Applying the Stark and Bainbridge "Theory of Religion" to the Secular – Anti Secular Debate in Turkey

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Abstract: *This paper applies Theory of Religion by Stark and Bainbridge to an analysis of the secular - anti secular debate in Turkey.*

Humans desire rewards. Compensators substitute for rewards. Compensators based on the supernatural are supplied by religious organizations.

If there is scarcity of rewards, the powerful will monopolize rewards and the less well to do will be supplied with compensators. In an open society and with democracy, less well to do will become aware of the existence of rewards and demand rewards rather than compensators. Religious organizations can be involved in the production of rewards, thereby reducing the demand for supernatural based compensators and consequently the power of religious organizations (as providers of supernatural based compensators.)

If following Stark and Bainbridge, secularization is defined as the decline in the power of religious organizations, this is an interesting case of secularization led by religious organizations, and may be a model which explains the recent developments in Turkey.

Introduction:

"In both empirical research and interpretation today there is a total lack of agreement as to what secularization is and how to measure it," is the opening sentence of the 1967 article by Larry Shiner on "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research." (Shiner, 1967) More than forty years later, one can safely make the same statement with regard to what is meant by the term "secularization *in Turkey*" – both in daily usage and in academic discourse.

Turkey's reforms aimed at making a Moslem country secular were led by Kemal Ataturk, founder father of the Turkish Republic. Ataturk died in 1938. His party, the Republican People's Party was voted out of power in 1950, under the multi party system introduced by Turkey's second president Inonu. Ever since, many of the (mainly right wing) governments which have come to power through popular vote have been accused of pursuing anti secular policies by the opposition, (led mainly by the Republican People's Party) and also by the leaders of military interventions (above all, by the leaders of the ones conducted in 1960 and in 1997.) Three Islamist parties have been closed down by the Constitutional Court (National Salvation (Milli Selamet) in 1980, the Welfare (Refah) in 1998, and the Virtue (Fazilet) in 2001) on the grounds that they had become the focus of anti secular activities.

More recently, in 2008, the Constitutional Court ruled that the government party Justice and Development , which had received 47.5% of the popular vote in the most recent general elections held only a year ago, had become the focus of anti secular activities. The Court declined to close down the Justice and Development Party, short of one vote, possibly out of concern that the closing down of the party would plunge the country into political turmoil. The leaders of Justice and Development Party on the other hand have repeatedly asserted that they are committed to secularism and to Ataturk's goal of "bringing Turkey up to the level of contemporary (advanced) civilizations."

The political debate on secularism in Turkey has been echoed in academia. "Islamic Revival in Turkey" is the title of a paper by the eminent Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis, published in 1952, only two years after coming to power of the Democrat Party, which ended the single party rule of the Republican People's Party founded by Ataturk. (Lewis, 1952) The debate continued over the years. Multiple opinions have been stated.

Current scholarly opinion on the subject is dispersed. At one extreme, Justice and Development Party supporters are considered as "secularized Muslims" and the party itself as a vehicle "for the transition of Islamism into a secularized political movement with a Muslim identity under the dynamic multiparty elections and plural public space." (Tezcur 2003, p. 19) At the other extreme, there are those who argue that "What the Justice and Development Party seeks is … a strategy for a creeping Islamization that culminates in a state based on Islamic law (Shari'a) not compatible with a secular, democratic order. (Tibi 2009, p. 1)

One of the reasons for the divergence of opinions in the secular – anti secular debate in Turkey, is the absence of a consensus on what the participants mean by the term "secular."

Below, we shall review how the term secular has been perceived by those who have taken part in the debate on secularism in Turkey, on the basis of what has been proposed as being secular and anti secular in the Turkish experience. We do not expect to cover all definitions of the term secular. We shall not undertake a comprehensive review of all accounts of secularism in Turkey either. However, we hope to cover a representative sample of opinions on what has been regarded as secular and what as anti secular over the years. Our purpose is not to seek the correct definition of secular or determine whether the users of the term are aware of the correct meaning. Rather, we want to establish what real events are being referred to when the term secular is used. We will then try to give coherence to the debate by applying the Stark and Bainbridge approach.

