

The Principle of Laicism and Counter State-building in Turkey: Reflections on History and on the Conjunction of Contemporary Politics

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Abstract

The principle of laicism has been one of the main pillars of the state-building process of Turkey. Laicism in Turkish context was held through incorporation of religious institutions into the state apparatus. Starting with the 1990s parties with Islamist background have gained political power and found their way into government. With some reflections on the historical evaluation of Turkish politics, this article accommodates western oriented theories of state-building suggested by prominent scholars such as Charles Tilly and Stein Rokkan, and Barkey's complimentary model of state formation for non-western societies. The key objective of this article is to scrutinize the relationship between the state and religion during the old and the new state-building processes of Turkey. This study provides systematic empirical evidence to the argument that Millennium has witnessed a well-organized counter state-building process carried on by the government of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Introduction

The leading scholars of state-building literature explain state-building as a three-fold process; first coercive penetration or pacification of rivals, second standardization and homogenization of the public and last, accommodation of specific groups or power blocs (Tilly 1975; Rokkan 1975; Van de Walla and Scott 2009). On the other hand, Barkey (1994) states that the nation-building process of a country may also include incorporation of rival bodies into the rule of state by creating new institutions to neutralise and regulate their power. The nation-building of Turkey can be explained by using these two roots of literature as it first started with elimination of internal rivals such as sultanate and caliphate, but it also included and aimed to subordinate ethnic and religious identity of people and glorified one and unique identity of being a Turk. On the other hand, the government of Turkey incorporated the main rival, religious authorities, into the state apparatus step

by step and subsequently, on a certain level prevented possible reaction of the opposition groups to these institutional changes. However, despite the ban on religious fraternities, religious organizations have never been ended completely and some of these religious groups have been organized to become political powers after the 1980s. The main argument of this study is that nowadays there is a well organized contra state-building project in Turkish politics, aiming to pacify the main rivals in order to increase the role of religion in the political sphere. This new stream of state-building process started with the new millennium and has demonstrated some similarities with the secular state-building of Kemalists in terms of its strategies for pacification of the internal rivals and oppositions, as well as accommodating specific groups in the state agencies. In light of the historical explanations, this article explains the relationship between religion and politics in the state-building process of Turkey and its impact on today's political situation. There are two main research

questions posed by this article; firstly, how religion and state have intertwined in the establishment of the Turkish Republic and secondly, how has the relationship between religion and state affected current political dynamics of Turkey? The time period of the analysis spans from the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1920s) to present (2011). The article is structured around the historical flow of events. In the first part of the article, the theoretical framework of the paper is outlined. In the second part, the main dimensions of the Kemalist ideology and the understanding of secularity in this ideology are clarified. The third section analyses changing dynamics of the single and multi-party regimes from the 1920s to the 1990s. The fourth part examines the AKP government and its actions during the 2000s. The article concludes with contextual and theoretical reflections on the current conjuncture of Turkish politics.

Theorizing State-building

The term state-building was first used by Charles Tilly (1967) in his prominent work "The Formation of National States in Western Europe", referring to the development of modern European bureaucracies from the 17th to the 18th centuries. Even though the terms of state-building and nation-building have been occasionally used interchangeably by scholars, according to Van de Walla and Scott (2009) there is a clear distinction between these two concepts. While state-building refers to "interventionist strategies to restore and rebuild the institutions and apparatus of the state", nation-building refers to "the creation of a cultural identity that relates to the particular territory of the state" (Van de Walla and Scott 2009: 7). Having this differentiation in mind, in this article the term of state-building is used with regard to the theoretical and conceptual characteristics framed by Charles Tilly and Stein Rokkan.

Even though some scholars such as Barnett (2002: 105) argue that "there are many paths towards state formation", Tilly (1985) argues that states carry four main activities. First, war-making and state-making actions take place. These activities include elimination or neutralization of the powerful rivals outside and inside the territories. Second, the action of protection is characterized by elimination or neutralization of the enemies of their clients. Lastly, the so-called extraction includes gaining the resources of carrying out the first three activities—war making, state making, and protection. All these activities have required states to create modern bureaucracies, and introduce systematic taxation that caused resistance from the population. As a result states

expanded the agencies and institutions to maintain domestic political order.

Going more in depth into these processes, Tilly (1992; 1999) emphasizes a process of coercive penetration of the state by the use of violence, elimination, and neutralization of internal rivals. The building of states cost European states enormous "death, suffering, loss of rights and unwilling surrender of land, goods, or labour" (Tilly 1975:71). It required elimination and subordination of many rivals inside as well as outside the territory. Tilly particularly focuses on taxation and food supply policies as structures of extraction and demonstrates that there was a violent resistance from European populations to the creation of strong states. In this context, Migdal (1988) also argues that local leaders should be considered as 'strong men' who are the biggest challenge to the state leaders by utilizing their socially structured powers. Particularly the multiplicity of local authorities such as landlords has resulted in a great extent of rivalry and resistance against state makers. In such an anarchical atmosphere, Tilly (1975) puts a special emphasis on the role of war in state-building activity and argues that war makes the state. In this process the formation of standing armies has played a particular role as "the largest single mean of state coercion over the long run of European state making" (Tilly 1975: 73). As a result of this specific and crucial role attributed to the army, European countries have acquired more freedom in intervening in domestic politics.

