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The Condition of the Post-Kemalist Public Sphere in Turkey*

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Turkey has transitioned from the Kemalist to a post-Kemalist era. One of the major purposes of Kemalism was to secularize Turkey on a modern Western model. The authoritarian and illiberal elements of this secular program have now largely been repealed. A headscarf ban barred many women from education and occupation for more than a quarter century, but it was finally lifted in autumn 2013. The military guardianship of the Kemalist regime had posed an endemic dilemma for Turkish democracy. The troubled civil-military relations were reformed in the 2000s in the negotiation process with the EU, and the civil government now reigns supreme. The mass media no longer kowtows to the military; it has become a loyal supporter of the civilian government. Repression against things Islamic has been eased, and Kemalism is no longer the dominant ideology. Turkey has completed this shift to post-Kemalism in terms of its political regime.

For some time now, as such reforms have progressed, observers both inside and outside of Turkey have been talking about a new era in Turkish politics, one in which the traditional "secularism-Islam dichotomy" no longer holds.[1] As noted by a prominent scholar of contemporary Turkey, people of a secular liberal profile are now less concerned with the "threat of Islamism" than with the increasing conservatism of the governing Justice and

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[1] For example, see Jenny B. White, "The Turkish Complex," *The American Interest* 10 (4), 2 February 2015, https://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/02/02/the-turkish-complex/ (Accessed 1/2/2018).

Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP), whose roots can be traced back to a series of Islamist parties.[2] In this view, the obsolescence of the secularism-Islamism paradigm is epitomized in the so-called Gezi protests of summer 2013, which brought together people from all ideological perspectives for the defense of freedom and civil spaces against the encroachment of the neo-liberalist and authoritarian state, and all without any mobilization by established ideological organizations. Many secular liberal commentators praised the secular(ist) participants for the tolerance and respect they showed to Islamist participants at the demonstrations.

In my recent interviews with civil and political activists and members of parliament, all agreed—regardless of their political affiliations or the extent of their religiosity—that the era of secularism-Islamism opposition had given way to a post-Kemalist era. One member of the central decision-making organ of the AKP even went so far as to tell me that the AKP government had secured the predominance of the elected government over the state apparatus. According to my source, the era of state and military "guardianship" over elected governments had come to an end.[3] This person also said that while the AKP's core politicians and electorate included pious Muslims, the party was fully secular and had no desire to establish systems or policies based on any sort of Islamic understanding.

Yet discourse on Islam continues to abound in the public sphere, and domestic opposition figures and the international media often voice concerns about Islamic socio-political pressure rising in tandem with what is perceived as the increasing authoritarianism of the Turkish government. Has the era of secularism-Islamism opposition truly ended? If so, how should we understand the political implications of the salience of Islam in Turkey and the concerns about it held by the secular public?

Turkey is in a difficult time, pressed to cope with many problems within and without. Each of these problems is a sign that a transformation is underway, but the nature of that transformation is a vexed question. In this paper, I try to answer why the shift to a post-Kemalist era and the transformation of Islamism into conservatism have not so far led to a resolution of the secular-Islamic divide. I do so by discussing the features of original Kemalism and Islamism on the one hand and those of the post-Kemalist secular(ist) and the Islamic and conservative publics on the other, by situating each of them within the dominant ideological and power-political conditions of Turkey's past.

The international dimension has always been important for the domestic development of Turkey and for all actors within the country, regardless of their particular ideological positionings. Throughout the modern era, the Ottoman Empire and Turkey have always been exposed to a combination of power politics and normative judgments exercised by international power. The normative dimension of this power includes several of the most important issues characterizing politics in Turkey today, such as religious-civilizational identification/differentiation and the international and domestic stratification of people and social groups in accordance with the Western-centric norms. These affect diverse areas of the social-political and everyday life of people in the country, ranging from delimiting national and regional boundaries to organizing everyday socialization in

[2] William Hale, "Nationalism, Democracy, and Islam in Turkey: The Unfinished Story," *Middle East Journal* 64 (1), 2010, 127-134.

[3] Personal interview in Ankara, 25 January 2012.

line with differences of habitus, especially those pertaining to gender and lifestyles. This identification/differentiation mechanism operates not only domestically but also internationally, and it affects Turkey both from within and from without, sometimes separately but usually in combination. Turkey is still trapped under this combination of forces. Based on interviews I have conducted during my occasional visits to Turkey, in addition to other primary and secondary sources, I explore why this is the case.

Ⅰ. Kemalism in the Modern International Normative Hierarchy

I would like to start with some terminology. As a generic term, "secularism" points to specific attitudes about the relation of religion and state in favor of the secularity of the state or secular authority's predominance over religion, as illustrated in the way the term is adopted to describe state-religion relations in the Western countries. "Kemalism" is the name of a set of founding principles of the Turkish Republic, one of which is secularism. But in this paper, I use Kemalism as a specific version of state-religion relations peculiar to the secularist state in a predominantly Muslim society. Secularism was not a mere plan for a secular institutionalization of the state; it was a civilizational project for a new nation, and civilization was conceived as Western modernity.[4]

The imperialist West ruled and made the rules of the increasingly globalized modern world. In doing so, it also imposed an ethnocentric imaginary of a global hierarchy of norms. The Kemalists were attracted to the hegemonic appeal of Western modernity and sought to reform the state, nation, and society in accordance with its ideals. They also felt that such reforms were a prerequisite for survival in international politics. This was the lesson they drew from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It had been a player in the geopolitical arena of Europe throughout the modern period but had always been treated as a geo-culturally ambiguous player. Othered by European and modern Western identity, it had collapsed in the midst of European imperialist rivalry. The Kemalists viewed the Ottoman plight as their own, and felt pressed by the same forces.

The Kemalist elites sought recognition within the hegemonic normative hierarchy of Western modernity as a full-fledged member of civilization. Kemalists did not pursue a recognition based on difference, but one based on assimilation to the hegemonic power. Their perception of the hierarchy is reflected in the peculiar load on the word "modern" in the Kemalist dictionary, an approximation of Western modernity. In contrast, "the Islamic" was the antonym not only of "the Western" but also of "the modern," and was regarded as an obstacle to be overcome. Secularism, understood and intended in this way, became the raison d'être of Kemalist Turkey. In this regard, Kemalism was both an anti-imperialist movement and a kind of internal colonialism. Though the Kemalists were indigenous people, they embraced exogenous normative values and thereby were situated in opposition to their own people. In order to achieve Western modernity, the Kemalists made great efforts to acquire "the secular habitus," as Nilüfer Göle describes:

[4] Nilüfer Göle, *Islam and Secularity: The Future of Europe's Public Sphere* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); and Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books, 1997).