Secularism Perceived as Separation of Religion from Civil Order:

"Secularism" can be understood as the separation of political and religious spheres on the Christian grounds of maintaining a distance between religious affairs and affairs of the world (because the world is corrupt.) "This was the case for the founders of the United States, who, in building a 'wall of separation' between state and religion with the First Amendment to the Constitution believed, as James Madison noted, that religion is as much hurt by the establishment as civic order is threatened." (Davison, 2003, p. 334) In this context, the intention when separating the religious establishment and the state is not to reduce, but to strengthen religion, by freeing it from the control of state.

This was not what the founders of the republic had in mind when they introduced secularism. Rather, "Turkish 'secularism' is actually based on total state control and even repression of religion." (Fuller 2002) Perhaps, under the republic, the Turkish state and political apparatus were freed from religion, but religion was put under direct control of the state and political apparatus. (Stirling 1958, p. 405)

The control of religion was taken away from religious authorities. The ministry of *Seriat* and *Evkaf* (Religious Law and Endowments) which administered religious affairs and the property owned by religious establishments, was abolished. Religious authorities lost their right to nominate their own officials and the control of the property owned by their institutions. The property owned by religious establishment would be overseen by a separate government department, the Endowments Administration. The government exercised direct control of the licensing and appointment of all religious staff through the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which was directly under the Prime Minister. The state would decide where mosques would be built and who would staff them. The Religious Affairs Administration would script a single, uniform sermon to be preached at all mosques nationwide on Fridays. Through such sermons, the citizens would be invited to undertake actions supporting the government, such as paying their taxes, or to contributing to foundations established to assist the armed forces.'' (Davison, p. 339)

Secularism Perceived as "Decline of Religion:"

It would not be wrong to say that in daily usage, the term secularization is often understood as the withering away of religion. Secular has been defined as the "opposite of

'religious' - whatever that means." (Bailey 1998, p. 18) According to Casanova, Americans understand secularization to mean the decline of religiosity amongst individuals and Europeans understand secularization both as the decline of religiosity amongst individuals and also as the decline in the social significance of religion. (Casanova 2003, p.) Yinger, labels as secularization the process during which traditional religious symbols and forms lose their force and appeal. (Yinger, 1957, p. 119) According to this approach, the culmination of secularization process would be a religionless society. (Shiner 1967, p. 209)

Certainly, some authors have "decline of religion" in mind when describing the reforms of Ataturk or when evaluating the changes which have taken place since.

In an article published in 2004, Fuller makes the remark, secularism "established in the 1920s by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the remarkable reformer and founder of the modern Turkish state, was based on the French version of secularism. This French form emerged out of a French revolution that despised religion, perceiving it as a relic of backwardness and superstition to be swept away by a modern vision of scientific reason. The early Ataturkist reforms treated Islam in this same way: serious members of the new ruling elite rigorously avoided any public profession of religious belief. Islam, although not banned, was marginalized by the state, and religiosity remained a backward identifying feature of only the traditionally minded masses in central Anatolia." (Fuller 2004, p. 52)

Paul Stirling makes the point that even though religious sentiments and views were permitted to prevail without direct interference during Ataturk years (Stirling 1958, p. 398), personal religious practices nevertheless were actively discouraged. (Stirling 1958, p. 395) "The main body of citizens continued in their piety, but in view of the official pressures thought it wise not to declare their loyalty to Islam too forcefully to the official classes." (Stirling 1958, p. 408)

One development which took place during the post Ataturk years which some observers regarded as "anti secular" was the "rise of religion." This judgment is based mostly on subjective observations.

Authors who comment on the 1950s mention the rise in mosque attendance as a sign of rise of religion. There was a rise in the number of mosques as well. The number of mosques built between 1950 and 1960 was estimated as five thousand, which was approximately equal to the number of public schools built during the same period. (Daver 1969, p. 33) Mosques were provided with amplifiers in order to allow one to hear a service from outside. Religious functionaries had become more self-assertive and visible. (Lewis,

1952, p. 42) The villages were increasingly demanding properly trained imams. (Reed 1954, p. 272)

Religious books and pamphlets were written and published in rising numbers. Inscribed Arabic texts and talismans were offered for sale on the streets and were displayed on the walls of cafes and shops, in taxis and busses and at market places. (Lewis, 1952, p. 42) More religious phrases made their way into popular speech. (Reed 1954, p. 272)