On the other hand, having and sustaining resources to subsidize militaries for the war against rivals and to maintain governmental activities have been a difficult task for states. More extensively used strategy for extracting such activities was the fiscal apparatus such as taxes on trade etc. (Tilly 1985) However, many scholars criticize Tilly's explanations about the relationship between war-making and state-making arguing that this model do not always fit to Third World Countries (Schwarz, 2004; Sorensen, 2001). Schwarz (2004) argues that war-making did not lead to a creation of Tillyan understanding of strong states which are effective, legitimate and centralized, in Arab Middle East. According to Schwarz (2004) there are no strong states in the region in terms of their tax collection and the degree of militarization and he suggests that countries' level of rentierism is the main determinant of the emergence of institutionally weak states in Arab Middle East.

Secondly, the standardization and homogenization of people takes place through utilizing public services such as public education and mass media. Riggs

(1997) describes this phase as a process in which the state policies are used as the main features to create a nation. This process includes creation of a national identity with common cultural manifestations such as religion and language. In these processes, protection is provided by established institutions such as courts and representative assemblies (Tilly 1985). The strategy of homogenization is particularly important because homogeneous populations are more likely to remain loyal to a regime of its own kind as well as more likely to fight against foreign domination (Tilly 1975). In heterogeneous populations there is a high risk of a policy failing in some communities whereas being successful in others. In homogeneous societies, the resistance to centralized policies of extraction and control is minimized as their style of life will be relatively similar to each other. Tilly (1975: 44) argues that "the failure to homogenize increased the likelihood that a state existing at a given point in time would fragment into its cultural subdivisions at some point in the future". However, some scholars (Migdal 1988) demonstrate that some countries such as Egypt with homogeneous and bureaucratized societies were not able to build a strong state because strong societies may prevent those states' capacity to centralize social control. In this context, homogeneous societies may face other circumstances, under which they will be more likely to oppose the central power by mobilizing their social, religious, or traditional links and common interests.

Having a similar approach to Tilly, Rokkan (1975) propounds four time phases for state-building of European countries. The first phase; initial state-building, includes cultural, political, and economic unification of the elite (Rokkan 1975). In this phase states establish institutions to maintain internal order and to provide common defence facilities. The second phase; standardization, is characterized by strengthening of national identity at mass level by using features such as conscript armies, mass media, education system. In this phase emerges a "widespread feelings of identity with the total political system" which are most probably conflicting with the existing identities (Rokkan 1975: 572). The third phase; participation, includes extension of political representation by allowing people to access a political system. In this phase new channels such as creation of new political parties are opened to furnish mass participation. The fourth and final phase, redistribution, refers to the period in which states expand their social rights by increasing the number of agencies of redistribution and public welfare services. This phase is characterized by

an extension of administrative machinery for the territorial state through the development of policies such as progressive taxation.

Additionally, Rokkan's famous four point cleavage theory offers two important revolutionary steps in the state-building of European countries. The National Revolution produces two-cleavage structures. Firstly, the centre periphery cleavage refers to "the conflict between the central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations in the provinces and the peripheries" (Rokkan 1970: 102). The second cleavage refers to the conflict between the long-established and privileged institution of the church and the state's activities to centralise, standardise, and mobilise the nation-state. On the other hand, the Industrial Revolution produced two other cleavage structures. The third cleavage addresses urban and rural differences and refers to "the conflict between the landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs" (Rokkan 1970: 102). Lastly, the owner-worker cleavage refers to "the conflict between owners and employers on the one side and tenants, labourers, and workers on the other" (Rokkan 1970: 102). As this article focuses more on National Revolution of Turkey, I will go more in depth in the explanations of first two cleavages.

First of all, on the subject of the centre periphery relations, the centre has a strong position in which it controls all the transactions among actors in the territory. There are three sets of relationships between centre and periphery. First, military-administrative system building includes the spread of new people into new territories by using physical coercion. This phase includes the organization of new army and police forces and creation of new administrative agencies. Public officers and bureaucrats are mostly involved in this process and peripheral communities respond to these actions with some resistance and counter mobilization (Rokkan et. al, 1970). Secondly, economic system building refers to 'penetration of commodities and services into new territories' by using exchange of goods and money (Rokkan et. al, 1970: 118). Lastly, cultural system building includes penetration of norms into new territories by using scripts. In this phase, local religions, churches and schools are organised by the elites such as priests, scientists and scribes. Linguistic, religious and ideological standardisation is imposed by central power through the peripheral community which demands to maintain its distinctive identity. However, this cleavage structure cannot be considered free from critiques.

