

“Secularism: The Turkish Experience” Transcript **By Omer Baristiran December 2004 – Philadelphia**

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INTRODUCTION

[Music]

Vendor: Hello!

Title: Secularism: The Turkish Experience

Voiceover: *The struggle to balance worldly desires and demands against the promises and hopes of life in the afterworld, defines the essence of secularism in modern day Turkey. Located on a pathway between cultures in Eurasia, Turkey claims to be the only secular country in the region with a 99 percent Muslim majority(Carkoglu).*

Today, the 80 year old social experiment of the Turkish Republic is facing many challenges to build her own identity looking back to a rich history, while marching forward into contemporary times.

Aytunc Altindal, PhD: Turkey within the last 80 years doesn't know where Turkey belongs to. So this brings another problem to Turks, which is the identity crisis.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Turkish modernization experience has been successful in establishing modern institutions. That is to say it has been successful in establishing a nation state, bureaucracy, law.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk: We must realize many more improvements. We are determined to do that.

[**Mustafa Kemal Ataturk:** Daha cok ve daha buyuk isler yapmak mecburiyet ve azmindeyiz.]

Prof. Fuat Keyman: This success has turned into a failure when it imposes itself, its own ideology on society and assuming that by using certain state-based cultural reforms, they can transform society, they can educate society, they can change society.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Turkish Republic was in a way successful but successful at a price and the price was a kind of amnesia a kind of trying to forget this past and this past comes back in different forms and I think Islam is one of them.

Prof. Faruk Birtek: What happened in Turkey is that civil society gets suspended in Turkey to establish civil society. Democracy gets suspended to establish democracy. These are the Turkish habits. Sort of, to do the real thing you do the unreal thing. Maybe that's the way the Ottoman army marched you see, you take two steps forward and one step back but sometimes you take two steps back and one step forward and that is the hazards when you confuse your step.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: On the one hand you have United States with terrorism and Europe with Muslim migrants and Islam in many different configurations and in the middle of which Turkey a very small actor in that at that world level but playing a very important significant game for the history of all of us.

Voiceover: *What are the benefits, costs and risks associated with the Turkish way of secularism? How does the Turkish formula effect education, gender issues, politics, state-civil society relations and economy? Can Turkey offer an alternative answer for a secular system with a tolerant society for the rest of the world?*

DEFINITIONS OF SECULARISM

[Music]

Title: Chapter 1: The Definitions of Secularism

Voiceover: *Religions as well as nation-states can be considered as organizations, which are created by people to potentially satisfy their own values like security, happiness or prosperity.*

Prof. Charles Dwyer: One of the phrases I use to describe all organizations, certainly including nation-states and religions is conceptual artifact. And what that means is most of things important in our lives are constructed by people as ideas and ideas catch on and those ideas are interpreted variously by other people¹.

Voiceover: *Secularism is another conceptual artifact to regulate the relationship between two organizations namely the nation-states and religions. In other words, it is the allocation of power and resources between the spiritual and temporal authorities.*

The word secular connotes to “the temporal world” in Christian Latin as opposed to being under the authority of the Church. In fact, the roots of secularism lie in the conflict between the Protestants and Catholics in Europe.

Asst. Prof. Elizabeth Hurd: There were difficulties reaching agreement, reaching compromise between the Protestants and the Catholics and secularism emerged as a kind of compromise between these indigenous war in factions in Europe.

Abdurrahman Dilipak: Classical secularism theory does not mean the separation of religion and state. It arranges the relationship between the Church and state. In France many hospitals and universities belong to the Church. There are many recreational areas, industries, banks. Vatican Bank has a branch in Rome for example.

¹ Prof. Charles Dwyer believes that one should not look into nation-states for resolutions but instead should focus on one’s self. He has developed a program called *Self-Design* to help people cope with the complex world.

[**Abdurrahman Dilipak**:: *Klasik Laiklik teorisi din devlet ayriligini ifade etmez. Kilise devlet iliskisini duzenler. Fransa'daki bircok hastane kiliseye aittir, universiteler kiliseye aittir. Bir cok sosyal tesisler, sanayiler, banka, Vatikan bankin Roma'da filan subeleri var.*]

Voiceover: *The secular solution offered a neutral state system as opposed to any religion while also organizing the relations between the state and the religious authorities. Depending on the historical, cultural and political circumstances the local implementations of secularism in contemporary nation-states across the globe show great diversity.*

George W. Bush (2000 Inauguration Ceremony): ...preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God.

Asst. Prof. Elizabeth Hurd: These are competing, complementary strategies for managing religion in public life.

[**Visual Footnote 1:** Different Applications of Secularism in the World]

SECULARISM IN TURKISH HISTORY

[**Music**]

Title: Chapter 2: Secularism in Turkish History

Voiceover: *The Turkish experience with secularism in history goes back to the Ottoman times. In the Ottoman Empire headed by the Sultan, religion played a major role in the public as well as private spheres of live. Education was primarily given by Islamic scholars in religious madrasa² schools and Islamic rule of law, Shari At was in place.*

Prof. Faruk Birttek: Islam and traditional ways were identical really. It was not Islam as a political or social ideology but rather Islam as a way of life.

Voiceover: *The governance model of the Ottomans called the millet system, allowed great degree of religious, cultural and ethnic continuity to non-Muslim populations across more than three continents. At the same time it permitted their incorporation into the Ottoman administrative, economic and political system. The Ottoman-appointed governor collected taxes and provided security, while the local religious or cultural matters were left to the regional communities to decide.*

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: We are still far away from the Ottoman practice with regard to religious freedom. The religious freedom that we had in Istanbul; for centuries Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together. As a matter of fact, perhaps in many parts of the world we haven't really achieved that degree of tolerance even now.

² a school of Islamic theology and law in Muslim countries

Voiceover: *When the millet system started to lose its efficiency due to the rise of nationalism and other reasons, the Ottoman Empire explored new ways of governing its territory composed of diverse populations. Consequently, the military sector was one of first areas in the state system to be changed according to the European models. Sultan Selim III founded the first secular military schools by establishing the new military unit, Nizam-i Cedid, as early as 1792.*

[**Turning Point:** Demise of the Millet System]

Prof. Ahmet Evvin: Ottoman modernization goes back to 1839, Tanzimat Reforms.

Voiceover: *With the Tanzimat reforms secular civil and commerce laws were implemented to co-exist with the Islamic Law of Shari at (Berkes and Ahmad).*

[**Visual Footnote 2:** The Tanzimat Reforms]

Prof. Ahmet Evvin: So when the nation-state was established you did have basically an elite which had a secular outlook for about three generations.

Voiceover: *Yet this elite group at the helm of the discussions for the future of the Ottoman Empire, by the last quarter of the 19th century, was divided into two camps, the Islamists reformists and Westerners. Although they shared a similar goal, the modernization of Turkey, they had different views about how to reach that goal.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: Both the Islamists and the Westerners agreed that the Ottoman Empire had to change that it had to catch up with the West. And they both agreed that in doing so the Empire had to take industry and technology of the West.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Reformist would have claimed that we could have taken civilization, Western civilization for instance, but we could also have kept some kind of Islamic identity or Turkishness.

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The Westerners were saying well you can't do that because cultural forms come together with technology and industry and I think rightly so in many ways.

Voiceover: *At the end of World War I, the Ottoman Empire, which has sided with Germany, was defeated by the Allied Forces. A young Ottoman General Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his followers formulated a new idea for the future of people living in Anatolia. Instead of trying to save the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state, they decided to wage the Turkish revolutionary war against the Allied Forces occupying most of Ottoman territory in Anatolia.*

Prof. Ahmet Evvin: So actually it is a nation-state build as a result of an empire lost.

Voiceover: *In 1923, the Republic of Turkey became an independent nation-state with the goal of reaching the contemporary level of civilization.*

[**Turning Point:** Foundation of the secular Republic]

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The relevance of the republic is that it sort of put an end to this controversy, in the following sense that it was the Westerners who won.

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: So that for the early republican cadres there was no question that the new republic the new Turkish republic would be part of the West because there was no question in their minds that what was called civilization resided in the West rather than in the East.

Prof. Ahmet Evvin: If you wanted to break away from your Ottoman past you wanted to break away from the *caliphate*³ and the royal imperial dynasty so consequently that was one of the ways to make that clean break and call it a secular state.

Voiceover: *The newly constructed Turkish nation-state took the French model of secularism at the core of its national identity building.*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The words are always telling in French it is *laïcité* it is secularism and in Turkish it is *laiklik* – this Turkish version of French secularism.

[**Visual Footnote 3:** The Definitions of Secularism]

Voiceover: *The Turkish model similar to its counterpart shied away from allowing religious symbolism in the public sphere.*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The similarity between the Turkish and French one, although there are many differences of course, but I want to underline, highlight the similarity is in relation to the definition of the public sphere. A kind of public sphere which should be more neutral and as a neutral space, so that there would be no visibility for religious signs or ethnic differences.

[**Visual Footnote 4:** The Definition of the Turkish Public Sphere]

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The Turkish experience is very similar to the French experience. In other words, neither in Turkey nor in France could you ever see something like in God we trust on the French Frank or the Turkish Lira.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: On the one hand we actually resemble Turkey with the French case but on the other hand Turkey even goes beyond the French case in its state based attempt to get rid of the religion or to remove the religion from political affairs.

³ Office of the caliph - *Caliph* The title given in Muslim countries to the chief civil and religious ruler, as successor of Prophet Muhammad.

Prof. Faruk Birtok: It was perhaps the most bona fide the most representative of French revolution and the Third Republic. To the degree that perhaps even the French have given up on the radicalness of French revolution where the Turks have picked it up.

[**Visual Footnote 5:** The Third Republic France]

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The French experience turned into a struggle after the revolution between the Church and secular forces. And this went on for several centuries afterwards.

Voiceover: *In the Turkish model of laicism the objects of separation are the state vs. religion, since there was no one central religious authority as in the French case.*

Prof. Fuat Keyman: The mosque as a sociological organization in terms of what it does, how it relates itself to the community so and so forth doesn't work like the Church. So we cannot use the same kind of approach.

Voiceover: *Laicism in Turkey was institutionalized in 1937 when it became one of the six principles of the Republic of Turkey enacted by an amendment to the 1924 Constitution⁴. The state was to be neutral to all religions and the citizens had their religious freedom under the protection of the constitution. However, the Turkish state's hands on approach to secularism proved to have much more influence on religions in real life than on paper.*

The Turkish Modernity Project 1924-1950

Prof. Fuat Keyman: There is a consensus among those who are working on secularism that secularism constitutes one of the definitions of modernity. To be modern means to be secular.

Voiceover: *The Turkish state in her aspiration to be modern played the role of a social engineer instead of leaving this process to sociological and historical developments.*

[**Imagery:** Republican Refoms 1928 – Conversion to Latin Alphabet instead of the Arabic Script]

Announcer: The Arabic alphabet system has never been compatible for the Turkish language.