There was a considerable rise in the number of Turks going on pilgrimage to Mecca. Major newspapers had started the practice of sending dailies to cover the pilgrimage. The popular press gave increased attention to subjects on religion. (Lewis, 1952, p. 42)

Government sponsored schools designed to train religious leaders and preachers were given considerable private support. (Reed 1954, p. 272)

Ramadan (the Muslim holy month) celebrations became more public. (Daver 1069, p. 33) A willingness was observed amongst people in virtually all walks of life to discuss religious issues and a there was a "frank, general recognition that too much time had gone by without paying enough attention to these matters and that it behooved individuals and the community to re-evaluate their spiritual heritage and rededicate themselves to an Islam which can and should properly demand more of their wholehearted allegiance." (Reed 1954, p. 272)

Some observers claim that religion is yet again on the rise in Turkey and this development is given as one of the signs and also of as one of the outcomes of the anti secular changes which are taking place. For example, Sharon-Krespin proposes that "Turkey is no longer the secular and democratic country that it was" and the rise in religion is one of the developments she cites to verify her claim: "Today, Turkey has over 85,000 active mosques, one for every 350 citizens - compared to one hospital for every 60,000 citizens - the highest number per capita in the world and, with 90,000 imams, more imams than doctors or teachers. It has thousands of *madrasa*-like *Imam-Hatip* schools (training imams and preachers) and about four thousand more official state-run Qur'an courses, not counting the unofficial Qur'an schools, which may expand the total number tenfold. Spending by the governmental Directorate of Religious Affairs has grown five fold, from 553 trillion Turkish lira in 2002 (approximately US$325 million) to 2.7 quadrillion lira during the first four-and-a-half years of the Justice and Development Party government; it has a larger budget than eight other ministries combined. The Friday prayer attendance rate in Turkey's mosques exceeds that of Iran's, and religion classes teaching Sunni Islam are compulsory in public schools." (Krespin 2009, p. 1)

Other observers point out that only one third of the population prays regularly and half fasts during Ramadan and these ratios are actually dropping and that religiosity is actually in decline in Turkey. (A&G Research 2007a)

As part of secularizing reforms, all Moslem sects (*dervish* orders or *tariqas)* had been outlawed and their property had been nationalized in 1925. All magic like religious practices and all rituals associated by these groups had been rendered illegal and banned. According to Stirling, this was because these orders had a tradition of secrecy and opposition to the established authorities which made them perfect places in which to organize intrigue and counter-revolution. (Stirling 1958, p. 396)

The eradication of these orders was not as comprehensive as the Kemalist government would have liked it to be. Popular religion in the form of the cult of dervish sheikhs persisted, particularly in smaller towns and in rural areas, but also in larger cities. These orders became public during the 1950s. Radical ones were persecuted by the government. (Lewis 1952, p. 42) Others (such as Nakshibandi and Nurcu) which were more moderate became widespread and came to play an important role in political, economic and education spheres. One of these orders, the Gulen group for example, is in control of charities, real estate, companies, more than a thousand schools in 110 countries worldwide and many associations and foundations. The movement controls unions, lobbies and student groups and owns radio and television stations, the highest circulation newspaper in Turkey *Zaman* and other publications. (Krespin 2009) Turkish officials admit that Gulen's followers in Turkey number more than a million (Rubin 2008) Gulen movement controls an unregulated and opaque budget estimated at $25 billion. (Krespin 2009)

The rise of groups such as Gulen’s is perceived as an anti secular development by critical observers.

Secularism Perceived as Decline in the Authority of Religion:

Secularization can be understood as a decline in the proportion of social activities controlled by or through religious institutions. (Stirling 1958, p. 406) Shiner calls this process the “disengagement of society from religion.” (Shiner 1967, 212) The final outcome of this process would be the delegation of religion to private life or to matters which can be the subject of religion only, such as afterlife. According to the French theologian Roger Mehl secularization is the "historical process which tends to contest the public role of religion, to substitute other forms of authority for religious authority, and finally to relegate religion to the

private sector of human existence." (Roger Mehl, "De la secularization a l'atheism, " *Foi el Vie*, 65, 1966, p. 70, quoted in Shiner 1967, p. 212)

