kurdish dialects and other non-Turkish languages were freely used both by the pro-Kurdish HDP and by other political parties, particularly the AKP. Not only did the candidates of these parties freely speak Kurdish dialects during their rallies, but the HDP and the AKP also used Kurdish songs[7] and electoral

banners during the campaign periods.

Image 1. Multilingual AKP poster for the 2014 Diyarbakir municipal election

Image 2. Multilingual HDP poster for the 2015 general election

Kurdish language courses

Before the AKP began playing an active role in Turkish politics, the first attempt at providing Kurdish language courses had been made with an EU harmonization law in August 2002, the SoT 4771/2002, according to which private language courses teaching Kurdish or other Anatolian languages and dialects could be opened (art. 11). This statutory provision was, however, made impracticable, once the Ministry of National Education adopted its executive regulation under which no course could fulfil the instructor-related condition: although there was no Turkish educational faculty offering graduate programs in Kurdish language or literature, the regulation asked any private course intending to teach Kurdish to hire solely those instructors who not only have Turkish citizenship but also have had a bachelor's degree in such linguistic programs, rendering the enforcement of the statutory provision impossible (Zeydanlioglu, 2012).

During its first term in office, the AKP government initially eased the opening of private language courses through Article 23 of the SoT 4963/2003 – by which the Ministry of National Education removed its instructor-related previous restriction – but more important policies on Kurdish language courses were introduced during the second and third terms of the Party, when the democratic discourse of the Kurdish Opening was positively affecting the public.

In the autumn of 2009, the Higher Education Board (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu*, YÖK) began allowing public and private universities to provide language courses in Kurdish dialects

and other Anatolian languages. Since then, many public and private universities, especially those established in the Kurdish-occupied cities – such as Bingol University, Dicle University, Hakkari University, Mardin Artuklu University, Mus Alparslan University and Sirnak University – have been offering Kurdish language courses. Dicle University, for instance, provides a three-month regular language course in the Kurmanji dialect of Kurdish. The course teaches different aspects of the dialect, including daily life conversations, grammar and vocabulary. A significant number of participants, involving academics, bureaucrats, doctors, lawyers and teachers have attended the course so far (Kolcak, 2015b).

In addition to the universities, numerous non-governmental organizations, e.g. the Geoaktif Culture and Activism Centre (*Geoaktif Kültür ve Aktivizm Merkezi*) and the Istanbul Kurdish Institute (*İstanbul Kürt Enstitüsü*), and various municipalities – such as Baykan District Municipality, Cinar District Municipality, Tatvan District Municipality, Tusba District Municipality, Yenisehir District Municipality, to name but a few only, have begun providing Kurdish language courses since the early 2010s.

Image 3. Poster of Tatvan district municipality for Kurdish language courses

The public universities based in the Kurdish-dominated region have, moreover, started training Kurdish experts by means of various degree programs in Kurdish dialects since December 2009, when the AKP government endorsed the opening of the first research centre providing postgraduate education in Anatolian languages other than Turkish, namely the Living Language Institute (*Yaşayan Diller Enstitüsü*, YDE). Following this endorsement (Cabinet Decree 2009/15597), which allowed for the establishment of the YDE at Mardin Artuklu University, the YÖK authorized many other universities settled in the Kurdish-

populated region, e.g. Bingol University, Dicle University, Mus Alparslan University, Siirt University, Tunceli University, Van Yuzuncu Yil University, to provide undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate programs in Kurdish dialects, such as a BA in Kurdish Language and Literature, a BA in Zazaki Language and Literature, an MA in Kurdish Language and Dialects and a PhD in Kurdish Language and Literature.

These universities are still continuing to offer such degree programs. A significant number of students have already been enrolled in these programs since the early 2010s. For instance, when Mardin Artuklu University started offering a BA in Kurdish Language and Literature in the academic session of 2010-11, twenty students registered for this bachelor's degree. The number gradually increased in the following years and reached 65 in the last academic year (2015-16), when the first undergraduates beginning in the 2010-11 period received their bachelor's degree. In the 2012-13 and 2013-14 academic sessions, the University also awarded almost 500 students a Graduate Diploma in Kurdish Language and Literature (Tastekin, 2014). In the 2014-15 academic year, furthermore, approximately 100 postgraduates gained their master's degree in Kurdish Language and Literature from the University after successfully completing their dissertations (Kolcak, 2015a). Similar numbers are pursuing their studies at the other universities whilst the total number of graduates has reached 1500, according to a recent study conducted by several academicians working at the universities offering Kurdish-related degree programs (*Radikal*, 2015).