[**Announcer:** *Arap harflerine dayanan sistem hicbir zaman Turkce'ye uygun bir sistem olmamistir.*]

Young Girl: In the past, the alphabet was hard to write with. After Ataturk came, it is easier to read and write.

⁴ Constitution of 1924 - Article 75; 1961 – Article 19; 1982 -Article 24.

[**Young Girl:** *Eskiden eski yazılar sunle, soyledir. Egri bugru ve zor yazilan, zor yazilir. Simdi. Ataturk basa gecmis. Simdiki yazilar ise daha kolay okunuyor ve daha kolay yaziliyor.]*

[**Visual Footnote 6:** The Major Republican Reforms]

Prof. Faruk Birtek: A radically laic state, which had no tolerance of traditional ways and had taken onto itself to battle Islam as a way of life in order to modernize the country

Prof. Ahmet Evin: It is parental. It is in Turkish the mother-state. It could be harsh mother, it could be protective mother.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Turkish secularism tried to teach a way of living, a way of thinking a way of reasoning, rationality and so on to Turkish citizens, so it meant. It became a kind of a vector of modernization or in the direction of western civilization so it is not a neutral concept, it has something to do with the modernist project.

The Turkish Political History 1950-1980

Voiceover: *The Republican People’s Party initiated with the foundation of the Turkish parliament in 1923, ruled the country for the next 27 years under the one party system. In 1946, Turkey moved towards representative democracy by holding the first multiparty elections.*

[**Turning Point:** Transition to Democracy]

Prof. Faruk Birtek: It was for the first time the humble citizen had a say so in the political process.

Voiceover: *The first reinterpretation of the strict secular character of the Turkish state happened in 1950 when the oppositional Democrat Party enjoying the popular support of the public came into power by a decisive defeat of the Republican People’s Party. As promised, the new Democrat Party government relaxed the many of the rigid secular rules modifying the secular identity of the state.*

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: For 18 years until 1950 the call for prayer in Turkey was read out loud not in Arabic but in Turkish.

[**Prof. Hidayet Aydar:** *18 yıl süre ile yani 1950 yılına kadar Türkiye’de ezan arapça olarak değil Türkçe olarak okunmaya başlanıyor.*]

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: As soon as the [Democrat Party] came to power, their first act was to restore the call for prayer in Arabic. Thus, after May of 1950 the call for prayer in Turkey has been read in Arabic, which continues to be the case today.

[Prof. Hidayet Aydar: *Iktidara gelir gelmez yaptıkları ilk icraat ezanı yeniden arapçaya çevirmek olmuştur. Dolayısı ile Mayıs 1950'den sonra yeniden ezan Türkiye'de arapça olarak okunmaya başlanmıştır. Halen de öyle okunuyor.]*

Voiceover: *Yet the experiment with democracy turned upside down as the Democrat Party became more and more authoritarian as years passed. By using its absolute parliamentary majority power, the Democrat Party government tried to muzzle the opposition. In response to this repressive government, the first military coup happened in 1960, followed by two more in 1971 and 1980 respectively.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: When the military intervened in 1960, it actually intervened to change the constitution in order to make a viable competitive democracy, so that what the founding fathers of America would call, oppression of majoritarian rule cannot be repeated.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: 1971 military intervention was mainly to correct the inability of weak and fragmented coalition government, so was 1980.

Voiceover: *The Turkish Armed-Forces have a unique responsibility to protect the founding principles of the Republic, secularism being one of them.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: They were trying to do two potentially opposing things. One is the being the guardians of the constitution and the state and number two pushing towards a sustainable democratic system.

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): In any given country in the western world, the military is responsible to protect the mainland, but in Turkey, Turkish military was given a specific role plus protecting the country. So this specific mission is that Turkish military is also was also tasked to protect the Turkish Republic⁵.

[Imagery: The President of Republic of Turkey (2000 ongoing) greets military officials]

[Sound: National Anthem of Republic of Turkey]

Voiceover: *With the 1980 military coup, the secular character of the Turkish State experienced the second major adjustment in its ideological direction after the first fix in 1950's by the Democrat Party regime. The Turkish national identity built upon “progress, secularism and reason” was replaced by “traditionalism, religious accommodation and a sense of moral community(Birtek).”*

This neo-republican state ideology endorsed a synthesis of the family, the mosque and the barracks trying to recalibrate the secular identity of its citizens. The socio-political consequences of this change are still felt to this day.

⁵ The Interior Law of 1961 for the Turkish Military ([Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri İç Hizmet Kanunu](#))

[**Turning Point:** 1980 Military Coup]

Prof. Faruk Birtek: What happened is that the military coup created alternative elites. By alternative I mean they were more expressions of traditional society, traditional populism and Islamic orient. So you have Islamic intellectuals coming about. Islamic politicians coming out and you eventually ended up with Islamic democracy as we have it in Turkey today.

So, in a way it is very strange, it allowed Islam to become a more important political force in Turkey contrary to the generals’ initial design and interest. So you have Islam playing a more important role yet it also democratized Islam when it became to participate in the process.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: And after 1983, therefore we go back in a way, of course in different terms, we go back to this debate on how to combine modernity with some kind of authenticity or singularity.

[**Visual Footnote 7:** The Question of Modernity]

SECULAR POLITICS – A new Formula?

[**Music**]

Title: Chapter 3: Secular Politics – A new Formula?

Voiceover: *The debate on secular ideals and religious convictions continues today not only in the social level but also in the political arena. Contemporary Turkish politics constitutes an illuminating case study for secularism as well as its costs and benefits.*

The role of religion in secular politics of contemporary Turkey has gone through different phases in the last 20 years. Turkish State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin described the connection between religion and politics in his keynote speech for the conference in Washington DC titled “Islam, Secularism and Democracy: The Turkish Experience”

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: There are those however, who think like Mahatma Gandhi as a matter of fact, who said anyone who says that religion has nothing to do whatsoever with politics does not know the meaning of religion or politics. So they are related. Here it is not the mere existence of relationship but the nature of this relationship which concerns us.

Mr. Necmettin Erbakan (Welfare Party – 1994): Come to the Just System! This is the re-conquering of Istanbul 500 years later.

[**Mr. Necmettin Erbakan (Welfare Party – 1994):** *Adil duzene, milli goruse gelin...Bu Istanbul'un 500 sene sonra yeniden fethidir.*]

Voiceover: *The nature of the relationship between politics and religion is subject to manipulation of religion by multiple political as well as social actors. This vulnerable equilibrium has become one of the major factors of polarization in the political sphere.*

Mr. Deniz Baykal (Majority Opposition Leader- 2002): All of them brought down Turkey to the current situation.

[**Mr. Deniz Baykal (Majority Opposition Leader- 2002):** *Hepsi Turkiye'yi batiran bu noktaya getirmistir.*]

Prof. Ahmet Evin: The political culture in Turkey rests on an argument, win or lose, zero-sum game. So it is very important to take that into consideration, that gray area accommodation is not the immediate end of politics as we understand in the United States.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: So, in the Turkish case we have these two traditions. One more republican in the European sense, Republican secularist, or *Jacobin*⁶ as many social scientists refer in relation to the French case more state-authoritarian. And the second tradition, political tradition is more conservative and democrat.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: Any major ideological divide tends to continue and tends to fuel further disagreements in Turkish political culture. So secularism vs. religion is one of those.

Voiceover: *The current Turkish government of Justice and Development - AK Party claims to have struck a balance in administrating the state matters with a secular mindset while representing conservative values.*

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: It is unusual that in Turkey of all places, you would have a government that is now representative of combination of secularism and Islam that is very moderate. You have moderate Muslims working within the secular political system. It is an interesting experiment.

Voiceover: *In November of 2002, the conservative democrat AK Party won the national elections with 34 percent of the vote. This success granted the AK party government the majority of the seats in the parliament, while the left-wing Republican People's Party became the minority oppositional party with 19 percent of the ballots. As no other party*

⁶ A member of a French political club or society established in 1789, at Paris, in the old convent of the Jacobins, to maintain and propagate the principles of extreme democracy and absolute equality.

was able to pass the 10 percent minimum voting threshold, the current parliament has only two parties and a few independents⁷.

[Visual Footnote 8: The results of the 2002 Parliamentary elections.]

Prof. Nilufer Gole: They won the elections because they were representative of the conservative or more liberal or democrat circles. People, who voted for them are not all Islamists, not even religious people.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: So, it wasn't just the poor, it wasn't just the really rural conservative population, you would tend to associate with an Islamist movement but rather it was a new middle class and professional class.

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: When you look at what the movement has come to again that's a very very interesting example of how the Islamic movement itself was quote unquote tamed let's say by the democratic process, by the very logic of democracy.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: They moved let's say from the margins of the political system to the what we call towards the center. Towards the center mean more consensual with other social actors and not being radical.

Voiceover: *The Welfare Party was an earlier more extreme incarnation of the Justice and Development Party. In 1996, Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamist Welfare Party came to parliamentary power in a coalition government.*

Chanting: We promise to give all we can.

[Chanting: *Butun gucumuzle calisacagimiza soz veriyoruz.*]

Mr. Necmettin Erbakan (Welfare Party Convention): Let the new victory come! God bless you!

[Mr. Necmettin Erbakan (Welfare Party Convention):*Yeni fethiniz mubarek olsun. Allah'a emanet olun.]*

Voiceover: *Yet, the religious angle in Erbakan's politics was not welcomed by the secular circles of the state apparatus as well as the public.*

Chanting: Turkey is secular and will stay that way.

[Chanting: *Turkiye laiktir, laik kalacak.*]

⁷ After a few transfers between the political parties currently there are 6 independents and 4 seats for right-wing True Path Party in the Turkish parliament. To see the up to date distribution please go to: http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekili_sd.dagilim

Voiceover: *On 28th of February 1997 Prime Minister Erbakan agreed to sign a list of measures against the radical Islamic movement in Turkey at the National Security Meeting consisting of civil and military state officials headed by the president⁸. This meeting once again redefined the Turkish national secular identity for the third time in the history of the Republic and reinforced the notion of purely secular politics.*

[**Visual Footnote 9:** The National Security Council Meeting]

[**Turning Point:** Secular Reaction against the Welfare Party]

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): Everybody accepted that there are some indication. There are some threats to replace the Turkish Republic. So the 28th February operation must be taken into consideration from that perspective since our president, our prime minister, deputy prime minister including the appropriate ministers they all signed that [those] measures which was sent to the government.

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: There were so many so many incidents where there was this civilian reaction against the Erbakan government as well as civilian support for the secular state. I think the military was very much aware of it. In other words, they sort of put that behind their backs, put that wave behind their backs and then interfered rather than interfere directly.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: The military of course killed two birds with one stone. By virtue of making Mr. Erbakan signed this National Security Council resolution, the military was able to devalue Mr. Erbakan’s power and political effectiveness in the eyes of his very followers and that was basically the reversing trend of Islamism in Turkey.

