

The experience of Turkish Islamism: between transformation and impoverishment

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Introduction

In recent times, it has become a commonplace claim that Turkey's Islamic identity has started to play a more significant role in the self-identification and worldview of many Turkish people. This phenomenon has been particularly considered as a sign of the rise of Islamism in Turkey under Justice and Development Party (JDP) rule since 2002.¹ This new strength of Islam has alternatively been considered as a unique product of the failure of Islamism,² or interestingly, as a success of Kemalism by some social scientists,³ while others have interpreted it as a manifestation of the urgent need to reform the authoritarian Republican ideology.⁴ Needless to say, Islamists, through their discursive transformation and an ad hoc advocacy of the reforms stipulated for the European Union (EU) accession process, have brought a brand new political understanding to Turkish politics. The JDP's new politics should also be regarded as the culmination of transformations in the various Islamic sectors in Turkey, from religious orders and communities to intellectuals.⁵

Scholars of Islamism mostly believe that there are two phases of Turkish Islamism in the post-1980 period. The Islamism of the 1980s was characterized by an authoritarian and collective search for a new Islamic identity and a quest for an Islamic state, derived from a Jacobin understanding of state and revolution. The Islamism of the 1990s dropped its claim for an Islamic state and revolution and started to focus on individualist Islamic demands and experiences rather

¹ Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2008, p. 1. In the November 2002 elections, the JDP won 34 per cent of the votes, enabling it to govern on its own. In the July 2007 elections, it fared even better, winning 46.6 per cent of the vote. In the March 2009 local elections, it also gathered about 39 per cent of the vote and is still the largest political party in Turkey.

² Ziya Meral, 'The AK Party, the failure of Islamism and traditional Turkish politics', *Nthposition*, 8 January 2008, <<http://www.denizenscorner.com/2008/01/ak-party-failure-of-islamism-and.html>>.

³ Kemal Karpat interprets the JDP's retreat from Islamism as a revolution for both Turkey and the Muslim world. According to Karpat, Islamic circles have accepted all the arguments that the secularist state has defended until now, Derya Sazak's interview with Kemal Karpat, *Milliyet*, 12 July 2004.

⁴ Nilüfer Göle, 'Cumhuriyetçi İdeoloji Kendini Yenilemeli', Ayşe Özgün's interview, *Hürriyet Pazar Eki*, 29 July 2007.

⁵ Burhanettin Duran, 'JDP and foreign policy as an agent of transformation', in M. H. Yavuz (ed.), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the Ak Parti*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT, 2006, p. 281.

than collective Islamist demands.⁶ This change was politically reflected by an internal critique over the experiences of the Welfare Party (WP) in the 1990s. The WP's politicization of religion is seen as one of the reasons for the eradication of Islam's social, cultural and economic influence in Turkey. Later in 2001, the establishment of the JDP and its departure from the rigid ideological framework of the National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) parties came about as a natural extension of this critique.

The paper at hand attempts to argue that since 2002, a third phase of Islamism has been taking place in Turkey. Islamists have been experiencing power, enrichment, upward class mobilization and they have pursued successful careers during the JDP governments. Opportunity spaces within the public sphere have opened up for Islamists so that they have now reached the higher echelons of bureaucracy and become owners of large companies and media groups. They are much more power and wealth oriented than ever before. Accordingly, when faced with the secularizing aspects of being powerful and rich, many Islamists have experienced the loss of a *certain* spiritual identity in this period. Islamist discourses often claim to offer a meaning to the lives of 'ordinary' Turkish people, by filling the ethical and ideological void generated by the radical secularist reforms of Kemalism. But today they seem to be challenged by an ethical void emanating from the effects of capitalist consumerism on the daily lives of Turkish people, including Islamists.

It is my contention in this paper that much as Islamists have been integrated into the political processes by electoral mechanisms since 1970, Kemalist securitization⁷ and control over religion in the name of secularism is a significant reason for the impoverishment of the Islamist discourses. Securitization also conceals aspects of that impoverishment that stem from a position of power and consumerism within Islamism itself. The literature on the Islamic transformation in Turkey fails to recognize the impoverishing aspects of the secularist constraints placed upon an Islamist agenda while addressing economic and political opportunity structures given by international conjuncture and Kemalism (global economic interdependence, electoral politics and the EU process). In a deeper sense, Kemalism not only determines and transforms Islamist discourses in Turkey but also impoverishes them.

Towards this end, this paper has sought to address the specificities of Turkish Islamism from a historical perspective. It also focuses on the nature of the relationship between Kemalism and Islamism in Turkey and tries to show how Kemalist securitization has impoverished the content of Islamist discourses by making illegal any autonomous existence for religious groups and by making the popular Islamic identity insecure. Furthermore, this paper demonstrates that mainstream Turkish Islamism has benefited much from the opportunities created by the processes of globalization and integration with the EU in the last decade.

⁶ Kenan Çayır discovers self-reflexive and confessional aspects of Islamism in the 1990s by pointing out the transition from collectivism to individualism in the Islamist movement through an analysis of Islamic novels, *Islamic Literature in Contemporary Turkey: From Epic to Novel*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007.

⁷ Securitization is a development that moves a particular issue beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 1998, p. 23.

Islamists have changed their views on democracy and focused on tolerance, pluralism, and the participatory aspects of democracy and civil society. The Islamic middle classes and a rising new bourgeoisie are influential actors in this transformation. Moreover, it examines the parameters of the JDP's victory over the last decade and its implications for Turkish Islamism. It unearths a somewhat unnoticed impact of the JDP rule: the impoverishment of Islamist discourses.

Turkish Islamism from a historical perspective

Islamist movements have been transforming their discourses and programmes in many parts of the Muslim world since the late 1990s. This newly emerging form of Islamism embraces a political discourse that prioritizes curtailing the role of the state. In this form, it is argued that constitutional limits to government or legal recourse prevent the state from intruding too far into social and private lives, and this is a well-established tradition in Muslim societies. This tradition is reinterpreted to accommodate universal values such as democracy, human rights and civil society. In this vein, it is suggested that the domain of the state in its reach into society should be restricted as much as possible so as to maximize social and individual choices and differences. The state should not endorse any single comprehensive doctrine. This form of Islamism also emphasizes the dialogue and interaction between Islam and the West. In a sense, Islamism has passed into 'a post-Islamist stage in which Islamism is losing its political and revolutionary fervour' but is continuously infiltrating the social and cultural practices of daily life.⁸

An analysis of Turkish Islamism is needed to incorporate studies on non-Western or multiple modernity approaches.⁹ The contemporary rise of Islamism should not be seen as an anti-global, anti-Western defence of threatened Islamic traditional societies, but rather as a 'part of multiple modernization processes in different world regions, multiple constellations of nation-state formation and democratization as well as religious change and secularization in different civilizations in the present global era'.¹⁰ With the urgent need for a response to the challenge of the West and the rejection of a Eurocentric definition of modernity, Islamists strive for the revitalization of Islamic civilization. The notion of Islamic civilization has constituted a useful framework for coping with the challenge of Western modernity and for the construction of a new (Islamic) modernity in order to meet the needs of a truly Islamic life in the contemporary age. Since late Ottoman times, the underlying theme inherent in Turkish Islamism has always been the

⁸ Nilüfer Göle, 'Snapshots of Islamic modernities', *Daedalus*, 129(1), Winter 2000, p. 94.