Migdal (1988) finds this dichotomous distinction of societies problematic as he argues that societies are composed of various kinds of social organizations and state is only one of those institutions, which wants to have social control over the society. Similarly, Braddick (1991) finds it extremely short-handed to consider state as the centre. He argues that in the process of state formation states can be considered only as "a part of a network of local social relationships" (Braddick 1991: 4)

Turning to the cleavage of church and the state, Rokkan emphasizes the contradiction between the corporate claims of the churches and the state's will to control moral community norms. Besides the fundamental issue of the control of education, these two have long been in conflict over the issues such as marriage and divorce, functions of medical and religious officers and organisation of funerals (Rokkan 1970). Particularly, the establishment of compulsory education by the state has caused a strong resistance from the religious institutions and resulted in mass movements. The expansion of secularization and rationalization movements has subordinated the fundamentalist trends. In light of these explanations, Rokkan argues that Reformation and Counter Reformation have brought a momentous division of state-religion relations in Europe. In the process of Reformation, the struggle to take the control of religious organizations has taken place. These struggles have generated different results in different contexts. In Southern and Central Europe the Counter-Reformation consolidates the position of church and the privileged bodies of the ancient regime gain authority over the church. As a result, a high polarization of politics has arisen between the national-radical-secular movement and the catholic-traditionalist movement (Rokkan 1970). However, in Southern and Central Europe Counter Reformation opposition to the regime was not hostile to the teachings of the Church. First of all, the cultural integration of the nation has taken place and then the church has found its way in the new political order (Rokkan 1970: 117).

On the other hand, Barkey (1994) criticises the state formation theories of Tilly and Rokkan by arguing that they only characterise western patterns. She presents a non-western model of state-building by analysing the case of the Ottoman Empire. She aims to build a more explanatory theoretical model which could be capable of explaining non-western styles of state-building. Barkey argues that the Ottoman Empire used other means such as bargaining or negotiating with bandit armies rather than of coercion. However, this argument can be

questioned considering the period of single party rule of Turkish Republic (1923-1950). Kuru argues that "the secularists never saw Islamists as a negotiation partner" during single party rule (2004: 10). Barkey further argues that to control the rivals and social classes, the Ottoman Empire manipulated most of the classes in the society and incorporated those forces into the central state mechanism. Even though in the west, countries have been successful in building a centralized state through using the monopoly of coercion, it is not always necessary that this will be the way in each country. The 17th century Ottoman Empire witnessed different control mechanisms, including "low level of militarization in the country side" or "internal warfare with large scale bandits" (Barkey 1994: 231). In this context, Barkey criticises the assumption that the revolts are part of the state formation process. According to her, the study of the revolts requires to scrutinize state-society relations by taking the social structure of society and centralization of state policies into account. In this process "state selects a course of action that weights the structure of society against state goals, and society is shaped and reshaped through action and reaction" (Barkey 1994: 231). This dynamic relationship between state and society is the core in the difference of the existence of rebellion between western and non-western world. Contrary to many European states, the Ottoman Empire was able to subdue each social class accompanied by the relative weakness of the social structure allowing a relatively easier communication and organisation in the rural areas. As a result, rebellion activities were minimised.

Kemalism as an official ideology of the new Republic

The Turkish Republic was established after the Independence War which was held against the occupying forces of the Allies after the First World War. High respect by the elites and average citizens provided Mustafa Kemal Atatürk¹ with the legitimacy and power to become the founding father of the Turkish Republic. Atatürk also demonstrated outstanding political leadership skills in the building of a modern nation state. He had carefully developed a series of principles such as pragmatism, secularism, national sovereignty and empirical state controlled economy and processed a number of reforms in order to reach his main aim; modernization of the Turkish society.

¹ The Grand National Assembly of Turkey has given to Mustafa Kemal the last name of Atatürk on 24 November 1934 after the Law of Family Names came into force on 21 June 1934.

So called Kemalist ideology grounded its state-building project on three main pillars: 1) nation-building 2) western style modernization 3) separation of state and religion.

Looking back to the times of the Ottoman Empire, the idea of national identity as being a citizen of the Ottoman Empire did not exist because of the multicultural and multi-national characteristics of the Empire. Under the leadership of Atatürk, Turkey had two difficult tasks in building a nation-state: first to develop a western oriented society and second, to create a national identity (Kılıçbay and Binark 2002: 496). In this context, the authority of religion in the ruling of the state and in the daily lives of people was seen by Atatürk as a sign of backwardness and antithetical to progress. As a result, disestablishment of religion from the state apparatus played a central role in the state-building of Turkey. During this process, Islamic law was replaced with European law and many revolutionary steps were taken. The creation of a national assembly and the abolishment of Sultanate and Caliphate paved the way to the creation of a secularized state with the ruling power of the Grand National Assembly². Thus, the authority of religion and sultan/caliphate was eliminated and the Islamic religious communities have been integrated into the framework of nation and represented in the parliament. The understanding of Islamic community so called cemaat created an unconscious support for the perception of a nation in Turkish society (Mardin 2001). Article 1 of the first temporary constitution of Turkey stated that 'Authority, without any condition and reservation, belongs to the nation' (Constitution of Republic of Turkey 1921). The terminology of nation was not clear in the minds of people that may allow them to replace the meaning of it with the understanding of cemaat (Mardin 2001). The glorification of Turkish identity over religious or ethnic identities was the main aim. Thus, sub-identities caused by the multi-ethnic nature of the Ottoman Empire were to be subordinated to the everlasting unity of the Turkish society.