Voiceover: *The Welfare Party not only lost its social but also legal status. It was banned by the Constitutional Court due to unconstitutional activities against the secular identity of the Turkish Republic in January of 1998⁹, while Erbakan was prohibited from doing politics for the coming five years.*

Prof. Fuat Keyman: On the basis of the constitutional court decisions, an attempt to close down the parties, because it has not effected the sociological basis of these parties did not function in Turkey and every closing down of the party has produced another party and another party has become a better party in terms of presenting itself, moderate what ever. The result of which is what we have today in Turkey.

Voiceover: *Its successor, the Virtue Party also shared the same destiny and was closed in July 2001 after 3.5 years of operation¹⁰. At that time, there was a split in the Islamist*

⁸ The detailed list of the 18 decisions can be found at Appendix 3 from David Shankland, *Islam and Society in Turkey* (Huntingdon: Eothen Press, 1999). pp.204.

⁹ Article 68 of the 1982 Turkish Constitution reads: *The statutes and programmes, as well as the activities of political parties shall not be in conflict with the independence of the state, its indivisible integrity with its territory and nation...sovereignty of the nation, the principles of the democratic and secular republic...*]

¹⁰ The Decisions of the Constitutional Court to close down political parties can be found at:

political movement between the reformist wing lead by current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the traditionalists. So both groups founded their own parties.

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): 28th February operation was a lesson for the different parties. It was a lesson for the military; it was a lesson for the political parties. It was a lesson for NGO's.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: When we look at the period between 1997 where we have the 28th February intervention and today, if I go back to the learning process, I will actually argue that AKP and Islamic forces have been much more successful in learning what they can do, what they cannot do in Turkey.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Instead of putting the headscarf issue on their agenda, they put European integration and that helped also on going beyond these cleavages and create a kind of larger consensus.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: Of all the politicians or political leaders in the past half-century in Turkey, they are the ones who are making an effort at least to tell the public that they are not contrary to the state elite that in fact they are willing and wishing to enter into debate in a common understanding of issues with the state elite.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Radical Islamism is transformed to something more pluralistic. We can even consider the leader of the political party as an ex-Islamist. So in a way they took kind of a distance from the original, radical project of Islamism as a total project and something that should englobe the whole system and the power and the state and where as now they move into a kind of more mainstream, center conservative party.

[**Visual Footnote 10:** The definition of a total project]

Voiceover: *While the political Islamic movement was becoming more and more moderate and mainstream, the rest of the political parties basing their policies on authoritarian secularism were separating themselves further apart from the Turkish society in the process.*

Kenan Cayir, PhD: We are experiencing an evolution from Islamist sentiment towards Islam. If society is a stage where conflicts are displayed, the transition does not only depend on the Islamist sections. The change is only possible with the transformation of the more laic, secular groups as well as strong institutions.

[**Kenan Cayir, PhD:** *Belki Islamcilikten muslumanliga dogru bir iste gidis goruyoruz. Toplum catismalarin sergilendigi bir sahne ise bu donusum tabi sadece Islami kesimin donusumune bagli degil. Daha laik kesimlerin, sekuler kesimlerin, Turkiye'deki cok guclu kurumlarin da donusumu ile olacak birsey.*]

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Center-right and center-left parties located in the state-centric politics have been unable to learn about the changes, learn about different problems and transformations in the society.

I think the Islamic parties because they are supposed to be embedded in society. They cannot embed themselves into the state because the laicist and secular nature of the state and they learned this process. What to do, how to do this politics.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The Welfare Party and the other AK Party, first of all, they understood sociologically the Turkish society better. That means the family vote and to touch the family vote you have to be in touch with women and interior spaces so they made door to door kind of campaign. And for that you need women as well.

Prof. Yesim Arat: The party was allowing them to work in the public realm, use their skills or education or experience that had gathered throughout their education and give them an opportunity to be part of public life.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: This is not to say its without its problems. So, although there are many women active in the what was called the Islamist movement, now is a more personalized Islam in politics. There are many women in developing that but there are not that many women in parliament not just in Muslim-oriented parties but in any party in Turkey.

[**Imagery:** 21 females in 549 seat parliament (4%)¹¹]

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The key issue and the key is the women. But who will have the key?

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: So there is a question of whether or not this will bring any more tolerance, any more pluralism to the Turkish public sphere or whether it will just add one more groups of elites to the secular elites. So now we have Muslim elites we add them to the secular elites.

Voiceover: *The conservative democrat political agenda of the Justice and Development Party is its biggest strength and weakness at the same time.*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: They are not even referring to Islam as a religion but they are trying to define a political project where there can be a place for conservative ideas and democracy.

Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: The formulated perspective by this synthesis is a conflicting one because the following scenario emerges when one talks about being a conservative democrat. The core of conservatism is the protection of the spirit and shared values of a community. If you try to protect that spirit you cannot be a democrat. Yet, if you are a

¹¹ For a list of all of the members of parliament (2004) please go to http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekili_sd.liste

democrat you should not be concerned about protecting the values of a community, then you cannot be called a conservative.

[Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: *Bu anlayisin formule ettigi gorus celiskili bir gorus cunku muhafazakar demokrat dendigi zaman ortaya su cikiyor. Muhafazakarligin ozunde bir topluluk ruhunu, topluluk degerini korumak vardir. O degeri o ruhu korumaya yoneldiginizde demokrat olmazsiniz son tahlilde. O sempozyumda da soyledim bunu. Ama demokrat iseniz o zaman belli bir toplulugun belli bir toplulugun degerini ruhunu korumak gibi bir endisenizin olmamasi lazim o zaman da muhafazakar olmazsiniz.]*

Voiceover: *What is then the message of the Justice of Development Party wants to get across to the Turkish nation and the world at large? Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay believes that the conservative democrat is a synonym for the pragmatic attitude of the party towards political problem solving.*

Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: It is exactly putting a label on a tactic and strategy. By conservative they imply their sensibility towards Islam. By democrat they express the fact that they are aware of sensibilities other than the Islamic one.

[Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: *Tamamen bir taktigi bir stratejiyi bu sekilde adlandirmak. Muhafazakar derken bence Islami duyarliliklara atifta bulunuyor. Demokratim derken de bu Islami duyarliliktan baska duyarliliklar da var ben bunun farkındayim demeye getiriyor.]*

Prof. Faruk Prof. Faruk Birtok: It would be wrong to read dishonesty in their activities. Nobody is justified to do that and what we are concerned about the practice, all we have to hope is that pragmatism would pay rather than would fail everybody.

Voiceover: *This pragmatic synthesis welcomes people from different backgrounds, while having a harder time to meet the expectations of its core followers.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: The Justice and Development Party is itself a coalition.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Paradoxically, those parties who have emerged, that have emerged out of the gap between state-centric modernization and societal changes and transformations since the 80's cannot be a solution to this because they will have all of this, they will have paradoxes they will face like the more secular they are the more they are going to be challenged by the core constituency. That is why I think social democratic and liberal parties should for me initiate certain democratization reforms.

Voiceover: *It is difficult to assess if this fusion offered by the current government will result with a more pluralistic and tolerant state system than its predecessors from the Ottoman and early Republican times.*

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: The secularist thought that if we could ban the headscarf from all public places like the government, civil service and schools and so on that eventually people will become secular.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: It is kind of notion that if you change the environment within which people live, you make them wear certain kinds of cloths, behave a certain way that they become that way and that really didn't work. So, the question is will the public Muslims go the same direction. There is a tendency to think that's something that might work and so there was talk for instance -about among the public Muslims- about talking. They talked about whether they should ban the consumption of alcohol in public places because it might offend some people who might be passing by those public places who didn't approve. But that's the same kind of thing. It's also social engineering and it is a non-liberal non-pluralist approach that some would say is not tolerant of differences.

A DIVIDED TURKISH SOCIETY?

[Music]

Title: Chapter 4: A Divided Turkish Society?

Voiceover: *How much does the zero-sum game in the political arena translate to the societal relations between people with secular, Islamic or alternative lifestyles?*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: I don't think that the majority of the Turkish people are basically divided one way of the other.

Prof. Yesim Arat: When you talked to the people involved talked to the people with headscarves you see that actually polarization is artificial, is superficial that it needs to be deconstructed because there has been so much self-definition of one through the other. The headscarved girls define themselves with reference to the values that so-called secularists, who are opposed to them, try to define themselves with.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: At the sociological level the wall between secularist elites and the middle classes and others Muslims or more religious people are getting thinner since 1980's. It's started since 1950's but especially during the last two decades.

Voiceover: *In February 1999, at the height of political division between secularist and Islamists, Prof. Binnaz Toprak co-authored a study “to analyze the relationship between religiosity on the one hand, and socio-political attitudes and behavior in Turkey, on the other” (Carkoglu).*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: That was a survey a colleague and I carried out in 1999 and many of the questions showed that religion in this country is understood in very tolerant terms.

There was this great polarization, so we were interested to see if this polarization was real as far as the man on the street or women on the street were concerned and what we have found is that it really is not.

Voiceover: *97 percent of the study sample replied to the question “Which religion do you belong to?” as Islam, while only 3 percent claimed that they do not believe in any religion at all.*

[**Imagery:** In the TESEV Study sample 0.3% were non-Muslim]

Voiceover: *The answers about the religious habits in daily life demonstrate that the majority of the Turkish population not only are believers but also practice their religion on a daily basis.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: Turkish people are religious but when you ask them how religious those who say very religious or not religious at all are really in the margins.

Voiceover: *In response to a number of questions about the secular vs. Islamic polarization in the society, the study reveals that if the individual is a believer in God and the Prophet the society is tolerant towards different levels of religiosity and religious practice.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: What this revealed is that what’s important for the Muslims in this country is that you are a believer but whether you practice it or not whether you pray, you fast during Ramadan or whether you cover your head is not altogether that important.

Voiceover: *Another outcome of the survey portrays the attitudes of the Turkish population about the role of religion in the public sphere such as the judiciary or legislative branches of the Turkish nation-state.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The majority are Muslim and yet what comes out is that they see religion as a private affair.

Voiceover: *61% of the population believes that there should no parties in Turkish political life based on a religion, while 20 % of respondents, a significant amount expressed that they would like to see an Islamic state based on Shari At laws.*

Prof. Yesim Arat: When you try to understand how they see Islam, they see it in you know the most secular terms. They see an Islam where polygamy is not really quite possible.

Prof. Yesim Arat: So, there is clearly a misunderstanding. There is clearly a vague understanding what Shari At is.

[**Visual Footnote 11:** The Islamic Shari At Laws]

Voiceover: *In fact, when asked further detailed questions whether a man should be allowed to marry up to four wives as a consequence of Shari At laws, 85% did not agree with this proposition. Thus, Prof. Binnaz Toprak believes that the percentage of Turkish population with aspirations for an Islamic state is lower than what the study suggests.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: It seems like 10 percent of that 20 percent really say yes without knowing what they are asking.