⁹ The concept of multiple modernity, as developed particularly by Shmuel Eisenstadt's comparative approach to civilizations, presupposes that Western modernity is only one among other types of modernity evolving in the various civilizations of the world. It draws attention to the fact that religious and imperial traditions remain constitutive dimensions of modern societies despite various forms of secularization. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, 'Multiple modernities', *Daedalus*, 129(1), Winter 2000, pp. 1–29.

¹⁰ Willfried Spohn, 'Multiple modernity, nationalism and religion: a global perspective', *Current Sociology*, 51(3/4), May/July 2003, p. 282.

concept of an Islamic civilization which regards Turkey as the centre of the Muslim world.¹¹

Islamism in Turkey, compared to its counterparts in the wider world of Islam has its particularities based on its specific evolution. Islamism cannot be simply confined to a movement which has a political ideology for capturing power. Any conscious epistemological and ontological reference to Islam for shaping or directing a state, a society and an individual, directly or indirectly should be regarded as Islamist.¹² One reason for this broad conceptualization of Islamism is the recognition that Islamism in the Ottoman–Turkish context has been different from the Islamism that has gained so much currency in the literature by reference to the forms of Islam found in Iran, Egypt and Pakistan. Islamists generally embrace the unity of religion and state, an idea that challenges the validity of the secular democratic nation-state in the Muslim world, and in its place offer the alternative of Sharia law. In the Turkish case, there has been no political party openly calling for Sharia law largely due to constitutional constraints. Even though the restoration of the Caliphate represents a general demand of most Islamists,¹³ there has never been any Islamist party which calls for the restoration of the Caliphate in Turkey.

The aforementioned particularities of Turkish Islamism or ‘Turkish exceptionalism’ do not hint that Turkish Islamism is superior to other Islamist experiences in its adherence to liberal values and practices. It would be essentialist and ethnocentric to attribute pluralism, tolerance and openness merely to Turkish Islam, while regarding radicalism, violence and an inclination towards authoritarianism as belonging to other forms of Islam.¹⁴

The primary characteristic of Turkish Islamism derives from the fact that it is deep-rooted in Sufism. The *Nakşibendi* order has a unique position in relation to the evolution of Turkish Islamism to the extent that all of the significant groups engaged with the contemporary Islamist movement, ranging from politicians to intellectuals and businessmen, have been influenced by its teachings.¹⁵ However, it is not the Sufi tradition itself, but the specific interaction between Sufism and the strong state tradition¹⁶ of Turkey that has a significant impact on the

¹¹ The JDP also uses the idea of a common, universal civilization to which Islam has contributed in order to justify Turkey’s integration with the EU, see Daniella Kuzmanovic, ‘Civilization and EU–Turkey relations’, in Dietrich Jung and Catharina Raudvere (eds), *Religion, Politics, and Turkey’s EU Accession*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008, p. 53.

¹² Menderes Çınar and Burhanettin Duran, ‘The specific evolution of contemporary political Islam in Turkey and its “difference”’, in Ümit Cizre (ed.), *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2008, p. 18.

¹³ Mozaffari, *op. cit.*, p. 23. Turkey is a significant country not only because it is the only Muslim country where secularism is established as a constitutional principle and where a secular culture has taken root, but also because it is a country that has a legacy of the Caliphate, the centre of the spiritual leadership in Islam, though it was abolished in 1924 in Turkey. This legacy, in the eyes of Turkish Islamists, gives Turkey an implicit right to claim a leadership of the Islamic world without mentioning the Caliphate.

¹⁴ Elisabeth Özdalga, ‘The hidden Arab: a critical reading of the notion of “Turkish Islam”’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42(4), July 2006, pp. 565–566.

¹⁵ Şerif Mardin, ‘Turkish Islamic exceptionalism yesterday and today: continuity, rupture and reconstruction in operational codes’, *Turkish Studies*, 6(2), 2005, p. 152.

¹⁶ See Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, Eothen Press, Walkington, 1985.

moderation of Turkish Islamism.¹⁷ Largely shaped by the Sunni interpretation of Islam, which prioritizes the necessity of political authority and for the state for the preservation and maintenance of religion, Turkish Islamists do not resort to violence even if they face repression from the secular regime. The Turkish *Hizbullah* and a Turkish al-Qaeda cell are exceptions to this observation.¹⁸

Another characteristic of Turkish Islamism is the fragmentation of the Islamic religious authority in Turkey. It is much more difficult in Turkey, as compared to other Muslim societies, to answer the question, who speaks for Islam? It would not be wrong to say that since the end of the 19th century there has been a profound transformation in the nature and structure of religious authority in the Muslim world.¹⁹ But in the Turkish case, this is more obvious due to the radical secularizing reforms of the Kemalist regime. The *ulema* did not have a monopoly over Islamic discourses in the late Ottoman times and they have even less authority in the Republican era. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) as a rather non-influential remnant of the *ulema*, has a minor role in the production of Islamist discourses. No other Muslim country has disempowered the *ulema* and disassociated its regime from Islam in the same way that Turkey has under Kemalism. On the one hand, stemming from this disempowerment, though they are legally forbidden, religious communities and orders such as the Gülen Movement and the Nakşibendi Order are very influential in the religious life of Turkish society. But on the other hand, intellectuals, writers or just ordinary Muslims, many of them educated in secular Kemalist institutions, have developed their own interpretations of Islam, indirectly challenging the *ulema's* or the sheikhs' claim to speak for Islam. This is much related to the observation that Islamic responses and oppositions to the Kemalist regime do not constitute a monolithic whole. It is true to say that the *ulema*, the sheikhs, Islamist intellectuals and politicians have different attitudes towards the Kemalist reforms.