To prevent the new government from being labelled anti-religious, Islam was declared the official religion of the state (First and Second Constitutions of Turkey 1921/1924). However, religion was disestablished from the constitution in 1928, and in 1937 it was replaced with the statement that Turkey is a republican, nationalistic, populist, statist, secular, and revolutionist state

(Constitution of Republic of Turkey, 1924, Amendments to Art.2). These six founding principles reflect the basis of the creation of the Republic, however, the principle of secularism will be focused in the following part as it has a fundamental role in the context of this article. The Meaning of Secularism in the Republic: Laicism
The term of secularism has particular dimensions in the context of Turkey. Scholars argue that the perception of secularism in Turkey is different than its Anglo-Saxon conceptualization, which refers to separation of church and the state (Kılıçbay and Binark 2002: 496; Hocoğlu 1998). Kılıçbay and Binark (2002: 496) described the concept of secularism for the Turkish Republic as didactic secularism, which emphasizes "moralistic and pedagogical" characteristics as well as it includes a "controlling and teaching mechanism". In other words, the nation state aimed to regulate and administer religious practices and institutions. Kuru (2005) identified Turkish secularism as assertive secularism in which the state promotes secularism as a doctrine in regulating the public sphere and aims to limit the practice of religion to the private sphere. The first responsible office for religious affairs, the Ministry of Shar'iyah wa Awqaf, was created in 1920. The fusion of religious services and politics was abolished on 3 March 1924. However, religious practices were still under control of the state and administered by, the Directorate of Religious Affairs (The Diyanet), which was attached to the Office of the Prime Minister. This juncture aimed "to execute the works concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the public about their religion, and administer the sacred worshipping places" under the principle of secularism (Presidency of Religious Affairs). The Kemalist secular policies such as disestablishment of religious education, ban on religious orders, and ban on fez and turban accompanied by the introduction of western style clothes, all aimed to disestablish political power of Islam but they did not aimed to destroy Islam (Lewis 2002). It may be argued that the creation of such an agency has a preventive effect against certain practices of religion, which may be caused by traditional knowledge as well as exploitation of religion by uncontrolled religious establishments. Traditional and fundamentalist interpretations of religion and misleading knowledge of uneducated religious leaders may lead to the exploitation of religious beliefs for personal interest and may also lead to wrong practices such as oppression of women on the basis of incorrect religious knowledge. In the context of Turkish state-building process, on the one hand the separation of state and religion

² The usage of the word 'Grand' is seen as a political genius by Serif Mardin (2001) as it emphasize the pure authority of the nation in the ruling of it.

did not reduce the importance of religion but limited its practice to the private sphere of individual life. On the other hand, the creation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs provided a preventative body against the exploitation of religion that has no power to intervene in the operations of the political agencies.

Single Party Regime and Repression of Oppositions to Laicism

Nation-building of Turkey under a secular framework has been carried by the Republican People's Party (CHP) with the support of civil and military elites. However, solidarity and unity of military commanders existed during the Independence War have been weakened during the 20s. Ex-military commanders such as Rauf Orbay, Refet Bele, Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy, who were personally involved in the Turkish Independence War, ideologically conflicted with Atatürk and the CHP and attempted to form opposition parties. The Progressivist Republican Party (Terakki Perver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) is established in 1924 but closed in 1926 because the party actively participated in a plot attempt against Atatürk in Izmir (Baskan 2006).

Another source of opposition and the only remaining rival of the CHP about the provision of religious services was the religious community as at the era of Ottoman Empire all other intermediary bodies between state and the public were eliminated (Baskan 2006). Mosques and Sufi houses were the most important political challengers of the new government and its reforms, although they were one of the most important allies during the Independence War (Baskan 2006; Cizre-Sakallioğlu 1996). Particularly during the War of Independence, religious community; namely Sufi sheiks and houses, *medrese*³ teachers, imams at mosques and religious counsellors, were able to organize public, mobilize the resources and affect the ideas of public. At the end, as mentioned, Sufi houses were closed and all other religious institutions were regulated by a specialised agency in the strong state structure. However, Sufi houses have continued their existence and remained active even after their abolition. They survived and persisted beneath the surface particularly in the suburbs and the inner Anatolia (Lewis 2002). Yet, the restrictive policies and bans on brotherhoods and religious orders forced them to built underground organisations that also caused a series of religious rebellions starting with

the Şeyh Sait revolt in 1925. Particularly, during the 30's secularization efforts, the sole purpose of which was to put an end to the power of organized Islam, became very strong (Lewis 2002). All schools for imams and preachers were closed by 1932 and prayers started to be uttered in Turkish. This resulted in a lack of educated religious officials and in some places fanatic conservatives as well as illiterates started to handle a religious issue (Lewis 2002) that was one of the main reasons of religious revival till 50s.