According to this approach, it is not religion but religious authority that declines as a result of secularization. (Chavez 1994, p. 754) People may retain their belief in the supernatural and attend to their services but society will be differentiated and autonomous spheres independent of religion will have arisen. (Casanova 1994)

Within this context, one tends to think of politics as the area that will be differentiated and freed from religious authority. Hannah Arendt, for example says that secularization is "first of all simply the separation of religion and politics." (Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1963, p. 69. quoted in Shiner 1967, p. 212) However, it is not only religion that will be differentiated as the authority of religion declines. Fields such as economics, education, law, health care, law, sexuality even manufacture and agriculture (from superstitious and dogmatic practices and traditions) will be differentiated and freed from religious authority as well.

The main consequence for religion in Turkey of the secularizing reforms was to crush the power of institutional Islam completely, and to make it directly subject to the secular authorities. (Stirling 1958, p. 408) Religious institutions had been "an integral part of the social structure of the Ottoman Empire, and the scripture provided, at least in theory, detailed rules for regulating behavior in almost all social situations. These religious rules and institutions were only one factor among many in determining actual events, but the close connection between religion and the social order" had been perfectly explicit. (Stirling 1958, p. 395) Breaking this connection and limiting the supremacy of Islam in political, cultural and social spheres was the avowed aim of secularist reforms. A decline in the number of important social activities to which religion was relevant would be one of the major outcomes. (Stirling 1958, p. 408)

Below we shall discuss how the power of religion was reduced in a number of spheres during the process of secularizing reforms and how religion has made a come back in some spheres in a manner which has been described as anti secular.

Politics: As part of secular reforms, political system was freed from religion. Caliphate, according to which the leader of the Ottoman Dynasty would be recognized as the leader of world Muslims, was abolished in 1924. The constitution article which stated that Islam was the official religion was deleted in 1928. In 1937, secularism was introduced as a constitutional clause. According to the clause two of the Constitution adopted in 1982, Turkey is secular and according to the clause four, this rule cannot be changed.

During the founding years of the republic, connection between religious movements and political parties was strictly severed. With the beginning of multi party system, religious

groups have been supporting political groups and affiliating with them, often in quite obvious, but out of legal necessity in non official ways. With regard to the current situation under Justice and Development Party government, whereas one author makes the comment, "There is no indication that the party is dominated by much less answerable to a specific *tariqa* (religious order) or a religious leader" (Jenkins 2003p. 60) another claims, "it is not clear whether the Gulen (religious) movement supports the Justice and Development Party or is the ruling force behind Justice and Development Party. Either way, however, the effect is the same." (Krespin 2009)

Involvement of religious groups in politics can be construed as the implementation of a basic democratic right, ("No group in civil society—including religious groups—can *a priori* be prohibited from forming a political party." (Stepan 2000, p.33)), but is regarded as anti secular by commentators such as Krespin. (2009)

Law: The courts of justice were taken from the religious establishment and put under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. Rules and regulations which people accepted as customary and divinely ordained were replaced by laws adopted from various European legal systems.

A corollary of these changes was the freeing of civic affairs from religion. Matters regarding property ownership, marriage, inheritance, incest, parental authority and responsibility would be regulated by the new Civic Code adopted in 1926, based on the Swiss Civic Code.

The legal system in Turkey continues as described above. According to a recent study 76% of population is opposed to implementation of sharai'a in Turkey. (Carkoglu and Toprak, 2006, p. 75) However, those who are concerned about anti secular developments point out that religion based groups, (mainly the Gulen group) claim that judicial positions are taken over by group sympathizers and that the group makes attempts to steer political cases. (Krespin 2009)

Education: As part of Ataturk's secularizing reforms, religious authorities were also deprived of their power over education. The traditional Islamic schools known as *medreses* were transferred to the Ministry of Education, and closed soon after that. A system of State schools based largely on the French system was founded. Religion found little or no place in the curriculum of new schools.

Religious education was reintroduced to Turkish schools in 1949. Fourth and fifth grade children, whose parents specifically asked for it, would receive two hours of instruction on Saturday afternoons. In 1950, such education was made compulsory, unless the parents wanted to opt out. Over the years, optional religious education was introduced through high

school. Following the military coup in 1980, religious education was made compulsory through high school. The introduction of religious education at schools is regarded as an anti secular development by critics.