> Practices and reforms such as abandoning the veil, compulsory coeducation, social mixing of men and women, free love, equal rights for men and women, women's performance in public… The habitations of the secular are not transmitted naturally and implicitly, but on the contrary, become a part of a project of modernity and the politics of the self that require assimilation and acculturation to a Western culture.[5]

> The colonial nature of the issue is this. … In Turkey … the sphere of habitus was targeted to create a secular, modern self. Reorganizing habitus in accordance with Western criteria and tastes was considered the precondition for becoming an elite. … This was not only a matter of voluntary choice but a reflection of the power relations [between the Western and the Islamic].[6]

The Kemalists sought to create this secular habitus through a program of social engineering carried out under an authoritarian regime, adopting a "colonialist" attitude akin to the "civilizing mission" of the West.[7] During the early years of Kemalist Turkey, strange reforms were introduced to transform things relating to Islam into something more Western, or at least to disconnect them from local traditions. For centuries, Islam had provided codes for legitimacy and morality and operational and mobilizing mechanisms in polity and society. In the Kemalist view, Islam thus had to be tightly restricted, surveilled, and engineered to appear Western, if not fully confined to the sphere of individual conscience. The Arabic alphabet and language were forbidden; the Quran was only allowed in Turkish, written with the newly adopted Latin alphabet, and prayers had to be conducted in Turkish as well. Benches were introduced into mosques in order to alter the way of prayer, and a new melody in the Western classical style was adopted for the call to prayer.[8]

Because this "colonialist" project did not succeed in transforming the Islamic rituals and the habitus of the whole nation, the Kemalist habitus, embraced by a small group of elite, has kept the Kemalists aloof from the general public regardless of their level of religiosity/secularity. The Kemalist habitus as a symbol of the ruling elite's cultural capital fostered the formation of a kind of interest group that connected, through the Kemalist web of social capital, people from all fields relating to power. These included politics, the bureaucracy (including the military), the judiciary, the economy, media and culture, and academia. It was a matter of course that Kemalists behaved as an elite social class since in their eyes they were distinguished from the rest of the nation by the criteria of Western modernity. By the 1990s, they began to look for a way to maintain the purity of their daily lives, insulated from people from other social classes. For example, they found a solution in purchasing second homes in suburban residential areas, called *site*, to spend their weekends. These *site*s allowed them to segregate themselves from other people of their economic

[5] Göle, 2015, 64-65.

[6] Ahmet İnsel, "Prof. Nilüfer Göle: Kemalizm, Müslüman Laikliğin En Gelişmis, Evrenselleşmiş Biçimi," *T24*, 16 February 2016, http://t24.com.tr/haber/prof-nilufer-gole-kemalizm-musluman-laikligin-en-gelismis-evrensellesmis-bicimi,389112 (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[7] Göle, 2015, 64; and Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), 1996.

[8] Masami Arai 新井政美, *The Modern History of Turkey: From an Islamic State to a Nation State* 『トルコ近現代史－イスラム国家から国民国家へ』(Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo みすず書房, 2001, published in Japanese), 215-216.

class who did not share their habitus.[9] With the rise of Islamic middle class from the 1990s onward, Islamic *site*s also emerged. But these were permanent residences and did not bear the class dimension that the Kemalist weekend *site*s inevitably did.

Against this backdrop, the increasing visibility of Islamic symbols in places that had once been regarded as the "sphere of influence" of Kemalism led inevitably to frictions. The headscarf was problematized only when it "transgressed" into the Kemalist sphere of influence, into places that were supposed to represent the modern civilized appearance of Turkey. These included the bureaucracy and parliament, both symbols of the nation, but also extended not only to schoolteachers and professors but even to students as the future candidates for the elite. It did not extend, however, to the cleaning personnel working in such places. But headscarves in housing and welfare facilities for military personnel were regarded as "transgressions" of the Islamic into the lifeworld where the Kemalist habitus should thrive, as were full-body Islamic swimming suites called *haşema* on the beach; both caused frictions. The headscarf issue was never merely an issue of secularist-Islamist rivalry over state power, nor an issue of religious neutrality or secularity of public spaces, but was inherently an issue of the quality of the elite who were in the authoritative positions to constitute and embody the norms of the society.

Counterintuitively, even under Kemalism, Islam has always been the primary marker of national identity in modern Turkey. The very notion of "Turk," the name of the member of the nation during the Republican period, shows the ambiguity of the matter. In modern colloquial Turkish, "Turk" does not include non-Muslim nationals of Turkey, even if Turkish is their mother tongue. Historically, "Turk" was a generic name for Muslims in Ottoman Europe and Anatolia. Turkey is the rump state of the Ottoman Empire, which was dissolved by various internal independence movements—each of which had a sense of nationality based on its own religio-ethnic identifications—and external imperialist powers, both collaborating in the context of the Eastern Question.[10] "Turks" fought the war of independence against these forces.[11] While constitutionally, all citizens of Turkey are "Turks" regardless of their religion, neither the government nor the state organs,[12] let alone a majority of the people, have internalized this more expansive definition of Turkish national identity. This identity has always been based on a logic of religious identity and religious difference. Though the Kemalists thought that the ideal Turk and Turkish citizen must be secularized and Westernized, secularity in Turkey has never reached a point where people do not concern themselves with other people's religious affiliations. In line with

[9] Sencer Ayata, "The New Middle Class and the Joys of Suburbia," in *Fragment of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey*, ed. Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 25-42. For an intriguing familial and personal history of her own that describes the perspectives and experiences of the elite of each time from the Ottoman to the Republican periods, see Nükhet Kardam, "From Ottoman to Turk and Beyond: Shimmering Threads of Identity," http://ottomantoturk.middcreate.net/author/admin/ (Accessed 1/2/2018), especially chapter two for those of a Kemalist family.

[10] Karen Barkey, "Thinking about Consequences of Empire," in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building, The Soviet Union and Russia, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires*, ed. K. Barkey and M. von Hagen (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 99-114.

[11] For the usage of "Türk" in one year of an early republican school textbook, see, for example, Süleyman Edip and Ali Tevfik, *İlk Mektep Çocuklarına Yeni Tarih Dersleri: Sınıf 4* (Istanbul: Sanayii Nefise Matbaası, 1929).

[12] It is interesting to see the minister in charge of relations with the EU along with the minister in charge of foundations in official meetings dealing with issues relating to non-Muslim citizens of Turkey, with leaders of non-Muslim confessional communities.

another Kemalist principle—ethno-Turkish nationalism—the ideal citizen has always been a secularized but Muslim Turk, at least until recently.

Kemalism never envisaged secularism as a social contract, nor state institutionalization as a way of coordinating competing interests and stakes among various religious—Islamic or non-Islamic—and secular groups. Moreover, it was not a liberal ideology embracing multicultural tolerance. As a result, all the groups with stakes in state-religion relations felt that they were minorities in some sense. Non-Islamic groups were treated as a fifth column, although this perception was based on their religio-ethnic ties with neighboring states—states that had won their independence from the Ottoman Empire—rather than simply on religious differences. Meanwhile, groups like the Syriac people, who never developed modern nationalism, were also often treated as scapegoats in times of escalating international tensions. They were national suspects. The Alevis, heterodox Muslims, also have a centuries-long history of oppression, and their situation was never improved under Kemalism. Yet the Alevis opted to take refuge in Kemalism, at least those Alevis who could identify themselves as ethnic Turks. Since Kemalism was a combination of secularism and Turkish ethno-nationalism, they tried to find a way to be part of the mainstream society by emphasizing their Turkishness in spite of Kemalist indifference to protecting religious minorities.

Meanwhile, the Kemalists were not immune from the minority feeling, either. In spite of their position as power elites, they were numerically a minority group because of their attitude toward Islam and the general public, most of which maintained a Muslim identity and conservative values to some extent.

Islamists situated themselves differently from other groups in terms of the majority-minority positioning. While they were labeled a threat to the state (that is, to the Kemalist regime) and were therefore often oppressed politically, they shared with the society the same fundamental religious identity and worldview and maintained a mobilizing potential about which the Kemalists were very anxious. In this regard, Islamists held a belief that they were the authentic representative of the nation.