In 1930, a new party was established with the support of Atatürk in order to pass to a democratic political system but evidently political dynamics of the country was not yet ready for such a shift and therefore the lifetime of the party (Free Republican Party, Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası) did not exceed a couple of months. The new party was established by some of the representatives who transferred from the CHP but their efforts to come into office were not appreciated by the CHP. Local public officers attempted to block the election speech of the new part leader, Ali Fethi Okyar, this caused public protests against those efforts. The police forces used firearms to stop the public protests and amongst the many injured, a 14-year-old boy was killed (Özgürel 2002). As a result, the new party was accused of causing anarchy and the party announced its closure on November 1st.

Laicism, Modernization and Reforms

There was no unified legal code during the Ottoman Empire. The legal system was based on both Sharia law and Martial law. While the former was dominant in almost all spheres of life, the latter was differentiated in accordance with legal customs of conquered countries and the needs of local societies. For example, while tax regulations were based on martial law, the family regulations were based on Sharia law.

The first radical reforms in Islamic laws in the whole Muslim world took place in Turkey aiming to totally modernise society as well as improve the status of women in society. In this process, the principle of secularism provided a suitable atmosphere to eliminate conservative and restrictive impacts of religious law. The new regime under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk esteemed in a duty to improve women's status in the society also to aid in the economic development of the new nation-state. According to Atatürk, a country could not develop if half of the society (women) stays uneducated and inactive (İçli 2003).

3 Refers to old theological seminaries and schools that give Islamic religious education

In 1924, the dual education system (religious education in medres and schools) was unified and women were granted equal rights to be educated with men. This important step eliminated gender segregation at the school system and gave women the same opportunities as men. The Sharia law was completely abandoned and replaced with a translation of the Swiss Civil Code in 1926. Under the new Civil Code, polygamy was abolished and monogamy based civil marriages became obligatory. Women were granted equal rights with men on inheritance, child custody, and divorce. This radical introduction of the Civil Code improved women's status in the family as that was the intended aim of Mustafa Kemal. According to him, the family was the basis of a society and happiness of the spouses in the family was a substantial issue because any degeneration in this basic institution might lead to the degeneration of the whole society (İçli 2003). Therefore, secular law aimed to improve woman's subordinate status caused by sharia law in both family and society and aimed to guarantee equality of spouses. The right to vote and to be elected was first granted to Turkish women in 1930 for municipal elections and in 1933 they gained the right to vote and to be elected in village headman and village council elections. Finally in 1934, with an amendment to the constitution, women were enfranchised in national elections. Women's enfranchisement in Turkey came before many Western countries such as France (1946) or Switzerland (1971) (Özdamar 2002: 50).

A new dress code introduced western type clothing to the citizens as a symbol of the modernization of their society. According to Atatürk, clothes, which were seen as a symbol of backwardness, had to be exchanged for modern clothes in order to build the grounds of a modern society. As a result, religious clothes, particularly the fez and turban, were banned and new western clothes were introduced. The banning of religious clothes can also be seen as an effort to embed secularism in the societal structure. However, the ban on veiling in universities did not exist before 1982. This law was made after the military coup in 1980 reflecting the military regime's efforts to follow and strengthen the reforms of Atatürk and thus to eliminate any signs of political Islam from the education system. In short, the Kemalist regime emphasised the importance of maintaining Turkish culture and identity, in which Islam was an integral part since 8th century A.D. Kemalist ideology urged for the limitation of religion to the personal level and removal of religious effects from the political life.

However, how is it that all these radical changes had

had little resistance from the public and was accepted by society? Although it would be a mistake to say that there was no resistance or opposition from society, it is appropriate to argue that mobilization capacities of the existent resistance groups were not well developed. Moreover, the ruling elite used some tactics to eliminate this resistance. Firstly, the establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs can be considered as the continuation of Ottoman pattern which included *ulema*⁴ into the state apparatus (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu 1996; Aydın 1995). Even though it lost its authority in the state bureaucracy, and its role reduced to a basic sub-ordinary and administrative one, the acceptance of new institutions by the public and religious communities was much easier. In this way, possible mobilization of the Ottoman based *ulema* was also minimized. In fact *ulema* had long been under the control of the state and therefore was not used to the action of opposing it (Lewis. 2002). The bigger threat to the new regime was the religious brotherhoods, which were independent from the authority and had a long practice of opposition besides its mobilizing capabilities. However, the composition of the First Grand National Assembly was covering all segments of the society including those brotherhoods and other religious representatives such as sheiks, dervishes, *ulema*, from all over the country (Baskan 2006; Lewis 2002). Thus, this representative composition provided a certain level legitimation and support to the decisions taken by the National Assembly. Thirdly, Islamic symbols were integrated into the secular nationalist discourses so to give legitimacy to the reforms and diminish the resistance. Terms such as jihad and holy war were commonly used to unify and mobilise society during the Independence War against the occupying forces (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu 1996). However, after the end of the War and secularising reforms of 1924, brotherhoods started to oppose the new regime. In the South East of Turkey a religious Kurdish nationalist rebellion, Şeyh Sait Rebellion, broke out in 1925 which afterwards gave the government legitimation to close down all the dervish convents. This was a rebellion which was mobilised on the basis of religious and Kurdish nationalist reasoning. Confirming Tilly and Migdal's arguments, this rebellion presents a good example of the mobilization and organization powers of local 'strong men'. Şeyh Sait, the leader of Naqshbandi school of Sufism, was able to mobilize society and to in-