In addition to the availability of Kurdish courses at the higher educational level, public secondary schools have been providing elective Kurdish and other Anatolian – e.g. Abkhasian, Circassion, Georgian and Lazuri – language courses since the school year of 2012-13. The opening of such courses are dependent upon the demand of students because the schools are obliged to incorporate these courses into their curricula should they be demanded by at least ten students. In the 2012-13 session, the number of students enrolled in such courses was nearly 21,000, but the number dramatically increased and reached 85,000 in the school year of 2015-16 (*Milliyet*, 2012; *Hürriyet*, 2015).

Image 4. Three secondary school students glancing through the Kurdish textbook

Having examined all trouble-free AKP policies, let us now turn our attention to the problematic policy, namely mother tongue education in Kurdish.

2.2 *Problematic AKP policy: mother tongue education*

Mother tongue education is the means by which a minority group can use its native tongue as the language of instruction. By the language of instruction, I mean not only the teaching of the native tongue (e.g. linguistic course in Kurdish) but also its use in delivering the content of the educational curricula (e.g. biology, geography and/or physics courses in Kurdish). Mother tongue education can take the form of at least in three different educational systems: monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. The first system is the one under which the *entire* content of the curriculum is taught in the native tongue of the minority. The second is the one under which the content of the curricula is taught in two languages: one is the mother tongue of the minority (e.g. Kurdish in Turkey); and the other is, in most cases, the dominant language of the whole public (e.g. Turkish in Turkey). The last system involves the content of the curriculum being delivered in at least three languages (e.g. delivering the content of the curriculum in Kurdish, Turkish and English).[8]

It is initially worth noting that mother tongue education is very limited in Turkey. The Turkish Constitution (SoT 2709/1982), which was created under the aegis of the military regime taking power following the *coup d'état* of 12 September 1980, stipulates that

> [n]o language other than Turkish shall be taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institution of education. Foreign languages to be taught in

institutions of education and the rules to be followed by schools conducting education in a foreign language shall be determined by law. The provisions of international treaties are reserved (art. 42(9).

By reserving the provisions of international treaties, the above article bestows a constitutional guarantee for mother tongue education solely upon religious minorities inhabiting in Turkey. In September 2003, the Turkish Republic ratified the *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), under which ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are bestowed with the right to use their own language in the field of education (art. 27), but with a reservation preventing all Muslim minorities, including the Kurds, from exercising the rights secured under Article 27 ICCPR:

> The Republic of Turkey reserves the right to interpret and apply the provisions of Article 27 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights in accordance with the related provisions and rules of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and the Treaty of Lausanne […] and its Appendixes.

Article 40 of the *Treaty of Lausanne* states that

> Turkish nationals belonging to non-Moslem minorities […] shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense […] any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language.

The following article of the same treaty also rules that

> [a]s regards public instruction, the Turkish Government will grant in those towns and districts, where a considerable proportion of non-Moslem nationals are resident, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Turkish nationals through the medium of their own language.

In accordance with the *Treaty of Lausanne*, therefore, the Turkish Republic recognizes only non-Muslim groups as the ones who can exercise minority educational rights enshrined in Article 27 ICCPR. As concerns the Kurds, who predominantly profess Islam and who have been acknowledged as a Muslim community (*cemaat*) since the very early Ottoman periods, they are not able to enjoy minority educational guarantees set out in the *Treaty of Lausanne* or other international documents in force on the grounds that they do not form a religious minority in Turkey.

While not providing the Kurds with a constitutional guarantee for mother tongue education, Article 42(9) of the Turkish Constitution enables the use of Kurdish and other Anatolian languages as the language of education should they be considered as *foreign* languages. This legal path was already followed by Article 11 of the Democratization

Package (SoT 6529/2014) which would pave the way for the establishment of *private* schools using Anatolian languages and dialects other than Turkish as the language of instruction. In implementing this statutory provision, the Ministry of National Education amended Article 49 of the Regulation on Private Schools in July 2014, and thereby a four-step administrative process for bilingual education was introduced: i) any private school which would like to use an Anatolian language other than Turkish as the language of education shall initially apply to the Ministry of National Education; ii) the Ministry shall then determine the opening of the school by examining whether it has fulfilled all the general requirements laid out in the Regulation on Private Schools; iii) having authorized the opening of the school, the Ministry shall determine in which courses (e.g. maths, geography, music, physics, etc.) the school can use the language other than Turkish; iv) subsequent to the determination of such courses, the school is eventually granted official school status and empowered to carry out bilingual education.