It should also be noted that Turkey has never been colonized, though it fought a war of independence. Turkish Islamism has been imbued with some level of anti-Western feelings due to the memories of the 19th-century Ottoman political experience, the First World War and the War of Independence. Nevertheless, the West has not constituted, not least in part due to the Westernist reforms of the Kemalist modernization, the 'other' in the making of a Turkish identity. Leading elements of Turkish Islamism abandoned their anti-European discourses in the late 1990s and have supported Turkey's integration into Europe.²⁰

¹⁷ Nakşibendism is an international Sufi order that takes different political forms in various Islamic countries. It may take the form of a jihadist movement when faced with a colonial power. For the various manifestations of Sufism, depending on the local context of Islamic countries, see Martin van Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (eds), *Sufism and the Modern in Islam*, I. B. Tauris, London, 2007.

¹⁸ Radical Islamist groups are very marginal and are not connected to any significant sector of Turkish society: Islamic Great Eastern Raiders-Front (IBDA-C), Turkish *Hizbullah* and the Union of Islamic Communities and Societies (UICS). Among these groups, *Hizbullah* is an important Kurdish Sunni organization which carried out hundreds of kidnappings and murders, and gained its identity during its fight with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), Bülent Aras and Şule Toktaş, 'Al-Qaida, "War on Terror" and Turkey', *Third World Quarterly*, 28(5), 2007, pp. 1045–1046. For the radicalization process of *Hizbullah*, see Emrullah Uslu, 'From local Hizbollah to global terror: militant Islam in Turkey', *Middle East Policy*, 14(1), Spring 2007.

¹⁹ See Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1996.

²⁰ Çınar and Duran, op. cit., p. 24.

Furthermore, Turkish Islamism is basically an urban movement empowered by a strong middle class with its own identity politics.²¹ Islamists try to recreate modern codes of urbanity, civility and universalism, blending them with their own religious features. There is an emergence of a new Islamic bourgeoisie. The market not only secularizes Islamists, but also contributes to democratic stability and human rights in Turkey.²² The class bases of Islamism in Turkey have been enlarged in the post-1980 period by liberal economic policies, which introduced market mechanisms, new communications technologies, the privatization process and private organs of the media. In the 1990s, Islamist individuals and bodies developed new public faces and created their alternative public spheres which ranged from radio stations and TV channels to hotels.

Altogether, as suggested earlier, one of the most striking characteristics of Turkish Islamism has been related to the nature of the relationship between Kemalism and Islam since the foundation of the Republic. Regardless of the fact that Islamists have been integrated into the political processes by electoral mechanisms since 1970, the securitizing and controlling nature of the Kemalist approach towards Islam has had an impoverishing effect on the content of Turkish Islamist discourses. The transformation and impoverishment of Islamism in Republican Turkey cannot be fully comprehended without an exclusive emphasis on the Kemalist securitization of Islam through secularism.

Kemalism and Islamism: control, securitization and the 28 February Process

Kemalism continuously instrumentalizes Islam by employing a two-sided approach. On the one hand, when it needed to cement its position and act as a mechanism of control for the unity and mobilization of Turkish society, it supported its usage in the public sphere in order to legitimize its own aims. On the other hand, it has continued to maintain that Islam is responsible for Turkey's backwardness and that it is an obstacle to reaching the level of modern civilization.²³ Stemming from this dual intertwined pattern, the principle of secularism has served both as a mechanism of state control over the religious sphere and as a discourse of securitization in Turkey. Contrary to the conventional separation of religious and political institutions, secularism is seen as the regulation and disciplining of religious life and institutions by the state through the Directorate of Religious Affairs. At the same time, it was also developed into an ideological core element of Kemalism to the extent that its preservation became identified with the defence of the Republican state and reforms.²⁴ This dimension is related to the politicization and securitization of Islam.

Paradoxically, secularism has not been regarded as a process to depoliticize Islam; rather it had removed Islam from its political role in the Ottoman system

²¹ Çınar and Duran, op. cit., p. 25.

²² Demet Yalcin Mousseau, 'Democracy, human rights and market development in Turkey: are they related?', *Government and Opposition*, 41(2), 2006, pp. 325–326.

²³ Sencer Ayata, 'Patronage, party and the state: the politicization of Islam in Turkey', *Middle East Journal*, 50(1), Winter 1996, p. 41.

²⁴ Dietrich Jung, '“Secularism”: a key to Turkish politics', *Intellectual Discourse*, 14(2), 2006, pp. 131, 133; Christopher Houston, 'Civilizing Islam, Islamist civilizing? Turkey's Islamist movement and the problem of ethnic difference', *Thesis Eleven*, No. 58, August 1999, p. 87.

while politicizing and enlivening it in new ways to support the Kemalist regime. Thus, there has never been a time in the republican history in which Islam was not politicized by the state though there are some differences in state policies between the single-party period (1923–50), the rule of the rightist parties and the period after the 1980 military coup.²⁵ The politicization of Islam (producing an acceptable interpretation of Islam)²⁶ in the hands of the state has been accompanied by a securitization of Islamic demands. The Turkish modernizing elites have often securitized any religious or ethnic claims of identity, including the Islamic one. The state is not only controlling every religious activity, ranging from its organization to its place in education but also presenting an acceptable concept of Islam as opposed to its *reactionary* and *dangerous* interpretations. Through this mechanism of control and the discourse of securitization, the state determines and shapes religious discourses in all public contexts in order to accommodate them to the 'official' interpretation of Islam. It places some limitations on autonomous religious practice as a matter of national security.²⁷

Hence, securitization is a key to comprehending the true nature of the relationship between Kemalism and Islamism. The Kemalist regime defines any challenge to its ideological hegemony as a security threat, thus justifying its exclusionary policies regarding identity issues. In the politics of securitization, a discourse of an unending state of emergency is used to rationalize and justify extensions to an unaccountable state power. It is basically a process of state-led securitization and the object of security is the secularity and integrity of the Republican state.²⁸ International events are also translated into domestic politics in order to justify the policies of Kemalist securitization. For instance, for most hard-line Kemalists, Iran, Saudi Arabia and an Afghanistan under the Taliban, serve as alarmist and *frightening* exemplar figures that justify their secularist policy of limiting autonomous Islamic practices.²⁹ While establishing an official and acceptable form of Islam by controlling the religious sphere, Kemalism actually made any autonomous existence illegal for religious groups and thus made the popular Islamic identity insecure in Turkey. Along with the transition

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 86–87; Andrew Davison, 'Turkey, a "secular" state?: the challenge of description', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102(2/3), Spring/Summer 2003, pp. 333–350.