4 Refers to a class of educated Muslim scholars who trained on several fields of Islamic studies and have a great influence on Islamic jurisprudence.

vade four cities of the Eastern Anatolia. In response, the government was given extra ordinary powers and the Law on the Maintenance of Order was passed and the Independence Courts were established in the Eastern Anatolia. Both the law and the courts were very effective in eliminating the rebellion and opposition movements up until 1929. These regulations also gave the army a special power to intervene in any kind of anti-regime movements. Secularisation reforms happened in a societal environment, where there was no national bourgeoisie. During the Ottoman rule, the possible formation of national bourgeoisie was impeded because of the fear that this class may mobilise the society against the Ottoman rule (Arslan 2008). In the absence of such a class which may be a supporter of the new regime, the military played a very important role in protection of Kemalist values which may be an explanation for the future military coups as well.

Multi Party Regime and Revival of Islam after 1950s

With the transition from a single party to a multi-party regime, the Republican People's Party (CHP) which was the ruling party of Turkey for over 25 years was defeated by the Democrat Party in free and fair elections. Although the reforms of the new Republic were quite successfully adopted, as mentioned before, laic policies and reforms unintentionally provoked the underground politicization of Islam by political parties and social groups (Karakas 2007). The DP came to the Turkish political scene with its religious discourses. Adnan Menderes, party chairman of the DP, openly stated his support on extension of religious values and stated that the DP freed religion from the pressure of previous administrations (Yücekök 1976). By adopting such policy through religion, the Democratic Party built a political ground in which social and political groups support more Islamic ideas to get the opportunity to find their place in the parliamentary system (Karakas 2007). Many scholars such as Dursun (1995) argue that as a reaction to CHP's repressive policies towards religion, religious orders such as Said-i Nursi were strong supporters of the DP. Thus, the DP followed a populist policy towards religion and provided a lot of freedom for organized religious activity (Dursun 1995). On the other hand, Cizre-Sakallioğlu (1996) states that instead of Islam being a political ideology of the DP, the strategy adopted by the DP was more the promotion of religion for electoral success and liberation of cultural religious traditions. The steps taken by the DP; such as setting up Imam

Hatip Highschools for educating prayer leaders and preachers, or re-establishment of religious broadcasts, was not an objective to dismantle the secular state but to give respectability to traditional culture and Islam (Cizre-Sakallioğlu, 1996).

Beside its support for religious freedom, the DP started to carry on more authoritarian policies in order to suppress opposition parties and groups. This authoritarian behaviour resulted in a military intervention in 1960 as the military had been playing the role of safeguard of the secular Republic (Arat 2010). So called most liberal Constitution of Turkey by now was drafted by 27 army officers in 1961. It created checks and balances system, brought the superiority of constitution instead of superiority of the parliament and expanded civil liberties and freedom of expression. In this relatively free environment, the Islamic National Order (Milli Nizam) Party was founded in 1970 but immediately closed by the constitutional court because it violated the principle of secularity (Arat 2010). Another party called the National Salvation Party superseded the National Order Party and became a coalition partner from 1974 to 1977 (Cizre-Sakallioğlu 1995). This party was one of the first legitimate political organizations that justified its religious political position to achieve its long term ideological purpose of emboldening the role of Islam in the scene of Turkish politics (Cizre-Sakallioğlu 1995). To identify the reasons of people's support to this political party is not an easy task. Beside its religious and traditional identity, its economic and political self placement favouring small and national based manufacturing might be attractive to the people (Weiker 1981). With the military coup of 1980, the National Salvation Party was closed as all other political parties.