Ⅱ. Islamism as Identity Politics Within and Without

Defining Islamism in modern Turkey is a conundrum. The conventional definition of Islamism is as a political movement demanding the introduction of Sharia.[13] In Turkey, however, especially after Kemalism established an authoritarian regime and imposed radical secularization policies (ranging from abolishing the Caliphate to introducing the Western legal and education systems), all Islamic movements opposing Kemalism could appear Islamist, regardless of whether they demand the reintroduction of Sharia. Under Kemalism, Islamic movements, including religious orders and political parties, were harshly oppressed and criminalized, especially when they had mobilizing potential in society. Calling for Sharia in public became almost impossible. Islamic opposition to Kemalism was labeled

[13] For a critical discussion about definitions of and approaches to Islamism, see Frédéric Volpi, *Political Islam Observed* (London: Hurst & Co., 2010), 5-9.

irticacı (reactionary), connoting opposition to modernity and progress. The words *dinci* (religionist) and *İslamcı* (Islamist) were used interchangeably with "reactionary" in the Kemalist-dominated public sphere. Because of the pejorative usage of the term "Islamism" by Kemalists, but also because of sensitivities to its Orientalistic undertones as an import from the Western-centric academic world, members of Islamic movements generally avoided using it as a self-description. Nonetheless, Islamists themselves could not find an adequate name for themselves. During conversations I had in the late 1990s with people taking part in such movements, like the *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) movement, I often had problems in continuing our conversations once I carelessly used the word "Islamist." The word offended them to such an extent that the conversation could never go beyond the explanation that I was not there for the purpose of judging Islamism from a Western-centric normative standpoint. Interestingly, though they were offended when the word was used by others, they did not have a generic name for themselves as people who were religious activists as distinct from ordinary members of the religious-conservative general public. This aversion to the term "Islamism" began to change when the AKP declared that it had "removed the shirt of the *Milli Görüş*" (*Milli Görüş gömleğini çıkardık*), thus disassociating itself from the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP), which was banned on charges of Islamism. Since this declaration, people have been freer in using the term in talking about themselves in the 1990s, because there is no longer a fear that talking about one's involvement in the *Milli Görüş* movement would expose the AKP to the danger of a ban.

Historically speaking, Islamist traditions in Turkey date back to the modernizing reformist and progressivist movements of the Ottoman Empire in the modern period.[14] The most successful Islamic political movement in the Republic of Turkey was the *Milli Görüş* movement, which set up successive parties under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan from 1970 on, with a new party established every time the old one was dissolved on charges of violating the principle of secularism. The core members of the movement were the followers of Mehmet Zahit Kotku, a sheikh of the Nakshbandi Sufi order, and many of them were technocrats and businesspersons. Erbakan himself had a doctorate in mechanic engineering from the Technical University of Munich.

Milli Görüş had a very peculiar understanding of the socioeconomic structure of Turkey and the surrounding international environment. It opposed not only the Kemalist regime but also, in the 1960s and 1970s, the right-of-center Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP), which represented the interests of big businesses and the alliance with the West. Süleyman Demirel, the leader of the AP, who assumed the premiership several times and presidency once in his life, was also a hydro-development specialist, originally from a small town of Anatolia. Demirel had a conservative profile but defended Western-oriented policies in the spheres of national development and foreign policy. He was a lifelong political rival of Erbakan, with both competing for the votes of conservative electorates.

Erbakan accused the Kemalist and center-right elites of being Freemasons. The accusation was based on a conspiracy theory with wide currency in Turkey, according to which an alliance of Jews, Freemasons, and big businesses in the West and their political

[14] See, for example, the article of İsmail Kara in this issue: İsmail Kara, "A Few Notes on Islamist Thoughts and Movements in Turkey," *Sophia Journal of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Studies* 35, 2017, 131-159.

representatives in Turkey were carrying out plots to rule the world behind the scenes. *Mason* (freemason) and *komprador* (comprador) were terms that frequently appeared on the pages of the party organ *Milli Gazete* and in the discourse of party activists.[15] This scheme neatly fitted the anti-colonial third-worldist mentality of society and the domestic political and economic order in which, in their understanding, their authentic values, which were the true values the nation, were confronting foreign and imperialist values embraced by the local agents of imperialism. Therefore, *Milli Görüş* was very clear about what they were against: Kemalism within and the Western world and Zionists outside.

Sporadic shouts for the introduction of Sharia at party meetings provided the state grounds to close the parties of the *Milli Görüş*, but those Islamic symbols and slogans were not necessarily founded on a concrete vision for an Islamic polity. One of *Milli Görüş*'s central policies was to equip young people with both modern scientific knowledge and Islamic moral values, and it was only in the 1990s that the RP articulated a clear Islamic system under the name of the "Just Order" (*Adil Düzen*).[16] For the conservative and Islamic public, "justice" connotes Islamic moral values, and the Just Order was a kind of socialist state with some Islamic features: It involved a redistributive development policy in which investment in heavy industries was to be allocated to less-developed regions of the country, thereby counterbalancing the socio-economic divide between different regions and, as a result, class disparity. The Islamic characteristics in the *Milli Görüş* political program were denoted in such policies as an interest-free finance system and anti-Western and anti-Zionist foreign policies.[17]

In spite of the confrontation between them, Islamism and Kemalism shared an important cause: modernizing Turkey and gaining the recognition of the dominant global power center. They were both reactions to the rise of Western modernity, which was not only progressive but also aggressive in its universalist claim. The Kemalists opted for assimilation into the hegemony project, and here they diverged from Islamism. For the latter, the cause of modernization needed to be achieved based on a Muslim identity and Islamic tenets. Despite these differences, and though neither side would likely recognize their common cause, the two forces were both modernist movements, and upheld visions of a developed Turkey that would occupy an honored place in the international community.

On this point, it is possible to regard Islamism in terms of identity politics in both a domestic and an international context. Identity politics is a movement of minorities aiming to take back the power of self-identification from the majority and to publicly re-identify themselves by liberating themselves from their earlier subaltern positions and by locating themselves in the center and subject positions.[18] Islamist movements, with their avowed aim of overturning "colonial relations," had to engage with identity politics domestically against Kemalism and globally against the Western-centric normative hierarchy and international political and economic order upon which that hierarchy rested. At the level of national

[15] Binnaz Toprak, *Islam and Political Development in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 97.
[16] Necmettin Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Düzen* (s. l., 1991); and Şevket Kazan, *Saadet İstiyorsanız Adil Düzen* (Refah Partisi Kartal İlçe Teşkilatı, n.d.).
[17] Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1975).
[18] Kazue Sakamoto 坂本佳鶴恵, *The Power of Identity: Can a Subject Speak about Discrimination?* 『アイデンティティの権力－差別を語る主体は成立するか』 (Tokyo: Shinyosya 新曜社, 2005, published in Japanese), 189.

politics, this naturally led them to a kind of Islamic nationalism focused on developing the national economy; at the level of foreign policy, it led them to stake out an independent or oppositional standpoint against the Western-centric international order. The official slogan of the *Milli Görüş* movement was "Make Turkey Great Again" (*Yeniden Büyük Türkiye*).[19]

From this perspective, the AKP could be understood as a continuity of *Milli Görüş* despite the party's official denial. The meaning of *milli* in President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's usage these days overlaps with that of the *Milli Görüş*, although his usage sounds less *umma*-centered and more domestically focused. Erdoğan's emphasis tends to vary from one context to another, but it is always inspired by an image of the Turkish state and nation founded on the Ottoman legacy. As a result, it could easily swing from one extreme to another: At one extreme, progressive policies for improving the conditions of the Kurds, non-Muslims, and Alevis—especially from 2008 through 2010—were framed in terms of the legacy of multi-religious and multi-ethnic coexistence under Pax-Ottomanica. At the other extreme, national solidarity under the grip of the AKP was imposed with exclusionist statements that drew a line between those who supported the AKP, described as the "local and national" (*yerli ve milli*), and those who did not, who were thus ostracized as foreign and other. A speech Erdoğan gave during the general-election campaign in 2015 illustrates this point:

> With the help of some White Turks, you [pointing to the Kurdish Left party and its supporters] are striving to maintain your existence. In the 1 November elections, I want you [pointing to the audience at the rally] to send to parliament 550 deputies, regardless of which party they run for, but who are *local*, *national*, and who will give their bodies and souls to the country. . . . We will not be double-crossed again. It does not befit us to fall again into the same traps that have been laid for the past 200 years.[20]