²⁶ Bobby S. Sayyid draws attention to the policy of trying to use Islam as the antagonistic 'other' of Kemalism, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, Zed Books, London, 1997. Since Islam was continually being described as the constitutive 'outside' of Kemalism, at the same time it has been an issue of securitization as well. In fact, securitization is simply a stronger instance of the phenomenon of politicization, Michael Sheehan, *International Security*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO, 2005, p. 53.

²⁷ Secularism is not the only issue of securitization in Turkey. There are other identity issues that have been expressed in security language such as the Alevi and Kurdish questions. These issues warrant further study. For more on Turkish national security, see Ümit Cizre, 'Demythologizing the national security concept: the case of Turkey', *Middle East Journal*, 57(2), Spring 2003, pp. 213–229.

²⁸ See Tuncay Kardas, 'Turkey: Islam, secularism and the EU', in Stig Hansen, Atle Mesoy and Tuncay Kardas (eds), *The Borders of Islam*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009. Pinar Bilgin finds an intimate relationship between secularism and security and argues that the securityness of secularism in Turkey should be located both in its national and international arena since the foundation of the Republic, 'The securityness of secularism? The case of Turkey', *Security Dialogue*, 39(6), December 2008, pp. 593–614.

²⁹ Kim Shively, 'Taming Islam: studying religion in secular Turkey', *Anthropological Quarterly*, 81(3), Summer 2008, pp. 707, 687–688.

to multi-party politics, the insecurity of religious orders and communities was translated into a struggle for power to assure a secure place in society.³⁰ The clientelist nature of the relationship between the right-wing political parties and religious groups in the 1950s and 1960s could not change the securitizing aspects of Kemalism towards Islamic demands. The emergence of the National Outlook Movement parties in Turkish politics further aggravated this politics of securitization. The last two decades have witnessed a series of events along these lines, notably the 28 February Process (a postmodern coup in 1997), the closure of the Islamist parties (the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party) and the ban on the headscarf in universities. As a reaction to the rise of Islamism in the 1990s, the Kemalist establishment triggered a process of re-securitization, called the 28 February Process³¹ in order to demolish public visibility of Islam. This process made it clear that the Kemalist establishment could not allow Islamist attempts to introduce Islamic symbols and idioms to political rhetorics, which would modify the standards of legitimization for politics in Turkey. In spite of a set of radical reforms carried out in the last decade, passed to meet EU membership terms, any expression of Islamic discourse in the public realm is still an issue of securitization. In this sense, Kemalism effectively determines the contours of the Islamic political discourses in the country. It can be argued that this controlling and securitizing nature of Kemalist secularism has been influential in the making of a power-oriented Islamic movement, which shows a secondary concern for creating a new political language of Islam. This is strongly related to the continuing weakness in the intellectual roots of Islamism (in contrast to its socio-political strength) in Turkey.³²

A typical example of Kemalist securitization in relation to Islam is the issue of the headscarf which has become one of the nodal points in Turkish politics. It is a master signifier that organizes all competitive symbols around the struggle of power and lifestyles between Kemalists and Islamists.³³ The headscarf acquires an aspect of religious freedom when articulated with Islamist demands and a quest for an Islamic political system when articulated with Kemalist fears. The Constitutional Court, in its decision on the closure of the Welfare Party, presented the following arguments against the headscarf: firstly, it restricts women's liberties; secondly, it is a symbol of opposition to the Republic; thirdly, it would lead to unequal treatment; and lastly, it implies the threat of the organizing of the state according to the dictates of Islam.³⁴

³⁰ Çınar and Duran, op. cit., p. 28.

³¹ Starting at the end of 1996, a series of events during the Welfare-Party-led coalition government culminated in a crisis for the Turkish political regime. On 28 February 1997, the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*) made recommendations to the government about measures to be taken against the increasing anti-secular activities. This military intervention brought down the Welfare-led coalition government and later the Welfare Party was closed down by the Turkish Constitutional Court for its anti-secular activities.

³² See Ahmet Çiğdem, *Taşra Epiği: Türk İdeolojileri ve İslamcılık*, Birikim, İstanbul, 2001.

³³ See Tuncay Kardas, 'Security governmentality in Turkey', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2006.

³⁴ Yeşim Arat, 'Group-differentiated rights and the liberal democratic state: rethinking the headscarf controversy in Turkey', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 25, Fall 2001, pp. 38–40. The issue of the headscarf as a subject of securitization also resurfaced when the JDP cooperated with the Nationalist Action Party to pass two amendments to the Constitution that would allow the wearing of headscarves in universities on 9 February 2008. The Republican People's Party (RPP), the main

Nevertheless, the Kemalist experience of secularism and the particularities of Turkish Islam, interacting with each other, have produced a more moderate course of Islamism and have prevented any radicalization of the Islamist movement even in times of repression. Above all, Kemalist securitization is a dynamic and complex process which has two different and interrelated aspects: the inclusion of Islamist actors for power-sharing and the exclusion of Islamist discourses. On the one hand, it integrates Islamist actors into Turkish party politics by allowing their competition for power and the expression of some modest Islamist discourses while in opposition. On the other hand, once they are in power, these Islamist actors are expected to drop their Islamist demands and discourses. Islamist figures can even lead the country whether as president or as prime minister, if they disown the Islamist discourse. Otherwise, the several disciplining and silencing mechanisms of Kemalism, including the Turkish Constitutional Court, securitize any Islamist claims for change in the secularist nature of the Republic and exclude Islamist discourses from the public arena. This dual nature of Kemalist securitization has generated rather interesting implications for Turkish Islamism. Admitting that Kemalism provides various structures of opportunities for the increasing significance and influence of Islamist political and social actors, it still insists in illegalizing any autonomous religious organization and any expression of Islamist discourses by these actors in the political arena. An important consequence of this securitization is a loss of a public negotiation between secular and Islamic discourses which might bring about a deeper exploration of the relationship between Islam and democracy.

In sum, to reduce the reason for the transformation of Turkish Islamism to the lessons learnt from the 28 February Process is to misread the dynamics and trends of Islamism in Turkey. It ignores the profound transformation of Islamist ideas about secularism, democracy and the EU through interaction with Western and Turkish secularist circles. A multi-dimensional approach should be employed to account for the political changes in Turkish Islamism, to go beyond the lessons learnt from the 28 February Process. Along these lines of analyses, both sides of the so-called change should be noted: respectively, a transformation led by the rise of the new Islamic bourgeoisie given appropriate opportunities over the last two decades and an impoverishment represented by the loss of an Islamic vocabulary and ethos amongst the Islamist circles.