Another Islamist party—Welfare Party (RP)—which took a position against the principle of westernisation and laicism, became the main coalition partner in 1995 and the leader of the party Necmettin Erbakan became the prime minister in June 1996. However, the RP was not as radical as the previous Islamist political parties in terms of its opposition to the existing system. Particularly, after coming into office, the policies of Erbakan became drastically more moderate. It was also in this period that an Islamist bourgeoisie started to grow out. The effect of socialist Islam reduced by the end 80s and capitalism penetrated into the Islamic ideology. However, during the rule of the RP, many of its members stated their purpose of bringing the Sharia into the country. As the military considered itself to be the main guardian of laicism, on 28 February 1997 the National Security Council

issued an ultimatum asking the government to prevent anti-laic activities. This ultimatum has been widely considered as a post-modern coup. Erbakan's government did not show a satisfying performance to the military's expectations on stricter implementation of Kemalist dress code and secular educational reform (Sezgin 2003). As a result, Erbakan resigned in June 1997 and the RP was closed by the constitutional court in 1998. Six members of the party including Erbakan and some ministers of state were prohibited from being involved in political parties for five years on the basis of evidence of their non-secular and anti-laic ideological discourses, statements, and actions.⁵ The Virtue (Fazilet) Party (FP) was established before the closure of the RP and after the closure it played a substitute role and all the representatives of the RP transferred to the FP. However, similar to many other Islamist parties, its life time was also not very long though this party played a crucial role in the formation of two mainstream Islamist parties of contemporary Turkish politics: The Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Felicity Party (SP). Particularly, the AKP came into the power as a single party government by 2002.

Millennium and the AKP Government

In 2002 Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) became the political victor and won the majority of seats (363/550) in the parliament. Erdoğan's previous anti-laic statements⁶ and attempts to increase the role of Islam in politics during its government have deepened the polarization of public in the country and received negative responses from the Kemalist elite and the military. It is commonly argued by Kemalist elites that the AKP has a secret or closed agenda to transform the secular state into an Islamic one (Kuru 2005; Kongar, 2010). In the first term of the AKP, a more moderate conservative ideology was followed and a policy to improve its relations with the global powers was carried out. Numerous steps were taken for a closer integration with the EU. Their success in providing a more stable economic growth helped them to respond to popular demands of the people (Arat 2010; Sezgin 2003). As a result, in 2007, the AKP won the elections with 47% of votes and 340 (over 550) seats in the parliament. In its

5 To see the full text of the decision of the court with reasons please visit the website at the URL:

http://www.belgenet.com/dava/rpdava_g01.html

6 To watch a video on a composition of these statements please visit the following website;

<http://www.kontratv.com/259102/akp-ve-laiklik>

second term, the AKP changed its policies and started to apply more targeted and deterring strategies against its opponents. This article argues that ideological roots of the policies applied by the AKP are much more complex and deeper than they seem to be.

In Turkey, judiciary, military, state bureaucracy, educated professionals and the president have always been in favour of Kemalist principles, particularly laicism, and they always hold a position against the Islamist parties. For the first time in the history of Turkish Republic, a president with Islamist background, Abdullah Gül, was selected in 2007. By placing their candidate in the presidency seat the AKP broke one of the rings of the chain among the guards of laicism and made the first step in the way for not only restructuring the government bodies but also for the new legislation through a more Islamic state. As expected, president Gül in his first year in office (from August 28, 2007 to August 20, 2008) only vetoed 2 of the 116 bills that were sent in for his approval (Haber Aktüel 2008). A second strategy used by the AKP, particularly in its second term, has been a policy of attrition among the opposition groups namely; the military, the judiciary, educated professionals and the media. The first claims of the government have been the existence of a military organization the so called Ergenekon, which plans a military coup in Turkey. At the time of writing this article, no real evidence has been introduced to the public to prove the existence of such an organization. Under the framework of the police operations against the Ergenekon, elites of opposition media, academicians and military officers were arrested without demonstrating serious evidence.⁷ These arrests have been strongly criticized by leading lawyers, opposition politicians, and journalists as being illegal because of the fact that the reason for the accusation has not been stated (Hürriyet Daily News 2011). In addition to the Ergenekon, many superior military officers as well as retired ones have been arrested under the authority of a prosecuting attorney. Beside Ergenekon, the claims about so called Balyoz Coup Plan (Balyoz Darbe Planı) have been legitimate instruments for the arrests of 196 military officers (Usta 2001) but the evidence has never been presented to the public under the privilege of secrecy on criminal investigations.

The neutrality of judiciary was interrupted by the government when phone lines of judiciary, politicians and Kemalist elite were tapped. Under the framework of 'democratic' reforms on the Supreme Board of Judges

7 By 14 February 2011, the number of people under arrest is reported as 117 (Gazete A24, 2011).

and Prosecutors, the appointment of the majority of members has been transferred to the executive power (Ekşi, 2010). On the other hand, pressure was put on critical voices from the media in an attempt to silence them. The biggest opposition media group of Doğan TV Holding was made a subject of heavy tax penalties. Erdoğan encouraged not buying the newspapers of opposition group media. Combined with the harsh effects of the Global financial crisis, these actions created distrust against state agencies and a chaotic atmosphere in Turkish politics.