In that election, a key rival of the governing AKP was the Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP), a Kurdish Left party that supported the Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*, PKK), a Marxist Kurdish guerrilla force fighting against the national army. Other pro-PKK forces in Syria had already been recognized by Western governments and peoples as their competent boots-on-the-grounds in the war on the so-called Islamic State (IS). Not only the AKP but also almost all parties and the major part of the general public in Turkey feared that a Kurdish state could emerge in a region spanning both sides of the Turkish-Syrian border. "White Turks" (*beyaz Türkler*) means the Westernist secular(ist) elite, who came to enthusiastically support the HDP. The HDP had developed a secular and multicultural discourse in order to attract the liberal secular Turks, Islamic non-ethno-nationalists, conservative Turks who prioritized decreasing socio-political tensions, and Kurds in general. All these groups were potential supporters for the AKP if it wanted to broaden the ideological range of its support base while remaining a centrist party. The framing of "white Turks" and separatists in collaboration with foreign

[19] Erbakan, 1975, 10.

[20] "Erdoğan: Meclis'e 550 Milli ve Yerli Milletvekili Gönderin," *Radikal*, 20 September 2015, http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-meclise-550-milli-ve-yerli-milletvekili-gonderin-1437713/ (Accessed 1/2/2018). Emphasis added.

powers is a familiar mixture in the stuff of Turkish nationalism, recalling a national history going back to the decline of the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and evoking conspiracy theories of collaboration between foreign powers and local agents on the other. In the *Milli Görüş* version of this conspiracy theory, the local agents were the Kemalists and Westernist center-right elites; and the profiles overlap with the profiles of "white Turks" in Erdoğan's statements.

Ⅲ. Post-Kemalist Condition

3.1. Retreat of Kemalism

The post-Kemalist era began with the end of the Kemalist regime's hold on power. The authoritarian tutelary regime lost both its constitutional basis and its legitimacy, even among secular(ist) intellectuals and media commentators. This shift to post-Kemalism was a decades-long process with both institutional and psychological dimensions. In terms of the institutional dimension, it stripped the Kemalist elites, especially in non-elected positions in state organs like the military and the judiciary, of the constitutional basis for their tutelary role. This was realized with the help of the EU accession process, which accelerated democratization reforms during the first years of the twenty-first century.

The institutional shift was complemented by the psychological dimension, which was reflected in public reactions to socio-political events during the AKP period. An early sign of this was rift that opened between secular liberals and staunch Kemalists after a series of illiberal and undemocratic measures taken during the so-called 28 February process. During this process, leading figures from the judiciary, the media, big businesses, and universities—that is, the traditional core of the Kemalist elite—followed the military guidance in order to secure their predominance. A coalition government led by the Islamic RP collapsed in 1997 and the party was banned in 1998. The headscarf ban was implemented in almost all state organs and state-controlled institutions, including private schools and universities. As a part of the process, a veiled woman elected to parliament in the 1999 national election was removed from office and even stripped of her Turkish citizenship. The secular liberals were very small in number but showed their opposition to such policies by supporting veiled students in universities and at demonstrations or even by writing for Islamic media organizations as columnists (although they were forced to do so because they had been dismissed from the secularist and opportunist media). They successfully established a liberal cultural-pluralist discourse and convinced the secular(ist) democrats that the Kemalist tutelary regime was a major obstacle to Turkey's democratization.

The year 2007 was full of decisive events in the shift to post-Kemalism.[21] The process of the presidential election in parliament, in which the candidate from the AKP was expected to win, turned into another showcase of how the Kemalist tutelary regime worked. The People's Republican Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) sabotaged the session in parliament for the election, upon which the constitutional court complied with the strategy

[21] It is telling that the year opened with the assassination, in broad daylight on a public street, of a journalist of Armenian origin, Hrant Dink. Though the murder was most likely the result of ethno-nationalism run amok, the general public viewed it as expressing the dark side of the Kemalist regime.

of the CHP and ruled that the session failed to meet the quorum. Although there was no clear constitutional stipulation and this rule ran counter to a conventional judicial precedent, by ruling so the court effectively allowed the CHP to veto the results of the presidential election. The AKP government then decided to seek the judgment of the people by calling an early general election. It gained a landslide victory, and the new parliament elected the candidate from the AKP for the new president. All through the process, though the military played a role at the beginning, it was noteworthy that there were no public cries for the military to intervene in politics, not even at the massive demonstrations mobilized by Kemalist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in major cities, or in the secularist and opportunistic mainstream media.[22]

In this atmosphere, some prominent scholars of a secular profile joined the AKP in its project of writing a post-Kemalist constitution that would, among other things, lift the headscarf ban. The following year, in 2008, charges were brought against the AKP for allegedly violating the principle of secularism and calls arose for the party to be closed. Though the indictment relied more on media accounts taken from the internet and the news rather than on serious investigation or legal evidence, the constitutional court nevertheless found the AKP guilty and imposed a fine on it. That same year, charges were also filed against many active and retired military officers as part of the so-called Ergenekon and Balyoz court cases for their suspected involvement in plots to overthrow the AKP government. Many defendants were sentenced to imprisonment for life. Although these cases were overturned several years later on grounds of insufficient evidence and procedural impropriety, they served as the final blow to the legitimacy of the Kemalist tutelary regime.

The psychological shift to post-Kemalism was accelerated by swift growth in the economy, the fruits of which were at that time being felt by the whole nation. The quality and accessibility of public infrastructure was improving across the board, from transportation to social services.[23] It was also a high time of liberal foreign policies aiming to maximize mutual interests for both Turkey and neighboring countries by taking measures to accelerate international economic transactions, transnational communication, and mutual understanding. Turkey was engaging in mediatory roles in several regional conflicts, including the Israel/Palestine conflict. Turkey was finally being recognized as an honorable member of the international community; and this long-standing aspiration had been achieved not as a Kemalist state, but as an emerging Muslim middle power under a more democratic government. This was a decisive turning point in the shift to post-Kemalism, even among people of a Kemalist background. A case in point is a Turkish professor I interviewed in 2011. The professor, originally from a Kemalist background but now a secular liberal, told me that even secularists were impressed by how economic development

[22] In a poll conducted on 5-6 April 2008, however, 48 percent of the respondents said that they would view the potential intervention of the military in politics in a positive light. This seems to indicate that even though there was public support for military intervention, publicly expressing such sentiments had come to be perceived as illegitimate. KONDA, "Biz Kimiz? Hayat Tarzları Araştırması," 20 February 2009, 7, http://konda.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2008_04_KONDA_Hayat_Tarzlari.pdf (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[23] Ziya Öniş conceptualizes the AKP's developmental policy as "social neo-liberalism," which should be distinguished from neo-liberalism in the sense that the former employs redistributive policies. See his "The Triumph of Conservative Globalism: The Political Economy of the AKP Era," *Turkish Studies* 13 (2), 2012, 135-152.

under the AKP had raised Turkey's global standing, as exemplified in the rise of Turkish Airlines as one of the top world airlines.[24]

3.2. Changing Class Experiences, Banalizing the Islamic

The shift to post-Kemalism means not only the waning of authoritarian, illiberal secularism as the state ideology and dominant political force but also the change of the "colonial" social-class relations.[25] Economic development and the rising living standards of the whole nation, and of the electorate of the AKP in particular, contributed to this change. More importantly, these socio-economic changes coincided with the rise of consumerism among the Islamic part of the nation, members of which participated in this trend both as businesspersons and as consumers. During the AKP period, the divide in terms of social-class experiences between the Kemalists and the rest of the society narrowed. Symbolic places and experiences of consumerism in such places as shopping malls and franchise cafes became more familiar to members of the middle class, regardless of their religiosity/secularity or gender. Islamic fashion industries have thrived over the last few decades and there has even appeared a "Muslim high society" (*Müslüman sosyete*), symbolized by "[a] new fashionable Muslim woman who is increasingly savvy about creating her own style, who wants to catch the eye, and who is often able and willing to pay the price."[26] Taking vacations to seaside resorts or to other touristic places in Turkey or abroad has become common even for pious people, especially those living in the cities.