Special schools which were set up in order to train religious leaders and the Faculty of Theology established in Istanbul University were all closed by 1933. As a result, during Ataturk era (1923-1938), the supply of new religious trainees was completely cut off. "Imam and preacher schools" designed to train religious specialists at high school level were initiated in 1951. As of 1997, there were six hundred such schools. In 997, approximately 17% of all students attending high school were enrolled in such schools. "Imam and preacher" schools produced 55,000 graduates annually, even though the annual need for imams was only about 2,000. Private organizations and foundations also ran several thousand Koran schools. Most graduates of imam and preacher schools therefore had to seek employment in other fields.

Critics regard the expansion of "imam and preacher" schools as an anti secular development and point out that Justice and Development government has been appointing imams to civil service jobs, as for example, as teachers and policemen. (Krespin 2009)

According to the education reforms of 1997, the primary aim of which was to extend elementary education to eight years, the junior-high-school level of imam and preacher schools was closed down. These reforms also stipulated that graduates of these schools could continue with their higher education only in the field of religious studies. Following the implementation of reforms, attendance in *imam* schools dropped drastically, from 476,069 in the 1996–1997 academic year to 356,471 in 1997–1998 and dropping further by 40% in 2000–2001. Recently, under Justice and Development Party government, Higher Education Council has taken steps to remove the restrictions on college field of study of imam and preacher (as well as other vocational) high schools. Whether this policy change will lead to a significant rise in enrollment in "imam and preacher" schools remains yet to be seen.

Another development which is regarded as anti secular by critics is the expansion of a school system operated by sympathizers of Fetullah Gulen. Estimated 75 percent of Turkey's two million preparatory school students, who are studying a foreign language in order to follow the curriculum in the more elite foreign language immersion schools, are enrolled in Gulen institutions. According to Krespin, Gulen controls thousands of top-tier secondary schools, colleges, and student residences (*ışıkevi*s) throughout Turkey, as well as seven universities universities. (Krespin 2009)

Social and Cultural Life and Lifestyle: Steps were taken to remove social and cultural life from the influence of religion. Sunday, the Christian day of rest, rather than the

traditional Moslem Friday was introduced as the weekly holiday. The alphabet was changed from the Arabic to Latin, a change which was regarded as impious by the masses. The language was cleansed of Arabic and Persian words, associated with Moslem culture. In 1928, the Arabic form of the call to prayer was legally banned, and a Turkish translation of it was made mandatory. (The ban an on the use of the Arabic form of the call to prayer was lifted in 1950. The entire country immediately dropped the Turkish translation.)

The freeing of daily life from religious constraints was best illustrated in the changes in the lifestyle of women and through the removal of religion related constraints on women. The vote and political office were opened to women in 1934. "Women were depicted as the builders of a 'new life,' a modern way of living both in the private and the public spheres. … The visibility of women in public life - as students, citizens, professionals, in the city, walking hand-in-hand with their husbands, shaking hands, dining, dancing and playing sports with men - signified a shift from a Muslim way of life to a secular, modern one. As such, modernity, in a Muslim context, acquired a gender specific sense." (Gole 1997, 51)

Sunday is still the day of rest in Turkey, Latin script is still used and the language remains cleansed of Arabic and Persian, and permeated more and more with western, mainly English vocabulary. Change in lifestyle, illustrated in the change in the lifestyle of women still prevails – for many. A recent study by led by Prof. Binnaz Toprak however suggests the presence particularly in small towns of increasing community pressure to confirm with more conservative Moslem lifestyles with regard to for example, dress codes, fasting in Ramadan and performing daily prayers and attending the Friday sermon. (Toprak 2008)

Public demeanor of men and women: The public demeanor of men and women was changed. The wearing of religious attire was banned except for religious specialists when performing their duties. Fez, originally a Greek headgear, which had become the symbol in daily life of membership of the Muslim community, was legally banned for men. Dark veil and head cover was discouraged for women. Western dress code was made compulsory for public servants and students.