Besides the activities of coercive penetration and pacification of rivals and critical voices, the AKP has also used strategies to permeate traditional or religious values into the educational system. Not only conservative religious values have started to be integrated into school books but also the overall quota of the theology faculties were drastically increased from 813 in 2007 to 5620 in 2009 (Ilıcılı 2009; Kotan 2009a). The books for high school philosophy courses were revised and changed in the way to prioritise the philosophy of religion and concept of wisdom (Kotan 2009b). Thus, teachers have been required to teach the philosophy of religion and to prove the existence of God by using cosmological, ontological, and theological proofs (Arat 2010). The teachings of religion in the education systems have long been used as a feature to bring up new generations with more conservative values. The conservative values mostly subordinate women's status in the society and therefore contradict Kemalist ideology. Whenever "... the public education system is used to legitimise religion and religious values, then the space for expanding opportunities for women or for fighting against restrictive roles that orthodox interpretations of Islam endorse becomes narrower."(Arat 2010: 874).

It has not always been necessary for the AKP to implement conservative policies on its own. On the contrary, the AKP has long used accommodation policies to grant its mostly religious proponents with civil service, state bureaucracy, and educational positions. As a result, these institutional structures have been implementing and applying those norms actively instead of the AKP. According to Arat (2010: 873), "AKP does not have to implement a systematic plan to promote traditional roles sanctioned by religious readings. However, religious cadres infiltrating the state bureaucracy and the educational institutions propagate these values because this is part of their socialization".

Supporting the arguments of this article about the Islamist background of the AKP, some conservative poli-

cies started to be applied addressing the issue of alcohol consumption. AKP-backed municipalities took over the supervision of alcohol-selling restaurants and cafes and put economic and regulative pressures on them. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has issued a decree limiting alcohol licenses of restaurants only to chosen districts and prohibiting the social clubs of sports teams from serving alcohol (Arat 2010; Hürriyet 2005). This decree has been subject to profound criticism by opposition groups, arguing that the AKP is intervening in an individual's private life, trying to impose an Islamic lifestyle.

The first decade of millennium in Turkey witnessed a counter state-building project of the AKP against the Kemalist principle of laicism. After gaining legitimacy of its power by getting elected a second time in 2007, the AKP on the one hand has increased its efforts to eliminate its rivals and on the other hand has widened its efforts to place its proponents into the state agencies. A deep polarization of society, with the Islamists on the one side and the Kemalist laics on the other seems beyond doubt. The existence of such a divided atmosphere has varying impact on different divisions of the society, including women. The issue of veiling and its symbolic meaning of political Islam put women at the centre of these discussions. Political discussions on the promotion of religious norms have left footprints on the politics of Turkey, so have the antidemocratic actions of the government.

Conclusion

Despite the existence of the principle of laicism and secularization movement for almost a century, what is understood by the identity of Turkish people is still that of being a Muslim Turk. In one respect, this demonstrates that Kemalist ideology did not impose features to create an atheist society. On the other hand, religion has been accepted as an aspect of Turkish culture but its practice has been limited to the private sphere of citizens. What was surely rejected by the Kemalist ideology was the politicization of Islam as it was seen as the main barrier standing in front of the modernization of the society.

Tilly and Rokkan's explanations on the stages of the state-building processes—penetration of rivals, standardization, participation, redistribution—complemented by Barkey's view on incorporation of rival bodies into the centralization of state have been explanatory theories to the historical phases of Turkish state-building. In the early state-building of Turkey, all of these processes

have occurred but not in row order. On the contrary, each step has taken place simultaneously and complementary to each other. In accordance with the arguments of Barkey, early periods of Turkish state-building witnessed the incorporation of religious institutions to the state apparatus. However, on the contrary to the analyses of Barkey on the Ottoman Empire period, these actions resulted in a certain level of rebellious activity. This is due to the fact that some coercive means are used during the process of incorporation.

This article argued that state-building of the Kemalist Republic produced a certain level of counter state-building action after the government of the AKP. The argument of counter state-building of the AKP lends some support to Rokkan's concepts of Reformation and Counter-Reformation. He argues that the struggles 'between state and church determined the structure of politics in the era of democratization and mass mobilization three hundred years later' (Rokkan, 1970: 116). During the establishment of the Turkish Republic a Reformation process was held by the time's political power: the CHP. Nowadays, the political scene

undergoes a Counter-Reformation process. As a supporter of conservative and Islamist trends, the AKP has gained power as a reaction to the Kemalist ideology. However, the Turkish Republic was built on strong secular roots and there is still a strong Kemalist elite guarding laicism vis-à-vis the AKP and the newly born counter semi-elite group including intellectuals, Islamist bourgeois, and academics. The voices of the opponents of the government have started to be silenced by the new state-building ideology causing a deeper reaction by those strata of the society. Thus, a counter homogenization of public seems to be difficult to achieve. Instead what seems to be taking place today is that of a stage of polarization of Turkish politics and public between nationalist-secularists and Islamist-traditionalists. It may be argued that this polarization has long been existent but it would not be misleading to argue that it has never been as evident as nowadays. The new dynamics of Turkey make it more difficult for citizens to be neutral about the issue of laicism, thereby increasingly forcing them to be either laic or Islamist.

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