Voiceover: *According to the results of the study, ‘the majority of the Turkish people are practicing Muslims and devout believers. However, religious belief and practice is considered to be limited to private live and the idea of religious involvement in public life in not supported’ (Carkoglu).*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: And this I find to be a success story for republican secularism because I think from the very start that was the whole idea that religion should be –how should I say it- not reduced but should be confined in the private sphere rather than have any role in public affairs.

SEPARATING THE STATE FROM RELIGION

[Music]

Title: Chapter 5: Separating the State from Religion

Voiceover: *The management of religions in a secular state is an intricate matter and involves the neutrality of the state authority against any religion. Even tough the current Turkish population is already against the involvement of religion in public affairs, the Turkish state has taken extreme measures to create and maintain a strictly secular public sphere from the very beginning of its foundation.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: What happened was the domestication of Islam under state control.

Aytunc Altindal, PhD: The day you are born you are a Muslim but all through your life you have to live like a laic person in Turkey. And the moment when you die again the state says now a Muslim died and the state appoints a certain Imam and then there is a certain mosque and then your funeral is treated as a Muslim funeral.

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: and in Turkey of course this has meant that rather than the separation of the two spheres; religion and the state. It meant state control over religion because way back in the 1920’s a presidency of religious affairs was established.

Voiceover: *The Directorate of Religious Affairs was founded with a law while the Caliphate from Ottoman times was abolished in 1924.*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: In Turkey, the Directorate of Religious Affairs is a constitutional establishment. According to the Constitution it is supposed to unite the society, regulate the places of worship, enlighten the public about religion and produce correct information¹².

[**Prof. Ali Bardakoglu:** *Turkiye’de Diyanet tabi anayasal bir kurum. Anayasa’ya gore halki birlestirip butunlestirmesi gerekiyor, ibadet yerlerini yonetmesi gerekiyor, halki din konusunda aydinlatmasi gerekiyor, dogru bilgi uretmesi gerekiyor.*]

Voiceover: *Prof. Mustafa Fayda explains the reasoning behind the current organizational structure of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and similarly the Office of Commander-in-Chief, establishing the relationship between the Turkish Armed Forces and the government.*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: Why were these converted into a Directorate, while they were two separate Ministries? To remove them from the discussion of politics. The Directorate of Religious Affairs as well as the Office of Commander-in-Chief became departments under the Prime Ministry. Today, they continue to function in the same way.

[**Prof. Mustafa Fayda:** *Niye bunlar bakanlikten alindi da – ikisi iki ayri bakanlik iken birer baskanlik haline getirildi? Siyasetin tartisma konusu olmaktan cikarmak icin. Diyanet Basbakanliga bagli bir Baskanlik, Genelkurmay Baskanligi da Basbakanliga bagli bir Baskanlik haline getirildi. Bugun de boyle yuruyor bunlar.]*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The presidency is connected to the Office of the Prime Minister and all of its personnel are considered to be state-employees, civil-servants, which means that they get paid by the state and therefore are controlled by the state.

Voiceover: *The Director of Religious Affairs Prof. Ali Bardakoglu believes that the Directorate is under no political influence.*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: The Directorate of Religious Affairs is an independent public and civil institution. It is positioned inside of the bureaucratic state mechanism, yet it provides the information in a healthy way according to scientific data.

[**Prof. Ali Bardakoglu:** *Diyanet bir kamu kurulusudur. Diyanet ozgur bir kurulustur. Diyanet sivil bir kurulustur. Ne demek bu? Devletin carki icerisinde, devlet burokratik yapisi itibari ile mekanizma olarak devlet yapisi icinde yer alir. Ama bilgiyi bilimin verilerine gore saglikli bir sekilde ve ozgurce uretir.]*

¹² Prof. Ali Bardakoglu’s answer on the purpose of the Directorate of Religious Affairs is almost identical to the [Article 136](#) of the 1982 Constitution, where it states: “The Department of Religious Affairs... shall exercise its duties ... in accordance with the principles of secularism, ...aiming at national solidarity and integrity”.

Voiceover: *One of the ways the Directorate of Religious Affairs publishes its views on Islam in relation to current events is by preparing the weekly text called “hutbe” for all of the Imams across Turkey to be read on Friday’s sermon at noon-prayer.*

[Imagery: In the TESEV Study Sample - 84 % of Turkish men go to Friday prayer regularly.]

Imam’s voice during Friday sermon: ...These are not in the sentences of Koran... One cannot accomplish anything with these... Yet, you should make your nation and community stronger in moral terms, you should possess economic power...

[Imam’s voice during Friday sermon: *Gercek ... Kuran’in hukumleri icerisinde bunlar yoktur....Bunlarla bir yere varilmaz...Ancak sen ahlaki yonden guzelce kendi milletini cemiyetini guclendireceksin, ekonomik guce sahip olacaksin.]*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: The two-page long Sermon is read on Fridays in mosques. The text of this sermon is prepared by academics and religious scholars.

[Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: *Camilerde Cuma gunleri iste iki sayfalik bir hutbe okunur. Yaklasik bir bucuuk iki sayfalik. Bu hutbe metni buradaki bilim adamlari, din adamlari tarafından hazirlanir.]*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: We prepare these speeches according to Turkey’s circumstances, issues and bleeding wounds. We don’t take any external suggestions into consideration yet as individuals who live in this country, national problems are a concern to us. Look, I just came back from a tree-planting event. You see, if our country is becoming a desert, if the forests are being destroyed, we cannot let people pass time with prayer, we have to tell them that these are wrong actions.

[Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: *Biz bu hutbeleri Turkiye’nin gerceklerine gore, Turkiye’deki sorunlara gore, Turkiye’deki kanayan yaralara gore, oturuyoruz, dusunuyoruz ve hazirliyoruz. Hic kimsenin telkini ile hareket etmiyoruz ama bu topraklarda yasayan bir insan olarak ulkemizin sorunlari bizi ilgilendirir. Yani ulkemizde bak simdi ben iki saat once agaclandirmadan geldim. Yani ulkemiz collesiyorsa, ulkemizde ormanlar tahrip ediliyorsa, biz insanlara sadece abdest ile namaz ile vakit geciremeyiz, biz insanlara bunun yanlis oldugunu anlatmak zorundayiz.]*

Voiceover: *Even tough the majority of the population in Turkey believe in Islam, there are multiple interpretations of Islam and varying levels of religiosity.*

[Visual Footnote 12: The religious sects in Turkey]

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Casanova argues that this institution and laicism in this context with reference to this institution is problematic because it is too state-centric to Sunnites, it is too Sunnite to Alevites, it is too Turkish to Kurds, and I could add it is too Islamic too non-Muslim minorities (Casanova).

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: There are different religious orientations even among the Muslim population. In other words, people who pray and those who don't, drink or don't, play lottery or don't, all live together.

[**Prof. Ali Bardakoglu:** *Halkimizin kendi arasinda da Musluman halkin farkli dindarlik egilimleri vardir. Yani namaz kilan ile kilmayan, icki icen ile icmeyen, milli piyango bileti alan ile almayan, kurban kesen ile kesmeyen bir arada yasar.]*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: Neither in form nor in mentality do we have an essentialized, one size fits all type of religious model. We present knowledge to people and are sensitive that the presented information is accurate. As long as we present accurate information, people can take what they like. We are like a pharmacy so long as there is no expired medicine inside.

[**Prof. Ali Bardakoglu:** *Ne sekil olarak ne beyin, zihin olarak tek tip dindarlik modelimiz yoktur. Biz yeterli insanlara bilgi sunariz ve sundugumuz bilginin dogru olmasina ozen gosteririz. Dogru bilgiyi sunduktan sonra insanlar istedikleri bilgiyi alirlar. Yani bizim, eczane gibiyiz biz, iceride yeterli gunu gecmis ilac olmasin.]*

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Can we actually eliminate this institution and leave the regulation of religious affairs to civil society organizations or some sort of spontaneous organization. So far, my sense actually is no actually I mean so there is the problem in Turkey that we know the problems with this institution but we don't know what we can do we get rid of this institution.

Voiceover: *A study prepared in 1999 reveals that more than 80 percent of the Turkish population is against the abolishment of the Directorate of Religious (Carkoglu).*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: Contrary to what some journalists and politicians claim, the majority of our community have embraced the Directorate of Religious Affairs, laicism and democracy. They seem to have understood the effectiveness and harmony of the Directorate in a laic state system.

[**Prof. Ali Bardakoglu:** *Bazi kose yazarlarimizin, yazarlarimizin, cizerlerimizin veya siyasetcilerimizin iddia ettiginin aksine halkimizin buyuk cogunlugu hem diyaneti hem laikligi hem demokrasiyi ayri ayri benimsemis ve bunlarin laik bir devlet yapisi icerisinde diyanetin yer almasinin verimlilikini uyumlulugunu anlamini daha iyi kavramis gorunmektedir.]*

Voiceover: *The United States of America is a vivid example for a state system, where religious affairs are mainly left to the civil society to decide. Nevertheless, [Asst.] Prof. Elizabeth Hurd points out that even in the United States, the total separation of state and religion is not to be found. Traces of religious symbolism and rhetoric exist in the American public sphere including politics, law and education as religion is embedded in the national identity formation.*

Asst. Prof. Elizabeth Hurd: This is not simply Christianity in the sense of a privatized religion. It is public. In fact, it is so public that it is closely bound up with American national identity itself. It cannot be separated.

We have our president, who in the last day or two said that, you know, he was being criticized for basically not following his father’s foreign policy to a greater extent he said, well, there is my father and there is the father and I follow the father. He is quite serious about that and that resonates very profoundly with a lot of Americans.

After all recent PEW surveys are showing that between 58-65 % of Americans believe that religion can solve our public problems not out private problems¹³, questions of the after life or private decisions involving morality etc. but our public problems as a country.

Asst. Prof. Elizabeth Hurd: So, I think it is bigger and broader than civil society. That’s kind of the myth that, you know that’s kind of the Tocquevillian myth of America, but actually it is part of our culture, institutions and government and the extent to which Turkey wants to try to replicate that is up for grabs (Tocqueville and Goldhammer).

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Democratization and further democratization actually of state-society relations is key to understanding of how to regulate religious affairs in Turkey. And I would suggest actually that democratic secularism sort of rendering laicism into a more democratic secular ethos would provide a better solution than those who are arguing that “No, no no we have to have civil society, we have to have spontaneous society based, or if you are neo-liberal market oriented regulation of religious affairs”.

Voiceover: *Investigative Journalist Aytunc Altindal proposes that instead of eliminating the Directorate, a fresh more democratic viewpoint to its inner-workings might generate a health resolution.*

Aytunc Altindal, PhD: What do we have in the laic system as this religious department and what we have in the secular system? This state religious office functionally they are different. In the secular system this office is not more than a registering office.

Aytunc Altindal, PhD: So it’s a kind of security, here it is a kind of control, control of the conscience, consciousness.

TEACHING RELIGION?

[Music]

Title: Chapter 6: Teaching Religion?