Not long after the adoption of the regulatory provision, the Kurdish Research and Development Society (*Kürt Dili Araştırma ve Geliştirme Derneği*) applied to the Ministry of National Education to open various primary schools conducting bilingual education in Kurdish and Turkish, e.g. the Primary School of Ferzad Kemanger in the city of Diyarbakir, the Primary School of Fatma Tokat in the city of Van, the Primary School of Berîvan Berivan in the city of Sirnak, the Primary School of Ehmet Bayhan in the city of Mardin, and the Primary School of Üveyş Ana in the city of Hakkari. These schools have been carrying out bilingual education in Turkish and Kurdish since the school year of 2014-15. It is noteworthy, however, that as they have not yet fulfilled all the requirements laid out in the Regulation on Private Schools, the schools are still considered as educational support centres in place of official primary schools (Aslan and Sunar, 2014; Bozarslan, 2015).

The authorization of private schools to conduct bilingual education is, of course, a remarkable development; however, it may not be enough. Public schools may also be bestowed with the right to use Kurdish as the language of education. This right is already recognized by the two European minority-specific legal documents which have not been signed by Turkey, namely the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (ECRML) and the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (FCNM). According to Article 8 ECRML, the state parties undertake to make available the whole or a substantial part of education in regional or minority languages from the kindergarten level to the end of higher education within the territory where such languages are spoken. Similarly,

the FCNM not only endorses the use of minority languages as the language of instruction in private schools (art. 13(1)), but it also involves a provision pertaining to public schools:

> In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language (art. 14(2)).

In various European countries where a progressive human rights regime is being implemented, the aforementioned provisions have already been incorporated into their domestic legal frameworks. The United Kingdom (UK), for instance, provides the Welsh the right to use their native tongue as the language of education in both public and private schools established in Wales. While allowing the teaching of Welsh in all schools since the introduction of compulsory education through the *Education Act 1870*, the UK Government established a bilingual educational system (Welsh-English) in Wales by means of the *Education Act 1944*. After the adoption of this act, a significant number of private and public schools providing bilingual education at primary and secondary levels were established not only in Western Wales, where the dominant language spoken is Welsh, but also in Southern and Eastern Wales, where English is the prevalent language. Having been strengthened by the *Education Reform Act 1988*, the bilingual system took its ultimate shape with the establishment of the Welsh devolved region in 1998 by which educational matters in Wales were recognized as an area with which the National Assembly for Wales (*Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru*) – the legislative body of the devolved region – and the Welsh Government (*Llywodraeth Cymru*), the executive organ of the devolved region, should deal. These public entities have been pursuing their educational policies aimed at creating a bilingual Welsh nation since the establishment of the devolved region.[9]

Similar to the UK, Spain enables the implementation of bilingual and multilingual educational systems through the Constitution of 1978, which divided the country into autonomous regions after the long ruling period of dictatorial Francoism (1939-75). In contemporary Spain, every autonomous community where a language other than Castilian (the dominant language) is spoken – Catalonia, Galicia, Navarra, the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country and Valencia – is authorized to use its native tongue as the language of instruction in both public and private schools. The Galician Autonomous Community, established with the *Galician Autonomous Statute of 1981*, for instance, has been implementing a bilingual educational system (Galego-Castilian) in its public and private

schools since June 1983, when the Galician Parliament (*Parlamento de Galicia*) had laid the legal foundation for bilingual education through Title III of the *Linguistic Normalization Law of Galicia* (*Lei de Normalización Lingüística de Galicia*).[10]

Finally, the Åland Islands, a Swedish-speaking autonomous archipelago associated with the unitary state of Finland, also exercises the right to use its native tongue as the language of education in both public and private schools located in the archipelago. While all Ålandic public schools implement a monolingual educational system under which Swedish is the sole language of instruction whilst Finnish is merely an optional foreign language module, private schools may, if they wish, conduct bilingual education in Finnish and Swedish.[11]

To sum up, granting a minority group the right to use its native tongue as the language of education in public schools, as well as private ones, is now a legally-recognized reality that should be taken into consideration by the AKP during its second ruling period. Turkish public schools may practice a bilingual educational system akin to that being implemented in the private schools; alternatively, monolingual or multilingual programmes may also be taken into account by scrutinizing various European examples, including those examined in this study.