The Islamic has permeated spheres with which it had not previously been associated, such as consumption and global communication, and this caused the banalization of the Islamic.[27] In fact, many Islamic people with whom I have had conversations over the last two decades claim that it is artificial to divide Islamist and Muslim public from the right-of-center standpoint, stating that about 70 percent of women in Turkey wear a headscarf in one style or another. According to this claim, the majority of the general public do not have problems either with headscarves or with Islam in general, and that except for some very marginal tariqa members and the Kemalist elite, they have never segregated each other in everyday life. At the same time, Islamic people have begun to construct their own kinds of cultural capitals signifying higher status, which has led to the formation of a class divide among the Islamic and conservative public.

A scene from the Caprice Hotel,[28] a famous five-star resort hotel known for its Islamic atmosphere, illustrates this trend. I heard this anecdote from a pious Muslim woman, let us call her Ayşe for now.[29] For four or five years, she had been spending part of the month of

[24] Personal interview in Antalya, 6 March 2011.

[25] Nick Crossley, "Social Class," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Grenfell (Durham: Acumen, 2012), 85-97.

[26] Banu Gökarıksel and Anna J. Secor, "New Transnational Geographies of Islamism, Capitalism, and Subjectivity: The Veiling-Fashion Industry in Turkey," in *Muslim Societies in the Age of Mass Consumption: Politics, Culture, and Identity between the Local and the Global*, ed. Johanna Pink (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 41.

[27] Nilüfer Göle, "Islamic Visibilities and Public Sphere," in *Islam in Public: Turkey, Iran, and Europe*, ed. Nilüfer Göle and Ludwig Ammann (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2006), 5.

[28] For the backdrop to the opening of the hotel, see Mücahit Bilici, "İslam'ın Bronzlaşan Yüzü: Caprice Hotel Örnek Olayı," in *İslam'ın Yeni Kamusal Yüzleri: İslam ve Kamusal Alan Üzerine bir Atölye Çalışması*, ed. Nilüfer Göle (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1999), 216-236.

[29] Personal interview in Ankara, 28 September 2012.

Ramadan with her husband and some of their young children at the hotel. In Turkey, pious people are often intermingled, in terms of socialization and marriage, with traditional or less-practicing Muslims, and people who do not observe fasting or the daily prayers are also among the guests of the hotel. In order to attract both Islamic guests and non-secularist but not necessarily strictly observant Muslims, the common spaces of the hotel do not adopt gender segregation.[30] The only gender-segregated places are the swimming pool and beach. The beach is divided into places for family use and for women-only use, but there is no panel separating the two parts of the beach, so everyone can see the other part of the beach. The hotel has several restaurants, some of which are open twenty-four hours a day, while others are open only for the breaking of the Ramadan fast. One year, Ayşe says that she saw a woman who veiled adequately in Islamic terms (*tesettürlü*) begin eating at a restaurant of the latter kind before the end of the day's fast, and doing so as if it were totally normal. In Ayşe's eyes, such public disregard for the fast could be overlooked if it were done by someone who was not *tesettürlü*, but to see an overtly pious person doing so caught her by surprise. She said that her husband, too, does not usually practice fasting, and that she always complains to him that he should go to another type of restaurant if he is going to eat during the fasting period. He answered that he prefers eating at this type of restaurant because the dishes there are fresh and he can enjoy the time with his family. Based on Ayşe's observation, many guests at the hotel practice neither fasting nor daily prayers, excusing themselves because they are on vacation (in line with an Islamic exemption allowing travelers some leeway in terms of their religious duties). She said that many people enjoyed music and socialization until well after midnight. This could result in omitting the *teravih* prayers, a popular prayer conducted collectively in the very late evening every day during the month of Ramadan, and sleeping through their morning prayers.

As Ayşe's story illustrates, piety is no longer a symbol of a traditional lifestyle or habitus. Islamic symbols have become part of urban socio-cultural lifestyles, which are sometimes highly modern and other times are merely the continuations of the past. They are situated somewhere on the continuums of two poles between the modern and the traditional on the one hand, and between the secular and the Islamic on the other. The modern pole does not necessarily overlap only with the secular pole. Islamic symbols exist at various intersecting points along the two sets of continuums. With the rise of a new urbanite, middle-class Islamic habitus, the notion of the modern, which had been loaded specifically with the image of Western modernity in the Kemalist lexicon, has been liberated to some extent from such connotations.[31]

Young people, for example, are pursuing entirely different styles of living and socialization from those of their parents. The sight of a veiled girl having a chat with her female friends at a cafe, or even meeting with a boyfriend in a public place, has become a familiar scene in big cities, especially if there is a university. Meeting a boyfriend has come to be regarded by some parents, especially mothers, as something necessary if the two are meeting to get to know each other before embarking on marriage, but only on the condition

[30] According to Bilici, this was the hotel owner's strategy from the beginning. See, Bilici, op. cit., 217, 234.
[31] A study conducted by KONDA offered the category of "conservative modern" (*muhafazakar modern*) in addition to other two modern categories, both of which are secular(ist), in terms of the secular-Islamic continuum. See KONDA, 2009, 23-25, 34.

that the relationship be kept within certain modest bounds. Likewise, a decade ago, Islamic men and women did not shake hands with guests of the opposite sex, but doing so has now become a usual way to show their respect and hospitality to foreigners.

Just as consumerism leads to both structural homogeneity and symbolic heterogeneity,[32] modern-day socio-economic developments standardize lifestyles and habitus to some extent while preserving symbolic varieties because people are various in terms of their values and tastes. Individuation gains importance under the conditions of modern consumerism, and symbolic differences are a major tool of producing and displaying that individuation. Islamic symbols, too, serve as salient markers of identity and difference within the global modernizing dynamism of homogenization and heterogenization, while also functioning as symbols of otherness in the Westernized sections of the globe and of endogenousness in many Muslim societies.[33]

The banalization of the Islamic has also been driven by the permeation of Ottoman-inspired nationalism in the society. Ottomanist foreign and cultural policies during the AKP period have fostered a sense of national unity among people who are different in the extent of their religiosity but are stable in their Muslim identity. The immense popularity of Ottomanist soap operas like "Muhteşm Yüzyıl" (The Magnificent Century) since 2011 can be understood in this context.[34] Those who were out in the streets to support Erdoğan on the night of the failed coup in the summer of 2016 were people who have cultivated the pride of being a Turkish citizen during the AKP period. They defended Erdoğan and the AKP government because they felt that Turkey was greater than ever, both in the international arena and in terms of the national living standards. Their support for the AKP government reflects a sense that the expectations of society for recognition were being satisfied under this government and Erdoğan's leadership, and that this sentiment was not necessarily limited to the Islamic electorate. It was, therefore, natural that among the crowd were many women who did not wear headscarves. They know that it is they who enabled Erdoğan to assume the premiership and the presidency and Erdoğan knows that he depends on these people.[35] Against this backdrop, the AKP has comfortably positioned itself as a hegemonic center party with an Ottoman-Islamic imaginary; its ability to do so epitomizes the post-Kemalist normalization of the Islamic in Turkey today.