¹³ For further research visit The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life <http://pewforum.org/>

Voiceover: *Public Education is one of the central services that the nation-states are responsible for providing to its citizens. The Turkish secular education system confirms the state’s influence on religion in Turkey on the supply side as well as the desires of the civil society for religious teaching on the demand side.*

Prof. Yesim Arat: Secular education is very important, you know if the republic is a secular republic.

Kenan Cayir, PhD: The core purpose of official education not only in Turkey but in every nation-state, is political socialization. Yet, the issue is how it is constructed.

[**Kenan Cayir, PhD:** *Resmi egitimin sadece Turkiye’de degil her ulkede aslinda temelde hedefi politik sosyalizasyon, politik sosyallesme. Ancak sorun bunun nasil kurgulandigi.*]

Voiceover: *The secular education in Turkey was established as one of the first acts of the nation state in 1924 with the Law for Unification of Instruction under central command of the Ministry of Education. According to the principle of separation of state from religious affairs, the religious studies in the old curriculum were removed and religious madrasa schools closed.*

[**Imagery:** Students in front of an old Madrasa school turned into a female student dorm]

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: In the latter period of the Ottomans not only the administration and the military but maybe more so the religion got corrupted.

[**Prof. Hidayet Aydar:** *Osmanlilarin son donemlerinde sadece yonetim degil, sadece ordu degil, onlar kadar belki de onlardan daha fazla din dejenere olmustur.*]

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: Many people went to madrasa schools in order to avoid military service or payment of taxes.

[**Prof. Hidayet Aydar:** *Bir cok insan medreselere ve tekkelere askerlik yapmamak vergi vermemek icin gidip yerlesmislerdir.]*

Prof. Irfan Aycan: Religious instruction is a demand of the public. There are two forms of religious instruction in the world. The first kind is independent within a space of freedoms. The State or social groups took the responsibility, or it is left to the discretion of the civil society. In Turkey, considering the status of the Islamic world in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, the state proposed to offer religious education and currently it is under the monopoly of the state.

[**Prof. Irfan Aycan:** *Din egitimi toplumun bir talebidir. Dunyada iki cesit din egitimi yapilmaktadir. Bir hurriyetleralani gorulerek serbest birakilmistir. Devlet vermistir, cemaatler vermistir. Insanlara birakilmistir, toplumun kendine birakilmistir. Bu sekilde yapilmistir. Bizim Turkiye’de Islam dunyasinin ozellikle 18’inci 19’uncu ve 20’inci*

yuzyildaki konumu goz onune alinarak devlet vermeye talip olmustur ve su anda devletin tekelindedir din egitimi.]

Prof. Ahmet Evin: I do not think that state schools have any reason to teach religion, unless it is history of religions and I think that could be subsumed under philosophy and ethics.

Voiceover: *In 1949, after 25 years of strictly secular education curriculum, the Republican People’s Party introduced a course on Islam in the fourth and fifth grades on a voluntary basis as a populist political measure. Two years later, seven so-called Imam Hatip Schools opened to educate religious personnel and Imams. Over the next three decades religious instruction in the secular education focusing mainly on Islam continued to increase until its reinterpretation with the military coup in 1980.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: When the military stepped in, they thought that apart from security issues there had to be a renewed effort in the educational system as well to reinforce national unity and solidarity. So on the one hand, they thought that republican values and secular values were important but also any other factor that would put the traditional society together such as religion would also be an appropriate factor to put in education.

The result was a highly unsatisfactory synthesis of republicanism, secularism, Ataturkism¹⁴, Islam and nationalism in the educational curriculum.

Voiceover: *The 1982 Constitution made instruction in religious culture and moral education compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. A present-day high school graduate will on average have one hour of religious instruction per week starting on 4th grade.*

Prof. Irfan Aycan: Secularism and religious education by no means clash with each other. The intellectuals who are foreign to the culture and religion of their own society keep this issue on the agenda. They are continually against the religious teaching by claiming that a secular state cannot offer such a thing.

[Prof. Irfan Aycan: *Laiklikle din egitimi kesinlikle celismez, catismaz. Yani, bizim biraz once bahis ettigimiz aydin tipi yani kendi toplumunun dinine kulturune yabanci aydin tipi surekli bunu gundemde tutuyor. Laik bir devlet din egitimi veremez diyerekten surekli din egitimine karsi cikmaktadirlar.]*

Voiceover: *Yet, similar to the dilemma of Directorate of Religious Affairs, the non-confessional¹⁵ religious instruction in a secular education system has a hard time to*

¹⁴ From Turkey’s first President and national leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk also more widely known as *Kemalism* The political, social, and economic policies advocated by Kemal Atatürk, which aimed to create a modern republican secular Turkish state out of a part of the Ottoman empire.

¹⁵ This education model presents information about faith and religions of the world independent of any system of belief.

serve the values of all its students and parents not only from secular, but also from religious persuasions.

Abdurrahman Dilipak: There can't be a mandatory religious instruction. What an absurdity. For me, religion is more important than my own life, my property and loved ones. In order to learn my religion they tell me “You are required”. Who are you? The state tries to impose its interpretation of religion and this is very annoying for me.

[**Abdurrahman Dilipak:** *Zorunlu din dersi de olmaz. Ne demek boyle bir sacmalik. Benim icin din hayatimdan daha degerlidir. Malimdan, canimdan ve sevdiklerimden daha degerlidir ve bunu ogrenmek icin sen mecbursun diyor. Sen kimsin? O kendi din telakkisinin misyonerligini yaptirmak istiyor birilerine ve bu tabi benim icin cok sinir bozucu birsey.]*

Voiceover: *The writing of the national education curriculum with textbooks and additional materials presents an important challenge for the separation of state from religion and vice versa.*

Prof. Irfan Aycan: In the last three, four years, ten to twelve of our friends from the Religious Studies Department of Ankara University have totally changed the religious curriculum and textbooks of primary and secondary as well as vocational schools. They worked on this for four years. Today's religious textbooks meet the demands much better and are not in their outdated condition anymore.

[**Prof. Irfan Aycan:** *Son 3-4 yildir bizim Ankara Universitesi Ilahiyat fakultesi ogretim uyelerinden 10-12 arkadasimiz hem Imam Hatip liselerinin, hem ilk ogretimin, hem orta ogretimin, din dersi kitaplarini, mufredat programlarini ve kitaplarini tamamen degistirdiler. 4 yil calistilar bunun uzerinde asagi yukari. Degistirdiler. Bugunku din dersi kitaplari daha iyi ihtiyaca cevap vermektedir, yani o eski konumunda degildir.]*

Voiceover: *In 2003, the Economic and Social History Foundation of Turkey published a study titled “Human Rights in the Textbooks” examining more than 150 textbooks in the Turkish national education system. Researcher Kenan Cayir studied the concept of state in these publications (Ceylan).*

Kenan Cayir, PhD: The goal of education is to provide and continue the unchallenged national unity. If it is necessary, the individuals sacrifice everything they have for the good of the society or rather for the good of the state.

[**Kenan Cayir, PhD:** *Egitimin temeldeki amaci cok da sorgulanmayan birlik beraberligi sey yapmak, surdurmek ve bunu saglamak. Bireylerin gerekirse herseylerini toplum icin devlet icin daha dogrusu belki feda etmeleri.]*

Voiceover: *The 4th Chapter of the Religious Culture and Moral Education Text book for High school freshmen published in 2003 is titled “Our Duties to the State”. In this chapter the author writes that “One should not forget that failing to pay taxes is not*

appropriate behavior for a civilized person and is frowned upon in our religion [referring to Islam]”

[Vergi odememenin, uygar bir insana yakismayacagi ve dinimizce de hos karsilanmadigi unutulmamalidir. (Pinar)].

A Caption under this picture reads “Serving in the military is a holy duty for every Turkish youth.”

[Askerlik yapmak her Turk genci icin kutsal bir gorevdir. (Pinar)]

Prof. Irfan Aycan: If you study Koran from the beginning to the end, you discover the relationship between humans and God, humans and the society and humans and nature. These three foundations are very important. That’s why we projected these onto our textbooks. So, this should not be interpreted as an external influence.

[Prof. Irfan Aycan: *Kuran’i Kerim’i bastan asagi incelediginizde insanin Allah ile Tanri ile olan iliskisi, insanin toplum ile olan iliskisi ve insanin tabiat ile cevre ile olan iliskisi vardir. Yani bunun disinda hicbir sey yoktur zaten. Yani bu uc temel sey cok onemlidir. Kuran buna cok onem veriyor. Onun icin de biz kitaplarimizda o sekilde yansittik. Yani bu disaridan mudahale seklinde degerlendirilmemeli.]*

Voiceover: *The state-centric language in the national curriculum and especially in the religious culture and moral education restricts the capability to deliver balanced information on the topics and engage the students.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: Constant emphasis on secularism always referring to the *Kemalist*¹⁶ Republic causes discomfort.

Kenan Cayir, PhD: The authors try to explain concepts by constant reference to authority. This happens to be Ataturk most of the time.. The logic goes as follows: Democracy is good because some powerful person told us so.

[Kenan Cayir, PhD: *Yazarlar belli birseyi aciklarken surekli otoriteye basvurarak acikliyorlar. Yani bu cogu zaman Ataturk oluyor. Cogu zaman da bir baskasi oluyor. Yani soyle bir mantik. Ornegin demokrasi iyidir cunku iste buyugumuz, bir buyugumuz soyle soylemistir.]*

Voiceover: *Investigative Journalist Abdurrahman Dilipak wrote a book titled This Religion is not mine focusing on the religious culture and moral education curriculum in 1995.*

Abdurrahman Dilipak: There is no outlook from the perspective of Islam to the world but rather from the viewpoint of Kemalism to Islam. Ataturk has to be the witness that

¹⁶ One who advocates or believes in the theory of Kemalism -

Islam is a proper religion, otherwise it is a primitive interpretation. When I wrote the book [1995], there were more quotes from Ataturk than Koranic verses and *hadiths*¹⁷ in the textbooks.

[**Abdurrahman Dilipak:** *Islamin penceresinden dunyaya bakis yok, Kemalizm'in penceresinden Islam'a bakis var. Yani Islam'in iyi bir din oldugunun sahidi Ataturk'tur, yoksa o din zaten din olmaz ya da yanlis bir yorumdur ilkel bir yorumdur gibi. Orada Ataturk'un sozleri daha onceki ben kitabi yazdigim zaman ayet ve hadis sayisindan fazla idi.]*

Voiceover: *The 1999 decision by the Presidency of Instruction and Education Commission under the Ministry of National Education defines the concepts of Kemalism to be included in the textbooks of national primary education from natural sciences to literature including the religious culture and moral education*¹⁸.

Kenan Cayir, PhD: Frankly, the use of national leaders in textbooks is an ordinary matter but when we look at our situation, it is perhaps important to notice the misrepresentation and out-of-context handling of Ataturk.