2.3 *AKP silence: the official use of Kurdish*

Turkish has been the *sole* official language of the Republican State since its foundation. Before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the 1876 Ottoman Constitution (*Kânûn-ı Esâsî*) – the only constitution of the Empire – had stipulated that '[e]ligibility to public office is conditional on a knowledge of Turkish, which is the official language of the State (art. 18)'. This stipulation was embraced by all Turkish constitutions adopted in the following years. The Constitution of 1921 (*Teşkilât-ı Esasiye Kanunu*) recognized Turkish as the only official language of the State by directly referring to Article 18 of the Ottoman Constitution. The next two republican constitutions – the Constitution of 1924 (art. 2) and the Constitution of 1961 (art. 3) – affirmed this status of Turkish. Finally, the current constitution, the Constitution of 1982, acknowledges Turkish as the mere official language of the Republic like its predecessors, but unlike them, the present constitution makes the provision pertaining to the status of Turkish (art. 3) an irrevocable constitutional provision (art. 4).

In spite of the absence of its recognition in the Turkish constitutional framework, the official use of minority languages is a right which is secured under both of the European minority-specific legal materials. The ECRML regulates this right through classifying it into

two basic classes: the official use by judicial authorities and the official use by administrative authorities. As regards the former usage which is preserved by Article 9 ECRML, the Charter stipulates that every provincial judicial organ established in a province where a regional or minority language is being spoken should, at the request of the parties, conduct all civil and criminal proceedings in this language; the organ ought to allow an accused or a litigant to use this language during all judicial processes; it shall not regard a request or oral/written evidence inadmissible on the grounds that it has been formulated in the regional or minority language; and finally the judicial organ ought to produce, on request, all judicial documents concerning legal proceedings in the regional or minority language.

As concerns the latter usage which is enshrined in Article 10 ECRML, the Charter reads that every provincial administrative body founded in a province where a regional or minority language is being spoken should enable the official use of this language within the framework of the provincial (local) authority; the administrative body ought to provide any user of the language with the opportunity to submit oral/written applications or documents and to receive a reply in her own language; the body shall make available widely used official texts and forms either in the regional or minority language or in a bilingual version; and finally the administrative body should be capable of using the regional or minority language in drafting official materials and providing its public services.

As for the other European minority-specific legal source, the FCNM, it also imposes some significant duties analogous to those of the ECRML upon the state signatories. With respect to the official use by administrative entities, the FCNM rules that

> [i]n areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those minorities so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the state signatories should endeavour to ensure the conditions which would make possible the official use of minority languages in the administrative authorities (art. 10(2)).

The following paragraph of the same provision deals with the official use by judicial institutions:

> The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter (art. 10(3)).

Many European countries that are implementing a progressive human rights regime have already incorporated these provisions into their domestic legal frameworks. The UK, for

example, authorizes the Welsh to use their native tongue officially. The process of ensuring the official use of Welsh was completed through two basic acts, the *Welsh Language Act 1967* and the *Welsh Language Act 1993*. While enabling the official use of Welsh in court proceedings, the former law also allowed Ministers to prescribe statutory forms in Welsh. As for the latter law which played a concrete role in building a bilingual nation in Wales, it dramatically broadened the scope of the previous act through granting Welsh the status of equal validity with English, resulting in the official use of Welsh in the entire public realm. In modern Wales, which is a devolved region of the UK capable of exercising executive and legislative competences through its own autonomous institutions, all public entities, including the Welsh National Assembly and the Welsh Executive, have a bilingual characteristic enabling both Welsh and English to be used officially.

Spain is also another example where minority or regional languages enjoy official status. While acknowledging Castilian (the dominant language) as the official language of the state, the Spanish Constitution of 1978 stipulates that autonomous communities might use their own regional official languages in pursuit of their statutes of autonomy (art. 3). In implementing this constitutional article, all autonomous communities where a language other than Castilian is being spoken – Catalonia, Galicia, Navarra, the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country and Valencia – have already incorporated a provision into their statutes of autonomy, thereby authorizing the regional public entities to use both Castilian and the regional languages officially. In Galicia, for instance, both Castilian and Galego have been granted official status by Article 5 of the *Galician Autonomous Statute of 1981*. These two languages have been used officially by all autonomous public institutions, including the Galician Parliament (*Parlamento de Galicia*) and the Galician Executive (*Xunta de Galicia*) since the construction of the Galician Autonomous Community.