Aspects of transformation in Turkish Islamism: the new Islamic middle classes and opportunities

Although the transformation of Islamists gained momentum with the recognition that there is no way out of the Kemalist impasse without further democratization

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opposition party, took the issue to the Constitutional Court, which annulled the amendments on 5 June 2008. This securitizing atmosphere was intensified when the Chief Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals filed a case in the Constitutional Court for the closure of the JDP and a five-year political ban for 71 members of this party (including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül). On 30 July 2009, the Court ruled that the JDP should not be closed down, but declared that it was a focal point of anti-secular activities and it imposed fines on the party.

and Europeanization, it would be a mistake to disregard the influence of the growing demands of the Islamic middle classes (small and medium-sized enterprise holders), the moderate positions of religious groups (e.g. the Gülen Movement) and other factors such as the transformation of other societal groups including labour unions (*Hak-İş*, the Confederation of Righteous Trade Unions) and business associations (MÜSİAD, the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), all of which have had a cumulative effect. The learning process for Islamist circles is perhaps best accomplished by the aggregation and articulation of interests among the labour and business sectors of Turkish civil society.

In the pre-1980 period, *Hak-İş* reflected the discourse of the National Outlook to create Islamist policies on labour issues. From the mid-1980s onwards, *Hak-İş* managed to establish itself as a national force whose significance could not be limited to Islamist demands. *Hak-İş* was the first Islamist organization to successfully use the discourse of civil society and democracy not only to further the interests of the workers, but also to identify the problems regarding the consolidation of democracy in Turkey.³⁵ MÜSİAD, as a powerful representative of the Islamic bourgeoisie, combines Islamic identity with a free market ideology and supports the exposure of the Turkish economy and society to the world. Like other sectors of the Islamist movement, it calls for the restructuring of state–society relations in Turkey on the basis of the principles of democracy, pluralism and freedom. It also constitutes an Islamic model of modernity which presents a new synthesis of the economically rational and the morally communitarian modern self.³⁶ The Gülen Movement, as the leading Islamic community in Turkey, has a very special place in the transformation of Turkish Islamism. This movement draws attention to the links between Islam and modernity, and rejects the idea of an inherent clash between East and West. Although this movement suffers from residual nationalism and statism, it has opposed anti-Western feelings within Islamism by declaring that Turkey's integration into the EU would not result in a cultural assimilation for Turkish society.³⁷

A further observation in relation to the transformation of Islamism in Turkey is that in the post-1980 period, and especially in the 2000s, postmodernism and liberalism had a significant impact on Islamist circles. This is a new period of transformation for Turkish Islamism. One basic result of this transformation is the reaching for a post-Islamist stage where the idea of an Islamic state is left behind and the will to see Turkey as a member of the EU is welcomed by the Islamists. In fact, Europeanization has been a significant source of transformation in Turkey since the times of the *Tanzimat*.³⁸ As with the proclamation of

³⁵ Burhanettin Duran and Engin Yıldırım, 'Islamism, trade unionism and civil society: the case of *Hak-İş* labour confederation in Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 41(2), March 2005, pp. 227–248.

³⁶ E. Fuat Keyman and Berrin Koyuncu, 'Globalization, alternative modernities and the political economy of Turkey', *Review of International Political Economy*, 12(1), February 2005, p. 120.

³⁷ Ihsan Yılmaz, 'State, law, civil society and Islam in contemporary Turkey', *The Muslim World*, 95(3), July 2005, p. 400; Mucahit Bilici, 'The Fethullah Gülen Movement and its politics of representation in Turkey', *The Muslim World*, 96(1), January 2006, pp. 17–18; Ahmet Kuru, 'Globalization and diversification of Islamic movements: three Turkish cases', *Political Science Quarterly*, 120(2), 2005, p. 265.

³⁸ With the proclamation of the *Tanzimat* in 1839, known as *Gülhane Hatt-ı Şerif-i* (the Noble Edict of the Rose Garden), the Ottoman statesmen aimed to restructure the Ottoman administration and to establish the rule of law.

constitutional rule in 1876, the extensive rights and liberties of the EU process have contributed to the transformation of Islamism. This time though, the transformational effects of Europe should be seen not just in the reforms of the Westernist elite but also in the changing attitudes of Islamists towards the West and themselves. Islamists have lessened their fears of being assimilated into a European secular culture in the case of integration with the EU. They have started to voice the idea that the Islamic identity is so strong that Europe could not assimilate it, even if it so aimed. Therefore, the EU accession process is de-securitized by the Islamists on the identity issues. Ex-Islamists, notably the JDP leadership, have shown great determination in accelerating the pace of reforms which have brought far-reaching changes to the Turkish political and legal system.

Parallel to the change in the discourses of Islamist intellectuals, a process of political division started within the National Outlook Movement, situated somewhere between the reformists (*yenilikçiler*) and traditionalists (*gelenekçiler*). The first group had dropped their Islamist claims and advanced a new politics, namely, a conservative democracy under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership (the JDP), while the latter preferred to keep a low profile stance until the secularist campaign came to an end and they maintained their Islamist ideas (the Felicity Party, *Saadet Partisi*).

While transplanting themselves to the root of Turkish centre right politics and by referring to the legacies of Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal, ex-Islamists of the JDP (Erdoğan, Gül and Bülent Arınç) having their roots in the National Outlook Movement, have themselves undergone a transformation, thus making feasible an Islamic-oriented party focused on the will for integration with the EU, cooperation with the IMF, secularism and democratization. One of the trademarks of the JDP is its criticism of Islamism, and most importantly, Islam as a political ideology. It embraces pluralism, democracy, civil society, human rights and secularism. Its conception of secularism rejects the French model of an exaggerated laicism, but rather upholds the models of Anglo-Saxon countries. Essentialist and dogmatic aspects of Turkish Islamism have been erased and its pragmatic aspect has been strengthened by the JDP's new discourse on conservative democracy which attempts to achieve a compromise between Islam and democracy.³⁹

A major contribution that the Turkish Islamist movement seems to have gained from the JDP's experience in power is the development of a new discourse on and practice of Turkish foreign policy, which combines nationalist interests and Islamic sensitivities. The new foreign policy is largely based on a novel geographic imagination which puts an end to the alienation of Turkey's neighbours and Middle Eastern countries. It also redefines Turkey as a central country with multiple regional identities that cannot be reduced to one unified character.⁴⁰ It is clear that this new geographic imagination, formulated by the Turkish foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, underlines the necessity of

³⁹ For conservative democracy, see Yalçın Akdoğan, 'The meaning of conservative democratic identity', in M. H. Yavuz (ed.), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2006, pp. 49–65.