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[32] Uri Ram, cited in Dilek Kaya Mutlu, "The Cola Turka Controversy: Consuming Cola as a Turkish Muslim," in Pink, op. cit., 119. For the original article, see Uri Ram, "Liquid Identities: Mecca Cola versus Coca-Cola," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10 (4), 2007, 465-484.

[33] On this point, see Kaya, "The Cola Turka Controversy"; and also Tanfer Emin Tunç, "Between East and West: Consumer Culture and Identity Negotiation in Contemporary Turkey," in Pink, op. cit., 73-86.

[34] This drama triggered an outcry among Islamic-conservative audiences for its depiction of the sultan Süleyman, whose reign is generally admired as the golden age of the empire, as given to sensual pleasures and drink. This led to a controversy among members of the government and the general public about whether the drama should be put under official censorship, though such a measure was never implemented. For articles suggesting how this drama meets the demands of audiences with different ideological backgrounds and class tastes, and how the controversy represented the problems facing the media and expression more broadly, see Ahmet Hakan, "Ve Nihayet Çaktı 'Muhteşm Yüzyıl'a," *Hürriyet*, 26 November 2012, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ve-nihayet-cakti-muhtesem-yuzyil-a-22013384 (Accessed 1/2/2018); and Mustafa Akyol, "Muhteşm Yüzyıl'a Ne Yapmalı?" *Star*, 28 November 2012, http://www.star.com.tr/yazar/muhtesem-yuzyila-ne-yapmali-yazi-707520/ (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[35] This is the reason why Erdoğan conducted so many party meetings and ribbon-cutting ceremonies during election campaigns and at other times when he was the prime minister; after assuming the presidency, meetings with district heads (*muhtar toplantısı*) were added to the list.

Ⅳ. Reverberation of Old Oppositions

Now that the Kemalist tutelary regime has ended and the Islamic has been normalized and banalized, what has happened to Kemalism's "colonial" relations with the rest of Turkish society? As pointed out in the first section, the Kemalists themselves had felt that they were a numerical minority in terms of cultural capital.[36] Such minority feelings were expressed in the form of both anxiety and contempt by Kemalists and secular liberals around 2007, the very year in which there was a surge of critical political events, as described above, symbolizing the shift to a post-Kemalist era.

The anxieties were expressed in catch phrases such as "neighborhood pressure" (*mahalle baskısı*) and "anxious modern" (*endişeli modern*). The former was coined by Şerif Mardin, a prominent historical sociologist of Turkey. While he did not necessarily focus on religious pressures, this term stimulated discussions, especially among the secular(ist) public, that revealed how anxious the secular(ist)s were about pressures imposed by religious Sunni Muslims.[37] Sometime later, a polling company with a secular orientation conducted a study about the variety of plural lifestyles in Turkey, and found that 11 percent of the respondents had the "anxious modern" profile, the archetype for which is the well-educated urbanite who works as a bureaucrat, professional, or white-collar worker in the private sector, who is close to the CHP ideologically, and who fears that a Sharia regime may be established in Turkey.[38] Another study,[39] conducted by a secular NGO, detailed the neighborhood pressures that Islamic and Muslim conservative people imposed on the lifestyles of seculars, Alevis, and non-Muslims in terms of clothing, drinking alcohol, gender relations, and religious observance. In the postscript of the book, Binnaz Toprak, the coordinator of the research and future deputy of the CHP, explained why this research did not cover the pressures pious Muslims were experiencing. The reason for this, she wrote, was that the discriminations and pressures experienced by secular people were

[36] According to a study conducted in 2011, only 7 percent of the people in Turkey drink alcohol more than once a week. Another 7 percent drink once a month, and 69 percent have never drunk. Restrictions on consuming alcohol have been one of usual conflicts between the Islamic government (including the local governments) and the secular(ist)s. Hazal Özvarış, "Söyleşi: Anketlerde Erdoğan'ın Söylediği gibi Kafası Kıyak Gezen bir Nesil Yok," *T24*, 27 May 2013, http://t24.com.tr/haber/anketlerde-erdoganin-soyledigi-gibi-kafasi-kiyak-gezen-bir-nesil-yok,230717 (Accessed 1/2/2018). But this study also shows that, while alcohol is not a concern for majority of the general public, this does not mean that these people welcome alcohol restrictions. In fact, they may react negatively to their state's intervention in people's personal lives, as when, in 2013, many within Erdoğan's own party and columnists known for their support for him objected vociferously when Erdoğan sought to prevent university students of different sexes from sharing the same flat. In the end, Erdoğan gave up introducing such a prohibition.

[37] For interviews with Mardin and the range of public reactions to the idea, see Ruşen Çakır, ed., *Mahalle Baskısı: Prof. Şerif Mardin'in Tezlerinden Hareketle Türkiye'de İslam, Cumhuriyet, Laiklik ve Demokrasi* (Istanbul: Doğan Egmont, 2008). Also worth mentioning is Berna Turam's account describing the frictions seen in everyday urban lives as a result of the mutual encroachments of conventionally segregated "spheres of influence," so to speak, happening due to the gentrification of quarters traditionally inhabited by conservatives, and of the changing balance between Kemalist and Islamic political forces felt through alcohol restrictions by local administrations. See Berna Turam, "Are Rights and Liberties Safe?" *Journal of Democracy* 23 (1), 2012, 113-115.

[38] KONDA, 2009, 23; and Bekir Ağırdır, "Endişeli Modernler," *T24*, 21 October 2010, http://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/bekir-agirdir/endiseli-modernler,2658 (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[39] Binnaz Toprak et al., *Türkiye'de Farklı Olmak: Din ve Muhafazakarlık Ekseninde Ötekileştirilenler* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2009). The research was conducted between December 2007 and July 2008.

underrepresented in academic studies in comparison to those of religious Muslims.[40] The Kemalists were selected as an object of the research, along with Alevis, non-Muslims, and other minorities, under the category of "a new other in Anatolia, the seculars."[41]

In contrast to these concerns expressed in the shape of sophisticated studies by secular liberal intellectuals, hawkish secularist columnists of a popular daily newspaper resorted to demeaning descriptions of the typical electorate of the AKP. For example, Bekir Coşkun created an imaginary figure, a "man scratching his belly" (*Göbeğini kaşıyan adam*),[42] as a caricature of supporters of the AKP in the midst of the controversial 2007 presidential election. The man was depicted as someone lacking education, intelligence, and civility, who obeys everything authoritative Islamic personalities say and yet whose vote decides the democratic government of Turkey. Coşkun publicly declared his disgust at the fact that Turkey's democracy depended on such people.[43] Such insults could easily evoke among the general public the century-old "colonial" relation between the Kemalists and the rest of society.

In this regards, the Gezi protests in 2013 were both the burst of this anxiety and contempt and the moment that the continuing schisms over the legacy of Kemalism rose to the surface. Nonetheless, the Gezi protests have been remembered in contrasting ways by those who took part in the protests and by the supporters of Erdoğan. For the secular liberals, they marked the culmination of the post-Kemalist "decolonization" moment. Göle reflects on the psychology of the secular liberals as follows:

> The respect accorded to Islamic rituals and observant Muslims by the secular protestors was a compelling indicator that something new was afoot at Gezi Park. The traditional antagonisms were giving way to a new spirit of understanding and cooperation. In a moving scene, while a group of observant Muslims performed their Friday prayer in the park and under rain, other protesters, including members of the young atheist association, held umbrellas over them.[44]

The observant Muslims mentioned here are the anti-AKP Islamist Left, who call themselves anti-capitalist Muslims. Since the familial and social environment of the secular liberals has been inseparably intermingled with that of the Kemalists, seeing such a scene must have been moving for the secular liberals, because that moment proved that it is possible for a secularist to be a liberal with a multicultural sensitivity on the one hand, and without being a colonial paternalist in a predominately Muslim society on the other.