[**Kenan Cayir, PhD:** *Acikcasi bir ulusun onderlerinin ders kitaplarinda kullanilmasi aslinda olagan birsey ama tabi bizdeki duruma baktigimizda onemli olan belki Ataturk'un yanlis tanitilmasi ve yerli yersiz kullanilmasi.*]

Voiceover: *The Director of Religious Education in Turkey Prof. Irfan Aycan hints at the distorted perception of Ataturk as a strict secularist without any religious conviction. Ataturk's heavy presence in religious instruction textbooks can be interpreted as a defensive measure to counteract the misperception.*

[**Visual Footnote 13:** Ataturk and Religion]

[**Imagery:** Ataturk prays during the opening of the Turkish parliament in 1923]

Prof. Irfan Aycan: Ataturk is our national treasure. I think some unfavorable developments until 1950's might have produced negative thoughts about Ataturk. Presently, Ataturk is not really understood in Turkey. Ataturk has been embraced by people who are against religion.

[**Prof. Irfan Aycan:** *Ataturk bizim milli degerimiz. Sanirim bu 1950'ye kadar olan bir takim olumsuz gelismelerde Ataturk ile ilgili bazi olumsuz dusunceler gelismis olabilir. Muthemeldir ki hakikaten Ataturk taninmiyor yani su anda Turkiye'de. Yani dine karsi olanlarin sahiplendigi bir insan konumunda.*]

¹⁷ The body of traditions relating to Muhammad, which now form a supplement to the Koran, called the Sunna.

¹⁸ Decision # 263 by *Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanligi* on August 4th, 1999.

Voiceover: *The Kemalist synthesis of the textbooks as well as the criticism against it are closely linked with the perception of Turkish modernity. Prof. Fuat Keyman suggests that one should go beyond the one dimensional pro vs. con dichotomy.*

Prof. Fuat Keyman: We shouldn't think about Turkish modernity in a very metaphysical way by accepting it without questioning, without critically examining its operation nor should we actually approach it as a purely authoritarian project. Both of them are ahistorical. Both of them are in a way essentialist because they fix the center of Kemalism either good or bad, either beautiful or authoritarian whatever.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: By thinking about Turkish modern history or modern Turkey this way, I will argue actually that we will also see that democratization and further democratization actually of state society relations is key to understanding of how to regulate religious affairs in Turkey.

Voiceover: *In many countries around the globe there are different approaches to religious instruction. For instance, with its rigid definition of laicism, France is the only nation-state in Europe not to have any religious instruction at its national public school system. Yet, unlike the Turkish version, religious private schools are among the options of primary and secondary education in France.*

Voiceover: *The Director of Religious Affairs Prof. Ali Bardakoglu agrees with the insufficiency of the religious instruction at national level and describes alternative ways of religious learning provided by the state.*

Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: First, primary and secondary schools offer the Religious Culture and Moral Education classes but it is hard to say that these are currently sufficient. Then, there are Koran courses for the summer months and as a follow up to the primary education. This is another opportunity, which provides learning on Koran and religious matters on a limited scope.

Third, Turkey has the Imam Hatip High Schools, where in depth religious instruction is offered. There are also Religious Study Programs in higher education. Of course, it is not possible for everyone to go to the Imam Hatip High Schools or Religious Study Programs.

[Prof. Ali Bardakoglu: *Birincisi, ilkogretim okullarında ve liselerde din kultur ve ahlak bilgisi dersi var ama bunun su anda yeterli oldugunu soylemek mumkun degil. Ondan sonra Kuran kurslari var. Yazın yaz kuran kurslari var bir de ilkogretimden sonra devam edilebilecek Kuran kurslari var. Bu da bir imkandır burada sinirli seviyede, duzeyde Kuran ogrenme ve dini bilgi veriliyor.*

Ucuncusu Turkiye'de Imam Hatip Liseleri var. Buralarda daha derinlemesine dini bilgi veriliyor. Ilahiyat fakulteleri var. Ama tabi herkesin Imam Hatip Lisesine ve Ilahiyat fakultesine gitmesi mumkun degil.]

Voiceover: *The so called Imam Hatip High Schools initially designed to produce enlightened Imams for the mosques across Turkey have become the popular choice among parents. There are currently more than 450 schools and 80,000 students representing two percent of the entire student body¹⁹.*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: The majority of the public send the students to the Imam Hatip Schools so that at least they can take more classes on religion and learn their religion thoroughly.

[Prof. Mustafa Fayda: *Halkin buyuk bir cogunlugu hic olmaz ise Imam Hatip'e gitsin de, cok fazla din dersi okusun da, cocugumuz dinini ogrensin diye Imam Hatip'e onun icin cok talebe gonderiyorlar.]*

Prof. Irfan Aycan: In these schools, 40 percent of the curriculum is vocational, while 60 percent is the same general secondary curriculum. One takes all the classes offered in a normal high school but in addition receives vocational instruction. The reasoning behind this to educate individuals who are aware of worldly as well as religious matters. This was what Ataturk aimed for.

[Prof. Irfan Aycan: *Buralarda %40 mesleki egitim %60 genel ortaogretimin mufredati islenir. Yani bir lisedeki butun dersler alinir, bunun uzerine mesleki egitim yapilir. Bundan maksat hem dunyasini bilen, cok onemli burasi bakin, hem de dinini bilen insanlar yetistirmek. Yani Ataturk'un hedefi de oydu.]*

Voiceover: *Yet, the initial purpose of the Imam Hatip Schools has been distorted greatly over the years. Simple math illustrates the discrepancy between the supply and demand. According to 2003 statistics there are over 52 thousand religious personnel working in mosques with backgrounds from Imam Hatip Schools but in 2003 alone a little over nine thousand students graduated from these schools.*

Prof. Irfan Aycan: Since the demand cannot be satisfied inside the rest of the general national education, the public directs their children to the Imam Hatip High Schools and periodically the number of these schools swell up. This in turn causes yet again complaints and problems. The complaints are not for the shortcomings but rather for the surplus of education in Imam Hatip High Schools.

[Prof. Irfan Aycan: *Bu talep diger genel ogretim icerisinde karsilanmadigi icin millet coluk cocugunu Imam Hatip lisesine yonlendiriyor ve uc bes senede on senede bir sayisi okul sayisi kabariyor. Bu sefer tekrar Imam Hatiplerle ilgili sikayetler basliyor, sorunlar basliyor. Yani Imam Hatiplerin eksisinden degil, artisindan sikayet ediliyor.]*

Voiceover: *The suggestion of the Director of Religious Education to shift the focus away from the Imam Hatip schools triggers great deal of anxiety on the part of the secularist sections of the state as it is perceived to be a move against the secular nature of the*

¹⁹ Data from Ministry of Education's website - <http://www.meb.gov.tr/index1024.htm> Path: İstatistikler; APK; Milli Eğitim Sayısal Veriler 2002-2003.

Republic. Yet, this approach could be a first step towards a more balanced religious education in Turkey.

Prof. Irfan Aycan: In order to solve the Imam Hatip School problem, a few elective classes such as the study of Koran and its Turkish translation or the life of the Prophet Mohammed can be added to the general secondary curriculum. Then, there would be not as much demand for the Imam Hatip schools.

[Prof. Irfan Aycan: *Turkiye’de Imam Hatip sorununun cozulmesi vatandasin din egitimi talebine genel ortaogretim kurumlarinda zorunlu degil secmeli Kuran’i Kerim ve Turkce Meali gibi, Hz. Peygamberin hayati gibi bir iki ders takviyesi ile bu is cok rahat cozulur.O zaman Imam Hatiplere de fazla yonelme olmaz.]*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: We think that Islam is everything worse and we don’t take into consideration what is going beyond our prejudices. We always have prejudices we always have tastes. We always have resentments and so on. The only way to go beyond these given feelings and ways of thinking is through research, access to information and knowledge.

Voiceover: *The lifelong access to information and knowledge about Islam and world religions in general to the Turkish people is a key contributor in nurturing a tolerant and pluralistic society in Turkey. The Turkish state, as the central educational provider to a great extent lacks the capability to do so.*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: I am 61 years old. If I want I should be able to get religious education and instruction. Yet, where can I get this? There is no institution in Turkey for this purpose. I can’t go to the mosque. It is not an educational establishment. When the prayer is done, the Imam goes home.

[Prof. Mustafa Fayda: *Ben 61 yasindayim. Ben istersem bunu din egitimi ve ogretimi almam lazim. Peki nereden alacagim? Kurum yok Turkiye’de. Camiden gidip imamdan alamam bunu. Egitim ogretim kurumu degil cami. Camide namaz bittimi adam kapatip evine gidiyor.]*

Voiceover: *Prof. Mustafa Fayda, the Director of Marmara University Religious Studies Program in Istanbul draws attention to an unexploited clause in the Turkish Constitution and offers a unique perspective on how to normalize the supply and demand relationship between the society and the state in terms of religious instruction.*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: There is a difference between in school and after school programs. In Turkey we don’t yet have after school programs for religious education.

[Prof. Mustafa Fayda: *Ogretim ayri egitim ayri. Bizde din egitimi henuz verilmiyor Turkiye’de.]*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: The teachers of religious instruction at primary and secondary schools can provide voluntary after- school programs after the business hours and on the weekends in state schools. This seems to be the easiest way out.

[Prof. Mustafa Fayda: *Ortaogretim kurumlarındaki ve ilk ogretim kurumlarındaki bizim mezunlarımız olan Din Kulturu ve Ahlak Bilgisi ogretmenlerine mekteplerindeki derslerinin disindaki saatlerde isteyenlere mesai saatinden sonra yani okulun mesai saatinden sonra isteyenlere de Cumartesi ve Pazar devletin okullarında bu egitimin istege bagli olarak yapilmasi en kolay cozum yolu olarak gorunmektedir.]*

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: Turkey not only is incapable of deciding how to establish this institution it also is afraid to bring this issue to public debate even though it is stated in its own constitution. This is a very unfortunate matter.

[Prof. Mustafa Fayda: *Egitim kurumununun nasil olacagina Turkiye karar veremedigi gibi bunu gündemine almaktan bile korkuyor anayasasında yer almasına ragmen. Çok aci birseydir bu.]*

Voiceover: *The study of the national education in Turkey presents the challenging road ahead for the policymakers and society at large in finding the proper placement of religion and its education in the public sphere. At the same time, there are positive signs that Turkey is on the way to become a more tolerant, open society.*

SUCCESS OF THE TURKISH FORMULA?

[Music]

Title: Chapter 7: Success of the Turkish Formula?

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: I think it has been remarkably successful that most people seem to have accepted a secular state as part of their every day existence.

Voiceover: *This absorption of secular ideals over the history of the Republic has been successful to a great extent not due to social engineering projects but rather open channels of expression in different realms of life.*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: In the Turkish case I think especially seen from today Islamism had a chance to be integrated into channels of political parliamentary system through democratic elections.