⁴⁰ Ahmet Davutoğlu, 'Turkey's foreign policy vision: an assessment of 2007', *Insight Turkey*, 10(1), 2008, p. 78; Bülent Aras, 'Davutoğlu era in Turkish foreign policy', *SETA Policy Brief*, No. 32, May 2009, p. 4.

developing cooperative and close relations with Islamic countries by recognizing Turkey's ties of civilization with its neighbouring regions, including the Middle East.⁴¹ Although this imagination is beyond neo-Ottomanism and represents a continuity with Turkey's activist foreign policy in the post-cold war era, it still serves the Islamic ideals of having better relations with Muslim and Middle Eastern countries.

First and foremost, Turkish Islamists have always criticized the Western-oriented foreign policy of the Kemalist Republic, particularly in reference to its estrangement from the Middle East. The JDP's multi-dimensional foreign policy approach not only integrates Turkey into the region, but also empowers it as the prominent actor in a geography mostly populated by Muslim peoples. In addition, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership and his effective diplomatic style, as exemplified in the Gaza crisis in 2008 and in Davos in 2009, addresses Islamist aspirations and expectations to the extent that he emerges as the most influential leader in the eyes of the ordinary people in the Muslim world.

Thus, the JDP experience has transformed the parameters of both Turkish politics and Islamist politics through Europeanization and the internationalization of internal issues. The JDP administration, with its religious cadres and policies, has even produced a sense of siege and insecurity amongst Kemalists. However, the trends of transformation for Islamism in Turkey are open-ended and incomplete. The success of this experience conceals the impoverishing aspects of the secularist constraints placed upon an Islamist agenda.

Aspects of impoverishment and the post-Islamist triumph in the 2000s

What is the meaning of the apparent post-Islamist triumph in the Turkey of the 2000s? It is easy to find curious examples of deep scepticism towards the JDP and its transformation in the literature. For instance, in contrast to those who view Islamism as a search for recognition of an identity, İbrahim Kaya insists that as a consequence of the Islamization programme of the military in the post-1980 period, the Turkish political system has been colonized by Islamist groups. With the JDP government, he argues that Islamists have reached a stage where they have been developing an alternative intellectual model in order to establish their hegemony in a Gramscian sense. The rise of the JDP and Gülen Movement is described as an attempt to overcome a democratic republic with the aim of establishing an Islamic totalitarian regime.⁴²

Indeed, many secularists feared that the JDP would seek to undermine the foundations of Turkey's secular order if it succeeded in electing Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül as the eleventh president of the country in 2007. These fears led to large-scale popular demonstrations, called Republic Meetings (*Cumhuriyet Mitingleri*) by supporters of secularism in several major Turkish cities and this environment prompted the Turkish Armed Forces to issue an e-memorandum (*e-muhtrra*, a veiled threat of a military coup) on 27 April 2007. The protestors at

⁴¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*, Küre, İstanbul, 2001.

⁴² İbrahim Kaya, 'Identity politics: the struggle for recognition or hegemony?', *East European Politics and Societies*, 21(4), 2007, pp. 711–712, 714–715.

these meetings called the JDP government an existential threat to the secular and nationalist nature of the Turkish state. Similarly, by drawing attention to the increasing anti-secular religious activities, the generals restated, against this challenge, their determination to protect the secular nature of the Republic.

In my own account of the above analyses, the same developments can be interpreted in a different way. Turkish politics have presented an appearance of stability since 2002.⁴³ It could be stated that in spite of some evidence of instability, such as the 27 April e-memorandum (*e-muhtıra*) and the crisis over the election of a new Turkish president in the spring of 2007, the JDP's seizure of 46 per cent of votes in the 2007 national elections and its success in electing Abdullah Gül as the new president of the Republic enabled Turkish democracy to achieve a higher level of consolidation. Besides, the transformation of Turkish Islamism might bring reconciliation between democratically minded secularists and the religious circles. If this happens, then the securitizing structures of Kemalism will eventually lose their power and a contemporary European form of secularism will prevail in Turkey. From this perspective, the re-Islamization of Turkish politics and society would be a continuation of Turkey's integration with Europe.⁴⁴ Under the JDP administration, Turkey is not only rethinking its understanding of secularism but also reshaping its Islamic identity. This emerging synthesis is regarded as a liberal Islam in which a Turkish Islamic sensibility coexists with a tolerant, Western-friendly pluralism.⁴⁵

Apart from the discussions on the coming of an Islamist hegemony or liberal Islam, it is better to concentrate on the different dimensions of the post-Islamist triumph under JDP administration. Derived from the idea of an interaction between Kemalism and Islamism, it is possible to discover the dynamics of the shifting relationship between the Turkish Islamic actors and the secular state, from confrontation to cooperation, and how Islamic actors and the Kemalist state have transformed each other in the last two decades.⁴⁶ However, this is not the whole picture. The literature of transformation overemphasizes the transformative aspects of the political change that Islamists have experienced since the 28 February Process by focusing both on the significance of the learning process and on the structures for opportunity. This literature fails to recognize the impoverishing aspects of the secularist constraints placed upon an Islamist agenda.

My aim in this paper is to clarify that Turkish Islamism has been made defective by the loss of an Islamic political vocabulary and the Islamic way of life has been impoverished due to the perverse securitization of Islam by Kemalism at various times.⁴⁷ Unlike the Young Ottomans or Islamists in different parts of

⁴³ İlter Turan, 'Unstable stability: Turkish politics at the crossroads?', *International Affairs*, 83(2), 2007, p. 326.

⁴⁴ Perry Anderson, 'After Kemal', *London Review of Books*, 25 September 2008, pp. 148–149.

⁴⁵ Thomas W. Smith, 'Between Allah and Atatürk: liberal Islam in Turkey', *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 9(3), September 2005, p. 308.

⁴⁶ Berna Turam, *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2007, pp. 4, 6, 7.