This view of matters was not, however, shared by everyone. There were many,

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[40] Ibid., 200.
[41] Ibid., 47-50.
[42] Bekir Coşkun, "Göbeğini Kaşıyan Adam…," *Hürriyet*, 3 May 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gobegini-kasiyan-adam-6449176 (Accessed 1/2/2018).
[43] Bekir Coşkun, "Göbeğini Kaşıyan Adam -2-," *Hürriyet*, 26 July 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gobegini-kasiyan-adam-2-6962013 (Accessed 1/2/2018). Some other repertories of insulting phrases for the AKP electorate are listed in Meryam Gayberi, "Millet Dedi ki Ben Buradayım," *Sabah*, 18 July 2017, https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/ aktuel/gayberi/2017/07/18/millet-dedi-ki-ben-buradayim (Accessed 1/2/2018).
[44] Göle, 2015, 20. Emphasis added.

mainly from the right-of-center and right-wing (both Islamic and ultra-Turkish nationalist) factions, who opted to support the AKP and Erdoğan in the subsequent elections because of the protests and the series of political events following them. These events, to note but two, included a bribery scandal in which several ministers and their sons—including Erdoğan's—were alleged to be involved; and strife between the faction of Erdoğan and that of Fethullah Gülen, the self-exiled religious leader many Turks believe to have developed a network of loyal followers occupying positions of pivotal importance within the bureaucracy, including the military, intelligence organizations, and police, in addition to establishing educational institutions, the graduates from which were expected to develop the network further.[45]

In contrast to the romantic memory of the secular liberals, which generally focused on Taksim Square, the supporters of the AKP government focused their angle on places outside of the square. Many veiled women were attacked physically and/or verbally in public spaces and even places far from the sites of protest, although not necessarily by secularists. In addition, there were instances of people at the protests damaging public infrastructure, looting, setting up barricades, and using Molotov cocktails against the riot police. Insults and expressions of hate were exchanged between the opposing parties in virtual and real public spaces. The process as a whole was a traumatic experience for AKP supporters. They believed that the way the protests suddenly burst from a small innocent demonstration at the initial stage into a nationwide event was proof that behind the protests lay a plot to topple the government.[46] Here again emerged a conspiracy theory, similar to that espoused by *Milli Görüş* in the past.[47] But it should be noted that the people of Turkey, regardless of their particular ideological affiliations, were all quite familiar with conspiracy theories. That is why many people from the center and right-wing factions were ready to accept the claim that there was a plot aimed at overthrowing the AKP government, and why they were so determined to support the party and the leader, Erdoğan.

The Gezi protests showed that a post-Kemalist rapprochement between the secular and the Islamic in Turkey, only possible once reciprocity is achieved, had yet to come true. On the contrary, events over the following years indicate that, just as post-colonialism does not mean the erasure of the colonial imprints in the colonized society, people must keep coping with the divide that emerged under Kemalism. This divide will not be easy to overcome.

[45] For the strategy of the Gülen group in gaining socio-political power, see Berna Turam, "Split City versus Divided State in Turkey: Contrasting Patterns of Political Opposition to AKP's Authoritarianism," *Cont Islam* 11 (2017), 185-199.

[46] In the summer of 2013, I often heard from people, including supporters of the AKP, that among the protesters in the initial period were even the children of deputies from the AKP. Some AKP supporters told me that their own children also wanted to join the protests, which hope was often quashed by the family. The generation gap of opinions among the AKP electorate was evident in my interviews with Islamic people well before the protests. In these narratives, young people were embarrassed with the gap between the Islamic discourses of the party and the negative ethical records of the party, such as corruption and the aggressive discursive manners of the party politicians and pro-AKP activists and media commentators. The result of the 2017 constitutional referendum could be proof of this trend. The "Yes" vote, meaning the support for the shift to a presidential system that seemed to leave autocratic prerogatives at the disposal of the president, was lower among members of the urbanite, well-educated, young generation. See KONDA, "Nisan' 17 Barometresi," May 2017, http://konda.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/KONDA_16Nisan2017SandikveSecmen AnaliziRaporu.pdf (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[47] These conspiracy theories have often been employed since then, again, by the government. See Mustafa Akyol, "Unraveling AKP's 'Mastermind' Conspiracy Theory," *Al-Monitor*, 19 March 2015, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/turkey-zion-protocols-akp-version.html (Accessed 1/2/2018).

Its negative legacies are especially prominent whenever differences deriving from cultural capital translate into concrete gains in material terms (spoils).

Identity politics does not end when identities gain recognition; it demands redress for the injustices that resulted from the discrimination.[48] Political minorities under the Kemalist regime had all been waiting for such redress, and now Islamists are taking advantage of their positions in political power to take it for themselves. Yet this is a precarious position, as the spoils could be taken away as soon as the AKP government is defeated. In addition, there are many AKP supporters on the "waiting list" for the spoils, and many who wish to play the role of patron by utilizing a spoil of any kind in their relations with those around them. The expectations for spoils rise at every election since the people who work hard to muster votes at the grassroots level often do not feel the trickle-down effects of spoils, which tend to be preferentially distributed among people closer to the power. Because bureaucracy in Turkey is founded on a spoils system, even if AKP supporters are frustrated by the situation, they will likely prefer the AKP to other parties with opposing ideological worldviews, whose coming to power would not only bar them from further spoils but also endanger the status quo. Against such a backdrop, not only the Islamic symbols and memories of sufferings under the Kemalist regime invoked by the AKP, but also the declarations of distrust or even insult against those who are not "civilized and modernized" in the Kemalist definition, as described above, have successfully activated the politics of belonging and allowed the AKP to secure a grip on the mind of the Islamic and conservative electorate.

The boundary of the secular(ists) has become blurred, and so has that of the Islamic public. In the process, Kemalism has been marginalized, and the AKP has become a center-right party. But secularity/religiosity has not been downgraded to merely a single identity element among many others. Both Kemalism and Islamism as opposing political projects have played the politics of belonging, and secularity/religiosity has been a determining factor in demarcating the boundary of each political community and at dividing people into "us" and "them."[49] In spite of the retreat of Kemalism, the diversification of the positionalities of the Islamic public, and the resultant blurring of boundaries of Kemalism and Islamism, identity narratives and emotional attachments of both groups rarely have overlapped.[50] Only time will tell whether the younger generation with no direct experience of the Kemalist era can overcome the imprints of Kemalism and forge a sense of social and political belonging upon which a new configuration of politics of belonging could be imaginable.

For the time being, however, the reverberations of schisms deriving from the legacy of Kemalism continue to be detected in the exclusionary rhetoric of both sides. The Islamic

[48] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking Recognition," *New Left Review* 3, 2000, 107-120.

[49] Nira Yuval-Davis, *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations* (London: Sage Publications, 2011), 12-20.