Finally, Finland empowers the Åland Islands to use Swedish as its official language. According to the Finnish Constitution, both Finnish and Swedish are the national official languages of the State (art. 17(1)), permitting every Swedish-speaking Finnish citizen to use her native tongue in communicating with the nation-wide judicial and administrative institutions (Ihalainen and Saarinen, 2014). While the two languages are the national official languages, the sole official language of the Åland Islands is Swedish pursuant to Article 36 of the *Ålandic Autonomous Act of 1991*. Hence, all Finnish public entities, including the Council of State, are obliged to use Swedish in communicating with Ålandic autonomous organs (arts. 38 and 43).

In sum, granting a minority group the right to use its native tongue officially is currently a legally-recognized reality which ought to be taken into account by the AKP during its second ruling period. Turkey may recognize Kurdish dialects as national official languages by following the Finnish path. Alternatively, the Turkish language might remain as the sole national language of the State while acknowledging Kurdish dialects as regional official languages by following the British or Spanish patterns.

Conclusion

This article has sought to examine which minority language rights have been conferred upon the Kurdish people during the first AKP ruling period from November 2002 to June 2015. It is initially worth noting that the AKP has made important strides to compensate the harm done by the cultural togetherness policy. The Kurds can now exercise various minority language rights in Turkey: Kurdish broadcasting rights, the right to use Kurdish personal names, the right to use Kurdish place names, the right to use Kurdish in politics and the right to learn Kurdish. But nonetheless, there are still at least two crucial issues with which the AKP should deal during its second ruling period starting in November 2015.

The first is the use of Kurdish as the language of education in both public and private schools. Turkish private schools are now able to use Kurdish as the language of instruction, but this might not be enough. In the modern world, mother tongue education in *public* schools is a right that is not only acknowledged by minority-specific legal materials, e.g. the ECRML and the FCNM, but also exercised by various European minorities – such as the Welsh, the Galicians and the Ålanders – through monolingual, bilingual or multilingual educational methods. Hence, the AKP government may take into consideration such educational methods during its second ruling period, and it may eventually enable Kurdish to be used as the language of education in public schools.

The second is the official use of Kurdish. There has been no official attempt at granting Kurdish official status in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic. This circumstance might not be consistent with the spirit of the contemporary world, however. The official use of minority languages is currently a right that is both recognized by minority-specific legal sources, e.g. the ECRML and the FCNM, and exercised by a significant number of European minorities, the Welsh, the Galicians, the Ålanders, to name just a few. Therefore,

the AKP government may initiate a new policy during its second ruling period through which Kurdish might begin to be used officially.

Notes

[1] For a deep analysis of the two parliamentary elections, see Onis (2016).

[2] By 'linguicidal', Zeydanlioglu (2012: 103) underlines the *destructive* impact of the campaign upon languages other than Turkish.

[3] The oath includes several radical nationalist remarks, e.g. 'I am Turk' (*Türküm*); 'May my existence be a gift to the Turkish existence' (*Varlığım Türk varlığına armağan olsun*); and 'How happy is a person who calls herself Turkish' (*Ne mutlu Türküm diyene*). Uttering the oath was compulsory until 8 October 2013, when the Ministry of National Education abolished it through amending Article 1 of the Regulation on Primary Education Institutions.

[4] The examination of the PKK is beyond of the scope of this study. For more details on this terrorist organization and its disarmament process, see Belge (2016); Gunes (2013); Gunter (2016); Ozkirimli (2014); Tezcur (2015).

[5] The broadcasts were in Kurmanji on Wednesdays and in Zazaki on Fridays.

[6] The list of TV channels and radio stations broadcasting in Kurdish dialects can be found at http://kurtce.tvfre-kansi.com/.

[7] During the 2015 parliamentary election, for example, the AKP used the Kurdish song '*Carek Di*!' (Once More!), written by Aydın Aydın and Ferzende Kaya, and composed by Aydın Aydın. In the same election, the HDP used the Kurdish song '*Were HDP*' (Come to HDP), written and composed by one of the most important choirs of Diyarbakir, namely Diyarbakir Tev Çand.

[8] For more details on mother tongue education, see Derince (2012); Gok (2012); Kaya and Aydin (2013).

[9] For further details regarding the Welsh case, see Bradbury and Andrews (2010); Davies (1989); Gwyn-Williams (1985); Mann (2007); May (1999); Morgan (2006); Rawlings (2015).

[10] For more details on the Galician case, see Beswick (2007); Losada and Maiz (2005); O'Rourke (2014).

[11] For further details concerning the Ålandic case, see Daftary (2001); Hannikainen (2002); Suksi (2011).

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