⁴⁷ For the retreat of Islamist demands on daily life, the rising conservatism and the narrowing vision within the Islamic movement see Cihan Aktaş, 'İslami Hayat Tarzının Yeniden Keşfi', in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (eds), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 9, İletişim, İstanbul, 2009, pp. 651–668.

the contemporary Muslim world, Islamist (or ex-Islamist) politicians cannot use Islamic political concepts such as *shura*, *biat*, *sharia* and *ummah* in order to justify their democratic vision and experience. Islamists in Turkey are not legitimizing their transformation in terms of an Islamic vocabulary. Islamists have not been able to establish an Islamic discourse of transformation which would encompass different political positions on identity issues, ranging from those of leftists to those of the Kurdish nationalists.

An interesting observation in this respect is voiced by an Islamist woman writer, Fatma K. Barbarosoğlu. She emphasizes the maladies of the so-called 'transformation' in the Islamist discourses:

That pious people are forced to translate their religious stipulations and terminology of rights and freedoms into secular codes accelerated the secularization of Islamic segments. The most obvious instance of this came up with the headscarf ban. I am talking about the fact that the headscarf is defended without hesitation as an issue of 'women's rights'.⁴⁸

In the 1990s, Islamist intellectuals were more influential in creating a sense of Islamic authenticity and in presenting alternative Islamic formulas to both Kemalist modernization and Western liberal democracy. There was, for example, an Islamic model of pluralism called the 'multi-judiciary order' which was proposed on the basis of the Prophet Mohammad's Medina Document⁴⁹ and the Ottoman millet system.⁵⁰ However, in the 2000s, liberal writers and their discourses have become dominant in justifying the reform processes and policies of the JDP. In other words, it is not an Islamist discourse but a liberal discourse which seeks to legitimize the JDP government's policies with reference to the following concepts: Europeanization, civilianization and the consolidation of democracy. Although JDP leadership has declared its political identity as that of a conservative democracy, it has benefited much from liberal discourses on democracy, secularism and Kemalism, as expressed by leading Turkish liberal writers.

Islamists have often declared their demand to have a genuine liberal democratic regime in which religious freedoms would be fulfilled. They have left

⁴⁸ Fatma K. Barbarosoğlu, 'Ya Şişman Değilsek', *Yeni Şafak*, 23 June 2009.

⁴⁹ In order to get rid of the conditions of repression and wrong-doing in the existing world, Islamists mainly propose two ideal reference points: the Mecca model and the Medina model, that is, society as it was shaped by the prophet Muhammad himself and the classical era of the Caliphate. The Constitution of Medina established the terms for an alliance between Muhammad, his religious community and the eight tribes of Medina in about AD 627. The contracting parties, both Muslims and Jews, agreed to recognize Muhammad as their leader. Mozaffari, op. cit., p. 25. Ali Bulaç revived the idea of the Medina Document in the 1990s in a series of articles in *Kitap Dergisi*, *Birikim* and *Bilgi ve Hikmet* in order to present a new voluntary accord among different social blocs in Turkey, see Menderes Çınar and Ayşe Kadioğlu, 'An Islamic critique of modernity in Turkey: politics of difference backwards', *Orient*, 40(1), 1999, pp. 53–69.

⁵⁰ The WP adopted this model as a significant part of its alternative ideology, Just Order (*Adil Düzen*). This model was based on the Islamist intellectuals' critique of Kemalist nationalism, the latter rejects representations of different identities in the public sphere. This multicultural model advocated a new kind of Islamic pluralism that would revitalize the classical Islamic mechanism of legal pluralities, relying on the idea of the self-rule of each legal community and rejecting the rule of the majority, Yılmaz Çolak, 'Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: collective memory and cultural pluralism in 1990s Turkey', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 42(4), July 2006, pp. 595–596.

their claim of being Islamist and discovered that they are just religious Muslims, since Islam is not an ideology. Islamist politicians as well as Islamist intellectuals do not want to be referred to as 'Islamist'. Ideas of social justice, the freedom of religious education and the freedom to wear the headscarf in universities are no longer justified by reference to Islamic principles. Islamist demands have been reduced mainly to being in support of Muslim women's quest for the wearing of the headscarf at universities and for greater freedom for religious education. More importantly, these Islamic demands are defended as democratic and liberal rights rather than as religious duties. Since the heavy burden of Islamic identity politics (the headscarf issue) seems to be placed on the shoulders of Islamist women, they will continue to be the main actors in the transformation of Islamist discourses. At the same time, however, it seems that their lifestyle will remain a subject of securitization in Turkish politics.

An illustrating example can be found in the transformation of the JDP's political discourses. The label of conservative democracy is a vague concept and for the time being it is not possible to say that there is a political adherence to this new political identity even in the ranks of the party organization. Ex-Islamist politicians of the JDP do not advance further interpretation of the concept of justice in order to establish a new Islamic identity, though they do use this concept in the name of the party. Justice, as the first word of the party's name, has two meanings: it signifies the party's claim to fight injustice worsened by the corruption within the Turkish system, as well as reminds us of the fact that as the most significant Islamic concept since medieval times, justice has been a key issue for Islamism. The JDP's usage of the term 'justice' does not go beyond being a symbolic value which signifies the cultural roots of the party. The JDP seems to be trapped between an inclination to express an adherence to some references (conservative values and justice) which are directly related to Islamist ontology and an acceptance of dropping the Islamic vocabulary in order to protect the Islamic sensitivities of society from the noxious effects of politicization and conflict.⁵¹

Furthermore, Islamists have some difficulties in dealing with the challenge of finding a way to be religious in a secular post-industrial society. The realities of secular life force Islamists to move beyond the prescriptions of Islamic tradition and text. The hybridizations and negotiations between Islamic imperatives and the practices of secular life give rise to new Muslim subjectivities.⁵² Nevertheless, it is still ambiguous what kind of collective Islamic identity, if any, will arise from these subjectivities to signify a difference from the identity of those who are secular. The troubles of this self-reflexive transformation have not as yet been loudly spoken of in Islamist circles, since there are considerable benefits to being in power. Islamists have been experiencing power, enrichment, upward class mobilization and they have had successful careers during the period of the JDP government. Opportunity spaces have enlarged for Islamists; they have occupied the higher echelons of bureaucracy and they have become owners of large

⁵¹ Yasin Aktay argues that the transformation of Turkish Islamism in the case of the JDP represents not 'a failure of Islamism' but 'a further politicization' (daha yüksek bir siyasallaşma), 'İslamcı Politik Teolojinin Seyir Notları', in Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekin (eds), *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, Vol. 9, İletişim, İstanbul, 2009, pp. 1258–1280.