Voiceover: *Islam and religious accommodation found expression not only in the political process through democratic elections but also in the economic sphere.*

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: In the 1980’s also there was a great economic transformation in Turkey. Turkey used to have this very closed economy. They didn’t export very much, they didn’t import very much. That all changed in 1980’s

Voiceover: *With the introduction of the open market economy in Turkey, formerly marginalized social actors including people from more conservative backgrounds had the opportunity to take advantage of the more liberal economic system.*

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: People gained social prestige through it. People gained wealth through it, especially in a country where government contracts are important.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: So you had the development of more devout Muslim business people, who developed, became quite wealthy and started holding companies and so on.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: This was not in rivalry with the statist culture of the generals but as a matter of fact it was the reinforcement economically of a stable Turkey that was also developing economically.

Asst. Prof. Hakan Yavuz: Because the new agent of the social change in Turkey is very much bourgeoisie, not the military, not the politician. So what we are seeing is that Islam turned into a commodity.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: The market did an extraordinary thing. It supported or rather it encouraged the commercialization of Islamic identity.

Asst. Prof. Hakan Yavuz: The market conditions pressured Islam to become one of the commodity to compete as a good with other diverse and different brand of Islam.

Voiceover: *The evolution in the choices of Turkish women on how to dress themselves especially in the last two decades is a helpful study to understand the economic as well as social role of religion in Turkish public life.*

Headscarved Vendor: Middle-aged women usually cover their head this way.

[**Headscarved Vendor:** Orta yasli hanimlar boyle bagliyor.]

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: We observe that the majority of women²⁰, including the ones, who are not religious and don’t practice their religion cover their heads according to the local traditions as well as contemporary fashion trends.

[**Prof. Mustafa Fayda:** *Kadinlarimizin, hatta bizde dindar olmayan, hatta dinin diger emirlerini yerine getirmeyen kadinlarimizin bile muhim bir ekseriyetinin mahalli, geleneksel ve onların takip ettigi modaya bagli olarak hep baslarini ortugunu goruyoruz.*]

²⁰ 53.4 % of Turkish women cover their heads with a headscarf, 27.3% go out without a headscarf (Carkoglu)

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: So you had for instance, you always had people, women covering their hair, for instance in Turkey. People in the villages covered their hair with cotton cloths but suddenly you had a development of an Islamic style. You started to have runways; you know fashion shows with Islamic veiling very fancy veiling that was very fashionable.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The headscarf symbol was being transformed by these very girls who readopted it. That is the issue because with the headscarf the veiling represents this and this and that in history, according to Islamic law, according to Islamic practices and so on but today the new phenomenon is transforming the meanings of the Islamic veiling that is the main issue.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: You had the sort of Islamic chic that developed, Islamic fashion. This happened in a number of different areas of lives so that religion became a form of expression as well. It became associated with a middle-class life style. Even if you weren't middle class, you could aspire by wearing the leopard-print scarf and special outfits.

Omer Baristiran: How much are these headscarves?

Headscarved Vendor: That one is by Pierre Cardin and costs 50 US dollars.

Omer Baristiran: Are these popular? Is there a fashion for this?

Dad of the headscarved Vendor: Yes, [the headscarf fashion] evolved into an industry.

[**Omer Baristiran:** *Bu esarpların seyi nedir, fiyatları?*]

Headscarved Vendor: *Simdi o esarp 90 santim efendim. Pierre Cardin'in yeni sezonu 72 milyon 500 [TL- Turkish Lira²¹].*

Omer Baristiran: *Cok ragbet var mi peki? Modasi var galiba bu isin artik? Di mi?*

Dad of the headscarved Vendor: *Bu artik seye gelmis, endustri haline gelmis.]*

[**Visual Footnote 14:** The different ways of tying a headscarf]

Voiceover: *The social significance of veiling is worth of notice aside from its personal and political connotations. At the same time, the new visibility of Islam in political, social and economic lives causes discomfort in more secular sections of the society.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: On the side of the secular, modernist persons there is a great deal of distrust not of the people, who are believing Muslims but of the intentions behind visual symbolism of Islam such as the headscarf.

Voiceover: *Yet, this conservative upwardly moving urban middle-class including the women still shares similar values about the secular identity of the Turkish nation-state.*

Prof. Yesim Arat: Looking at, working on Islamist women, I think is one the greatest proofs that the republican reforms have been very successful. You look at the Islamist

²¹ 1 US dollar = 1.421 million Turkish Lira according to index on December 3, 2004.

women of Turkey and you see that they are a kind of its own. Assimilating all of these ideals that the Republic wanted to propagate, ideals that it itself did not have too much success in perhaps.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: This Islam as a social, political force became more visible more public but at the same time became more moderate.

Prof. Faruk Prof. Faruk Birtok: The Islamic traditional society found its expression in democratic discourse and democratic habit. So a very strange thing happens today. The Muslim population is much more democratic than the secular, laic, westernized population. They become inseparable. Islam of the Turkish way becomes inseparable from a radical need of populist democratic sentiment.

Voiceover: *The evolution of a more moderate Islam and its proper placement in the public lives of Turkish people brings new responsibilities not only for the Turkish state officials but the society as a whole to continue to move towards a more tolerant socio-political environment.*

Prof. Fuat Keyman: I think the solution is in Turkish case lies more in process of democratization and its consolidation mainly than direct focus on the institutional aspect of the regulation of religious affairs.

Voiceover: *One of the effective ways for consolidation of democracy as well as secularism is through civil dialog among the Turkish society.*

Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: If we use the English terms, I distinguish between togetherness and coexistence. Togetherness or living together requires certain responsibilities towards each other. Thus, it forces us to understand the other side and build relationships within a tolerant space.

[Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: *İngilizcesini kullanacak olursak togetherness ile coexistence arasında bir ayırım yapıyorum ben. Togetherness yani beraber yasama birbirimize sorumlulukumuzu gerektiren birseydir. Dolayisi ile karsimizdakini anlamayi, onunla bir tolerans zemininde iliskiye girmemizi gerektirir.]*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: I think we are touching each other, we are trying to cohabit in the same society, speaking to each other intellectuals among leftists and Islamists were in a dialog since 20 years.

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: Starting in the 1980's the media was deregulated and so suddenly you had a flourishing of all kinds of conversations on the air and in publications and so on of people debating these kinds of issues. Not just secularists vs. people who had political Islam in mind but also people who had different ideas about Islam. So you had the more liberal heterodox *Alevi*²² debating Islamists, Sunni Islamists. People who were moderate debating more radical people.

²² A Muslim Sunni sect. 3.9% of Sunnis in Turkey belong to this sect (Carkoglu)

Voiceover: *In addition, moderated settings such as academic meetings and conferences helped to establish a mutual understanding among the people with different point of views. The yearly Abant Platform which started in 1998 is a representative example. In 2004, for the first time the conference was organized outside of Turkey. Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington DC co-hosted the event with the attendance of a representative international academic community.*

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: People of all of these different persuasions, people of different stripes get together and discuss a particular issue. Like for instance, the relationship between state and religion that would be one theme for instance.

Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay: The Abant Platform meeting is important. Even though the platform consisted of participants with really diverse opinions, it has confirmed that we can talk and reach an agreement without clashing.

[**Prof. Ali Yasar Saribay:** *Abant Platformu onemli bir platform. Sunu gosterdi, catismadan da konusabilecegimiz ve son tahlilde anlasabilecegimizi gosteren bir platform oldu cunku platformun yapısına baktigimiz zaman gercekten cok farkli dusunceleri olan insanlardan olusuyor.*]

Voiceover: *The Abant Platform is a crucial civil society effort to preserve and expand the societal dialog as it generates channels of self-criticism and reflection in the process. For instance, the participants of the Abant Platform wrote a joined declaration at end of each meeting on the discussed topics.*

Asst. Prof. Jenny White: They were forced to come to a joined statement that they wouldn't necessarily agree with but they could live with. And that process I think repeated over and over exposes people to alternative points of view and makes them engage with this other point of view, makes them deal with it. And I think that leads to a process of moderation overall, combined with what else is going on in the society where people are just sort of talking about these things.

Voiceover: *One of the initial organizers of the Abant Platform, now the current State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin thinks that there is still room for more voices in the discussions on issues such as secularism, Islam and democracy.*

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: Each time I invited them, social democrats, the other parties which might be called on the left but again they did not want to come to Abant Platform, because it was too free for them. It was too open where everything is being discussed and so on. Where as they think that some of the things at least ought not to be discussed at all, taken for granted.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: I think what we need today is a kind of revisiting secularism. Maybe opening up secularism not reducing it on the contrary opening up its definitions. Maybe saving it more from the state authority and opening up towards a more, -I don't know we

have to think about it- to public sphere and civil society in that sense. I mean it would be great if it becomes a reference and a common reference a common value for both Turkey's- that means both secularist and religious Turkey.

LESSONS FROM THE TURKISH EXPERIENCE?

[Music]

Title: Chapter 8: Lessons from the Turkish Experience?

Voiceover: *The Turkish experience with secularism provides series of insights on how to construct the relationship between religion, the state and civil society. The question remains whether this experience can be molded into a secular model for the Muslim world?*

Prof. Faruk Birtek: I am not so sure that other people will look at the Turkish quote unquote success and try to replicate it.

Prof. Ahmet Evin: I don't think the idea of selling Turkey as a model to post-colonial Middle East is a very good idea because Turkey is not postcolonial. If anything, Turkey is looked upon by most of its neighboring Arab countries as a former colonizer. There isn't much sympathy for Turkey. The way Turkey is viewed is the way England and France may be viewed.

Voiceover: *Turkey is still conceptualized as a role model by internal as well as external influence groups. The Greater Middle East Project unofficially drafted by United States of America is an example for such an initiative. At the G8 conference in June 2004 Turkey participated at the talks as an observer, where G8 leaders adopted a declaration on a new “Partnership for Progress and a Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa”.*

[Visual Footnote 15: The Greater Middle East Project]

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): As a secular, modern, social, democratic country, Turkey is the only one who will give impetus to the Greater Middle East Project, which I know is on the screen to bring stability and security to the entire world by defeating the international terrorism by economy.

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): The roles must not be dictated to Turkey. Turkey herself must select the roles in order to expedite the Greater Middle East Project.

Voiceover: *Even if Turkey is allowed to freely determine its involvement as a key player within a regional development plan, the core concept still remains as a social engineering project.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: What they wished to learn is their business. Trying to push Turkey as a model may have the opposite effect than desired.

Prof. Fuat Keyman: Rather than being a role model Turkish experience should be taken into account and should be taken seriously by looking at it in a sort of historical analytical way so that we could also talk about ambiguities, peculiarities, tensions that experience has involved.

Voiceover: *This historical analysis in turn offers valuable perspectives not only for a specific region of the world but to the humanity at large. For instance, Prof. Nilufer Gole draws attention to the observation that Europe can derive relevant lessons from the Turkish experience with secularism for a pluralistic European Union future.*

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Europe will be defined in relation to these two issues. Muslims within the Europe, that is the headscarf issue but Muslims who are waiting at the frontier of Europe that is Turkey. So Turkish candidacy on the one hand and headscarf issue on the other hand I would say are defining more and more French politics but also German, the whole Europe.