[50] Such rare convergences are seen around Turkish and Kurdish ethno-nationalisms, and the two kinds of convergence—namely, that of the secular and the Islamic Turkish nationalisms on the one hand and that of the secular and the Islamic Kurdish nationalisms on the other—were intensified as the northern front in the War in Syria turned into a war between the IS, other Islamic militias, and Kurdish left militias, in which war Turkey's government and some segments of its society were deeply involved. However, the convergences of secular and Islamic ethno-nationalisms have not necessarily led to reconciliation or trust-building between the secular and Islamic co-ethno-nationalists.

emphasis on the government side will keep accentuating the boundary of "we," and the secular(ist)s will continue to be irritated by the rhetoric coming from the political center, especially given the socio-political atmosphere imbued with Islamic and conservative symbols and practices. Such irritations are most apparent when scandals relating to (Islamic) conservatism and gender erupt. For example, an internet site explaining basic Islamic information run by the Diyanet, the Islamic state bureaucracy, published a religious opinion legitimizing child marriage and *taraq* (a divorce by declaring the intention to end one's marriage three times by the male side, which is not effective under the civil law of Turkey) by SMS.[51] Added here was another scandal of a hospital that failed to report the cases of about a hundred underage pregnant girls who had received treatment there, as required by law. Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, a well-known columnist with a secular liberal profile, expressed her sense of alienation after a series of such events in a way that implied that like-minded people should seclude themselves in their own "neighborhood" in which free, modern, egalitarian, gender-mixed lifestyles could thrive.[52]

It would be possible to imagine, as a matter of sheer logic, that free, modern, egalitarian, gender-mixed lifestyles could be lived as a mixed group of secular and Islamic persons. But when the words "neighborhood" and "modern," each of which has a secular(ist) connotation pertaining specifically to Turkey, come side by side with other words that represent the values of the liberal political society, the border of the socio-political community of belonging Aydıntaşbaş describes could easily become coterminous with that of the secular(ist)s. The word "modern" also appears in scholarly works with the effect of impressing the readers about certain political forces in a positive way. The politics of belonging can be waged very subtly through one's choice of words, and it can have significant resonance. The resonance is loud enough for people to discern which community they feel the attachment to and which community will allow them a place as a member.

Concluding Remarks

Although Turkey has made the transition to a post-Kemalist era in many respects, from regime and ideology to economic class and social class, a rapprochement between post-Kemalist secular(ist)s and Islamic(ist)s has yet to be achieved. In addition, Turkey has been a porous country physically and ideationally due to its geopolitical and geo-cultural position. This porousness is prone to activate the politics of belonging, whose boundaries tend to correspond to the old opposition between secularism and Islamism.

[51] Riada Asimovic Akyol, "Turkey's Top Religious Body Allows Divorce via Text Message," *Al-Monitor*, 19 December 2017, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/turkey-top-religious-body-allows-divorce-via-sms.html (Accessed 1/2/2018); Zülfikar Doğan, "Turks Up in Arms over Religious Greenlight for 9-Old-Year Bride," *Al-Monitor*, 10 January 2018, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/01/turkey-turks-unite-against-greenlight-for-child-bright.html (Accessed 1/2/2018); Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, "Diyanet'le İlgili Daha Asılsız bir Haber Üretilmezdi," 4 January 2018, https://www.diyanet.gov.tr/tr-TR/Kurumsal/Detay/11167/diyanetle-ilgili-daha-asilsiz-bir-haber-uretilemezdi (Accessed 1/2/2018).

[52] Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Vasatın İktidarında Ayakta Kalma Sanatı," *Cumhuriyet*, 4 January 2018, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/koseyazisi/898143/Vasatin_iktidarinda_ayakta_kalma_sanati.html (Accessed 1/2/2018).

External conditions could add fuel to that fading opposition. Regarding the war in Syria, Turkey has been harshly accused in the Western public of not conducting effective border control and allowing Syrian refugees to flee into EU territory. The influx of refugees through Turkey has resulted in the rise of Islamophobia in the societies in the EU and of a pseudo-Islamophobic hatred of Turkey. This has resonated with the anxieties of the secular(ist)s in Turkey. The massive immigration of Sunni Arab Syrians worries them because if those Islamic Syrians became permanent residents of Turkey, the Islamic atmosphere in the country will grow more pronounced than ever.[53] The secular(ist) oppositions has loudly demanded that the refugees be sent back to Syria.

External circumstances could reconfigure the old secular-Islamic opposition into a somewhat novel framework. In the West, Islamophobia has been on the rise, fed by increasing violence in the name of Islam targeting Western societies and people in the West and the Middle East. Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country that has been uncomfortably embedded in the Western world. Even if it never becomes a member of the EU, it will continue to be a geographic part of Europe. Turkey has been a NATO ally for more than half a century, but it feels that its Western allies do not recognize the existential problem that the status issue of the Kurds in Syria poses for Turkey in terms of its national and territorial unity. For Western countries, on the other hand, the secular Kurdish force has become an invaluable ally for its role in the war on the IS as their boots-on-the-ground force. Turkey's prioritizing the crackdown against Kurdish nationalist forces on both sides of the Turkey-Syria border instead of the struggle against the IS has caused deep suspicions among both the domestic secular(ist)s and the Western-centric international public. These suspicions were intensified by speculations that Turkey was supporting the IS by arming and financing it, as well as by providing various conveniences ranging from passage across the border to medical treatment for injured IS fighters. These suspicions are anchored in the assumption that the government has an Islamic identity.

The secular liberals have been very sympathetic not only to the HDP but also to the armed youth affiliates of the PKK and Syrian Kurdish forces. The Kurdish issue in Turkey has not been framed in terms of the secular-Islamic opposition so far. However, the pro-PKK forces in Syria do gather international attention as a competitive secular opposition to the IS; at the same time, the Kurdish forces successfully propagate secular and progressive images, for example, by servicing international media with images of young female soldiers without a headscarf. Such images highlight the contrast between the image of these Kurdish forces, which are allied with international and domestic Westernist forces, and the Islamic authoritarian image of the government of Turkey. The old-fashioned Kemalists are missing in this picture because they comply with the government's crackdown against Kurdish nationalism by virtue of their Turkish ethno-nationalism. Nonetheless, the voices of secular liberal intellectuals and commentators sound convincing and legitimate to the Western-centric international public because of their common ideological backgrounds and converging interests. A novel framework has thus emerged, one in which domestic and international secular and "progressive" forces and publics are in confrontation with their

[53] International Crisis Group, "Turkey's Refugee Crisis: The Politics of Permanence," 30 November 2016, 11, 20–21, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/241-turkey-s-refugee-crisis-the-politics-of-permanence_0.pdf (Accessed 1/2/ 2018).

Islamic(ist) "backward" counterparts.

It is against this backdrop that the reactions of Western governments and publics to the failed coup in 2016 were forged. Despite the disastrous consequences of the coup attempt itself, it has been anxieties about the growing authoritarianism of the government in the aftermath of the coup attempt that have dominated the responses of the domestic secular opposition and the international public.[54] Although the government accused an Islamic network as the plotter, this instance of Islamic-Islamic opposition was blurred by the continuous reverberations of the secular(ist)-Islamic(ist) frictions well beyond the borders of Turkey.

As long as Turkey is embedded in the Western-centric normative hierarchy, Islamophobia in the West will continue to strike a chord with the Kemalist roots of secularism in Turkey, especially given secular(ist) anxieties about increasing pressures from a conservative Islamic public and their awareness that they no longer have the Kemalist tutelary regime to fall back on as a last resort. The seeds of Islamophobia abound, and the Islamic and conservative public seems to be focused for the time being on gaining and maintaining the spoils it enjoys thanks to its newfound position in Turkey. This condition makes it more likely that the two sides will continue to exacerbate the tensions between them, and that despite the blurring border between the old ideological camps, the newly coalescing politics of belonging will remain obsessed with the old secular-Islamic dichotomy.

[54] For responses that are critical both of Western responses to the coup attempt and of the authoritarianism of the government, see the second paragraphs of the following articles: Mustafa Akyol, "Should Gülen Face Trial for Turkish Coup Attempt?" *Al-Monitor*, 18 July 2016, https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/07/turkey-coup-attempt-indeed-seems-gulen.html (Accessed 1/2/2018); and Kemal Kirişçi, "Wanted: A Dose of Sympathy for Turkey," 4 August 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/08/04/wanted-a-dose-of-sympathy-for-turkey/ (Accessed 1/2/2018).