⁵² Nilüfer Göle, 'Islamic visibilities and public sphere', in Nilüfer Göle and Ludwig Ammann (eds), *Islam in Public*, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, Istanbul, 2006, p. 28.

companies and media groups. The charismatic leadership of Erdoğan and its popularity both in Turkey and in the broader Muslim world seems to discourage any further Islamist critique of the JDP's impact on Islamism.⁵³ The tensions between Kemalists and Islamists further conceal any internal discussions on the coming 'crisis of Islamic life' for the Islamist movement.

There is also a dilemma that some of both the Islamic electorate and the secularists share a belief that the JDP has not changed its political strategy to Islamize Turkish society. This situation blurs the extent to which the JDP has left its Islamic ideals. It also constitutes an effective barrier to any Islamist critique of the JDP government's policies over the religious demands of Islamist circles. The JDP, since 2002, has not been criticized adequately by Islamists, though it has not been able to fulfil Islamic demands on the headscarf and religious education. Undoubtedly, the Kemalist securitization provides enough material for excuses on the part of the JDP, which continues a politics of 'patience' (postponing Islamic demands until there is a broad consensus on religious demands).⁵⁴

The harsh criticism of the hard-liner Kemalists helps the party to postpone the religious demands of its constituency. However, this masks an impoverishment and the problems that are closely tied to the very heart of the transformation of Islamism in Turkey. The conundrum facing Islamists in the 2000s has been unnoticed largely due to this dilemma. For instance, Islamists are not discussing how to combine an Islamic ethos and vocabulary with secularism and with Turkey's integration within the EU. Due to the abovementioned impoverishment, one may argue that Turkey's experience of secularism, at least for the time being, cannot be a model for the rest of the Muslim world. However, it does give some inspiration to the different sectors of Muslims throughout the world. Perhaps Egypt's Muslim Brethren, rather than Turkey's JDP, might constitute a more suitable model for forward-looking Islamic movements.

Conclusion

Islamist movements have been transforming their discourses and programmes in many parts of the Muslim world over the last two decades and the Turkish case is no exception. The transformation of the Turkish Islamist movement has gained particular momentum under the influence of the growing demands of the Islamic middle class, the moderate positions of religious groups and other societal groups including labour unions and business associations. Islamists are rethinking their views on democracy and are focused, more than ever, on tolerance, pluralism, participatory aspects of democracy, civil society and a

⁵³ For the transformation in the JDP and Erdoğan's political outlook see Metin Heper and Şule Toktaş, 'Islam, modernity and democracy in contemporary Turkey: the case of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan', *The Muslim World*, 93(2), April 2003, pp. 157–185; Menderes Çınar, 'Turkey's transformation under the AKP rule', *The Muslim World*, 96(3), July 2006.

⁵⁴ There were of course some instances where Islamist intellectuals criticized the JDP for losing its willingness to transform the system and express its earlier Islamic sensitivities. The luxury lifestyle of the rising Islamic bourgeoisie is also the main subject in these critiques. Sezai Karakoç, Ahmet Taşgetiren, Hamza Türkmen, Fehmi Kuru and Ali Bulaç are five examples of critical Islamists to be mentioned here.

notion of living together. The JDP and the Gülen Movement, as the two leading actors of Turkish Islamism, benefit greatly from the opportunities that have opened up with the process of globalization and further integration with the EU.

Each individual case of Islamism should be interpreted within the parameters of its own genuine evolution and difference. Surely, the most striking characteristic of Turkish Islamism is related to the nature of the relationship between Kemalism and Islam since the foundation of the Republic. The underlying theme inherent in this relationship has often been a notion of securitization. Kemalism securitized the issue of Islam and established a firm control over religious life through the principle of secularism. In this sense, securitization has to be seen as a key to understanding the relationship between Islam and the state in Turkey.

The Kemalist experience of secularism and the specific characteristics of Turkish Islam, interacting with each other, have produced a more moderate course of Islamism and have prevented any radicalization of the Islamist movement even in times of repression. Kemalist securitization is a dynamic and complex process which has two different and interrelated aspects: the inclusion of Islamist actors and the exclusion of Islamist discourses. In establishing an official and acceptable form of Islam, by controlling the religious sphere, Kemalism in fact illegalized any autonomous existence of religious groups and excluded any Islamist discourse from the political arena. At the same time, it integrated Islamist actors into the system. In addition, it is here suggested that Kemalist securitization is a significant reason for the impoverishment of Islamist discourses. Securitization also conceals aspects of that impoverishment due to consumerism within Islamism. Indeed, the literature of transformation fails to recognize the impoverishing aspects of the secularist constraints placed upon the Islamist agenda.

Overall, Islamist politicians cannot use Islamic political concepts in order to justify their democratic vision and experience. They can hardly legitimize their transformation in terms of an Islamic vocabulary, which would encompass different political positions on identity issues, ranging from those of leftists to those of the Kurdish nationalists. In other words, Islamism in Turkey remains in metamorphosis, driven, on the one hand, by the demands of a new middle class and a new Islamic bourgeoisie for a pragmatic, open and moderate political identity (including lessons taken from the 28 February Process) and, on the other, by the loss of an Islamic ethos and vocabulary, which can be seen as manifestations of an impoverishment both for Islamists and for Turkish politics.

What is certain is that the transformation of Islamism in Turkey will contribute to the reconciliation of Islam and democracy and to the further consolidation of Turkish democracy if Islamic actors are allowed to frame their discourse in Islamic idioms. Then, Islamists will present a different synthesis of Islamic and secular vocabularies in order to define their own transformation and their projects on the future of the Turkish political system. To give an example, the JDP's adherence to an Anglo-American interpretation of secularism is not legitimized within the Islamic movement by reference to some religious concepts like *ijtihad* or the Constitution of Medina. However, this adherence still has to be embraced by the Islamic electorate of this party in order to be seen as more than a strategy to enlarge the political arena for religious freedoms. For otherwise, the securitizing nature of the Kemalist policies towards Islam will continue to

produce an impoverishment and further fears of a hidden agenda in Turkish polity. Islamists have to find their own solutions to these questions by developing their own vocabulary rather than looking for blueprints and the help of liberal secular intellectuals. They are under the burden of creating new syntheses that will combine Islamic vocabularies with the secular realities in a more global and European Turkey.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Şule Toktaş, Tuncay Kardaş, Menderes Çınar, Ali Yaşar Sarıbay and Muhittin Ataman for their helpful comments on and criticisms of this paper.

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