[**Imagery:** Turkey is waiting to become a Full Member to the European Union]

[**Visual Footnote 16:** the Muslim headscarf debate in France]

Voiceover: *On the global scale, Europe itself is being challenged to define an innovative open-minded European identity with Turkey’s bid to join the European Union, while Turkey is seeking to construct an open society and a tolerant state system in harmony with each other on issues such as secularism and religious rights at home.*

Prof. Ahmet Evin: This change and this expansion gives us a way to image a new Turkey in a new Europe.

Voiceover: *It is to be seen whether lessons drawn from the Turkish case study with secularism will in fact become a common reference for other peoples of the world.*

[**Visual Footnote 17:** Further lessons from the Turkish Experience]

Prof. Nilufer Gole: On the one hand you have United States with terrorism and Europe with Muslim migrants and Islam in many different configurations and in the middle of which Turkey a very small actor in that at that world level but playing a very important significant game for the history of all of us. Can we go beyond these clashes? Can we show that Islam and values of modernity, democracy, rationality, equality of sexes can go together or not? I think Turkey is the best candidate. I call it Islam with smiling face, with a human face.

THE END

[SON]

VISUAL FOOTNOTES

Visual Footnote 1: Different Applications of Secularism in the World

Great Britain - 72% Christian

Two State Churches -Church of England & Scotland

The monarch is the “Supreme Governor” of the Church of England

France - 33% Atheist

12% of the public attends religious services more than once per month

19% of students in secondary education go to private Catholic schools

Israel - 80% Jewish

A “Jewish”, “Secular” & “democratic” State

Religious Courts for marriage and divorce cases

Germany - 66 % Christian

Religious organizations considered as non-profit

Religious instruction given in public schools

Visual Footnote 2: The Tanzimat Reforms

- Equal Obligations and Opportunities for all Ottoman subjects, regardless of their religion
- Establishment of Institutions of Higher Learning for civilians.
- New Mejlis Civil Code based on Shari At Law with Western influence
- Secular Nizame Courts to deal with cases involving Muslims and non-Muslims (Cleveland)

Visual Footnote 3: The Definitions of Secularism (0:54)

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: The Turkish word for secularism is laicism and that comes from French and indeed Turkish experience is very much like the French experience rather than the let’s say Anglo-Saxon experience with secularism. Secularism connotes that the two spheres are totally separate, the sphere of religion and the sphere of state affairs. And that has been the practice in most Anglo-Saxon countries. Where as laicism has a different connotation referring to state control over religion or rather I should say in the French context, a Jacobin understanding of secularism.

Visual Footnote 4: The Definition of the Turkish Public Sphere (0:34)

Prof. Nilufer Gole: How do we define the public sphere? Is it the enterprises? Are we going to consider workplaces as a public sphere? So, where we are supposed to ban the headscarf?

[**Imagery:** In the Turkish public sphere (e.g. in state schools) it is forbidden for women to wear an Islamic headscarf²³]

²³ Constitutional Court Decision # 146 on June 21st 1995.

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: In state hospitals, which is another public place, doctors can serve patients with headscarves without difficulty.

[**Prof. Mustafa Fayda:** Bir diger kamu alani olan mesela hastanelerde hastalarin basortulu gelip gelmemesi, doktorlari onlara saglik hizmeti sunmasini engellemektedir.]

Visual Footnote 5: The Third Republic France (0:41)

Prof. Binnaz Toprak: For example when you look at the Third Republic France, which started in 1870 with the famous Paris communion and lasted until the Nazi occupation of France in 1940- for 70 years in the Third Republic nobody who was know to go to church to go to mass on Sundays was ever able to enter any of the coalition governments rather the cabinets for 70 years of the Republic terms. That was very very radical]

Visual Footnote 6: The Major Republican Reforms

- **1925** Closing of religious Madrasa Schools and Unification of Instruction under the State control
- **1925** Law about the usage of hats Civil servants are obligated to wear hats, no fez or kalpaks are allowed.
- **1925** Acceptance of Western-style Calendar
- **1931** Western Measurement Law of weights and distances
- **1934** Women receive full voting rights

Visual Footnote 7: The Question of Modernity (1:33)

Prof. Nilufer Gole: The issue is how to combine values of modernity with values of Islam or how to create a space for this Islamic expressions in modernity.

Asst. Prof. Hakan Yavuz: What we are talking about is very much multiple modernities, that there is no one highway to modernity.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: Globalization means that whatever we call as modernity it is not only technology but these social imageries like democracy, public sphere, equality of sexes and so on, they circulate and they become part of other local and non-modern experiences.

Then the issue is how to understand these practices, which is no longer traditional, not in mimicry with the Western modernity but some thing else. The question is can we have multiple modernities. Or should we always evaluate modernity in a Eurocentric way? I think it is beyond that. Today, we don't have any longer the reference to Europe as a Eurocentric understanding of modernity. The narrative of modernity was related to Europe. That's right. Today, how to open it up? And yet we cannot say everything is different, everything is particular. Is there a place for new universalism? At least we need to change our way of reading these experiences.

Visual Footnote 8: The Results of the 2002 Elections

34.3% Justice & Development Party
19.4% Republican Peoples’ Party
9.6% True Path Party
8.3% Nationalist Movement Party
2.5% Felicity Party (Source: www.electionworld.org/turkey.htm)

Visual Footnote 9: The National Security Council Meetings (0:45)

Gen Cevik Bir (Retd): Because Security Council has no decision role, the main role of the Security Council is to advise the important issues to the government, to the decision-makers. Turkish military are represented in the Security Council because the security issues are also having top priorities together with the economic issues, together with the political issues. The Security Council, which is also a constitutional organization in Turkey, to me is a think tank for Turkey.

Visual Footnote 10: The Definition of a Total Project (0:29)

Prof. Nilufer Gole: They are not like civil society movements or political movements who are dedicated to democracy. They are not self-limiting movements. There is an aspect of holistic, totalitarian [model]. And the Iranian model serves as an illustration of a model where again coming back to public sphere and state, where public sphere, public life is under hegemonic control of Islam.

Visual Footnote 11: The Islamic Shari At Laws (0:47)

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: I agree that Islam is one whole but I am referring to the Islam from the Koran. The Shari At is not the Koran.

[**Prof. Hidayet Aydar:** *Islam bir butundur gerceğini ben de aynen söylüyorum. Ama benim o sözünü ettiğim Islam, Kuran’daki Islamdir. Seriat Kuran değildir.*]

Prof. Mustafa Fayda: The public has embraced [Shari At] as if it is from the religion [Islam]. This is not the religion.

[**Prof. Mustafa Fayda:** *Bunu halk psikolojisi din gibi telakki ederek ona sarılmıdır. Bu din değildir.*]

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: Many mandates of the Shari At are not to be found in the Koran. The Koran draws principle guidelines. Yet, as these principles were interpreted to make Shari At laws, lawmakers moved away from the Koranic verses.

[**Prof. Hidayet Aydar:** *Seriat’ta one surulen hususların bir çoğu Kuran’da yoktur. Kuran bunları kabul etmiyor veya Kuran çok daha temel prensipler koymuştur. Ama Seriat’ta bu prensipler acilirken, bu ayetlerden hareket ile bir takım yeni yeni yasalar konulurken maalesef ayetler bir tarafa itilmiş, farklı bir takım anlayışlar one surulmüştür.*]

Visual Footnote 12: The Religious Sects in Turkey

81.8% Sunni Sect

Subdivisions of Sunni Sect

76.8 % Hanefi

5.8% Shafi

3.9% Alevi

0.2% Maliki (Source: Carkoglu, TESEV Study)

Visual Footnote 13: Ataturk and Religion (0:25)

Prof. Hidayet Aydar: For example, Ataturk invited one of the most important [religious] scholars, Muhammed Hamdi Yazir. He requested for him to write a new [Turkish] interpretation of Koran to remove any superstitious beliefs of the public.

[Prof. Hidayet Aydar: *Mesela Ataturk o donemin en yetkili isimlerinden biri, Muhammed Hamdi Yazir, bu zaati cagiriyor ve diyor ki ‘Bak halk arasinda Kuran buyruklari seklinde, Kuran emirleri seklinde cok kotu anlayislar vardir. Sen millete Kuran’in ne oldugunu bir anlat bir aciklayiver, boyle bir kitap yaz, yani tefsir yaz’ diyor.*]

Visual Footnote 14: The Different Ways of Tying a headscarf (1:23)

Preparation: Inner Cap

Style I: without using Pins

Style II: with the Pin and the Ring

Style III: for Special Occasions

Style IV: Fully covered

Style V: Partially covered

And many more...

Visual Footnote 15: The Greater Middle East Project (1:24)

Aytunc Altindal, PhD: While the other world, the western world is forcing, or reinforcing the globalization project, these 22 Muslim countries are limited with a Greater Middle East Project. So they will have no chance to open up themselves for the universal projects. So, to my opinion this will not work.

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: The further you go you have to look back and see that your past is a little bit dark in order to push you to the future. So, Turkey is on the march, Turkey is doing well, my party is doing well, I am doing well.

[Audience: Laughter]

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: But we cannot say look at us and learn democracy from us. No, we lose right away and no country should say that.

Prof. Faruk Birttek: The degree of relevance and importance of Turkey, I am not sure what extend it would be. More important I think, is that if Turkey plays an important economic agent in transforming the region and become a source for the new prosperity in the region that would be really the Turkish impact.

Visual Footnote 16: The Muslim Headscarf debate in France (1:02)

Prof. Nilufer Gole: In the French case it started in 1987. A little debate, but then it was over. And this year it was the national debate. Everybody was involved.

[**Imagery:** A French Law in 2004 banned any religious signs in state [K-12] schools.]

French President Jacques Chirac (December 17th 2003 Speech): Laicism guarantees the freedom of mind. It protects the freedom to believe or not to believe.

Prof. Nilufer Gole: I think the majority were the defenders of the French Republicanism. So what they have done is instead of.. I mean maybe it will come. But having a kind of self-reflexivity and trying to open up, again the same issue. Open up *laicite* secularism and to create to open up as a reference that can become a common reference for Muslim French citizens. I am scared that it means today a kind of putting frontiers, boundaries. We want to maintain our boundaries.

Visual Footnote 17: Further Lessons from the Turkish Experience (1:22)

State Minister Prof. Mehmet Aydin: As long as laicism, laicite, or secularism considers itself not something like a religious dogma, a narrowly defined ideological judgment. In some countries it is like that. It is a kind of semi-religious principle. As long as it doesn't consider itself as such, I think having a secular state, having a neutral state, even having a technical state... When I am flying, I would like to have a good pilot. Whether he will be religious or not. Well, I am a religious person, I hope the pilot is religious as well, but that is his business.

I would like to have a good government. I would like to have a good governance. Dealing with political issues, economical issues, with other issues in a scientific, in a rational, in a reasonable, in a sensible manner. Rather than saying that as a state I also have some religious dimensions. That is the point that we arrived in Turkey after having so many difficulties, after passing through so many periods of transition if you like and difficulties.

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