Following the change of government in 1950, observers noted the relaxation of the rules regarding the public appearance of men. Wearing of religious garb outside mosques had remained forbidden, but the beret, which was advantageous for Muslim worship which involved prostration, became the social equivalent of the former turban of the religious hierarchy. In the fifties, old gentlemen with beards and berets were to be seen in many places, voicing their opinions. (Lewis, 1952, p. 42) Those wearing apparently religious garb were treated with deferential respect. (Reed 1954, p. 272)

Today, there is no controversy about the public demeanor of men (non religious, western style is seemingly more and more the accepted norm) but a controversy is ongoing about the way women dress. Head cover is not allowed for female students and civil servants. In 2008, the Constitutional Court came close to closing down ruling Justice and Development because the party attempted to lift the rule for university students, an act which the court deemed was anti secular. Despite the ruling by the court, female students are now entering many educational institutions unhindered. Wives of politicians and public servants are appearing in public space in state protocol with head cover, where they were not allowed before. In other words, the rules against head cover for women are relaxed. However, there seems to be a decline in the ratio of women wearing headcover. (Carkoglu and Toprak 2006; A&G Research 2007b)

Economy, Health, Welfare: Seldom recognized as secular developments, steps were taken to free key areas such as economy, health and welfare from the authority of religion. In the economic sphere, modern commercial law was introduced, banking system was extended and the power of traditional guilds was broken. Health system was extended and the dependency on magic – religious practices which one sought out of necessity was reduced. Modern charities, rather than traditional religious ones were set up in order to care for the needy, elderly and orphans.

Secularism Perceived as the Rise of Rationality

Another concept that secularism has been associated with is rationalism. The decline of religious authority over areas such as economics, politics, law, civic affairs, education and health is accompanied by the casting aside of religious and dogmatic explanations based on the supernatural, and the rise of rational explanations based on reason. Priests, ministers, rabbis, and mullahs are less sought for solving world problems. Economists, politicians, lawyers, teachers, psychologists, social workers and medical doctors take over. Shiner calls this process the "desacralization of the world." During the process of secularization, the world is "gradually deprived of its sacral character as man and nature become the object of rational- and manipulation. The culmination of secularization would be a completely 'rational' world society in which the phenomenon of the supernatural or even of 'mystery' would play no part." (Shiner 1967, pp. 215 – 216)

According to historian Eric Kahler, as a result of secularization, man is freed from religion and starts to live according to reason, face to face with objectified, physical nature.

(Kahler 1943, p. 333) The process of rationalization during which events in one after another sphere of life are explained by human reason rather than religion, was labeled as "secularization" by Weber as well. Weber believed that this process had started in the western world beginning in the sixteenth century. (Swatos and Christiano 1999, p. 212)

The association of rationality with the decline of the power of religious authority (also an Enlightenment concept) is not necessarily correct in all historical contexts. For example, Christian Monasteries in Middle Ages Europe and the Buddhist ones in Japan spearheaded the rational methods of production in agriculture and manufacture. (Collins 1986) There are numerous cases of religious authorities initiating and overseeing rational networks of schools, health care and social security. It is also possible for non religious authorities act in irrational ways.

However, it was largely a correct observation that with the Ottoman Society which preceded the Turkish Republic, there were many spheres where religion was associated with age old, dogmatic and irrational traditions, rules and practices, many purportedly related to Muslim religion. Founders of the Republic were committed that the new society they were building would be based on rationality. Their inspiration was Enlightenment, if not Weber. The new Turk would think rationally and less and less in terms of religious principles or dogmas. Genuine attempts were made to make the operation of social institutions more just and more efficient (Stirling 1958, p. 398)

The young Turkish Republic made efforts in every sphere of life to spread rationality. Measures taken to reduce the power of religious authority in the fields of education and law were accompanied by the introduction of more rational systems.

Efforts were made even to rationalize Moslem religion. In an effort to "demystify" religion, the translation of the Quran into Turkish was encouraged. In 1928, a committee set up by the Faculty of Theology in Istanbul proposed radical changes in ritual, which were never implemented by the government.. (Report to the Press of Professor Fuad Koprulu, June 20, 1928, as quoted from *Vakit*, translated in Lufti Levonian, *The Turkish Press 1925-32***,** Athens 1932, p. 123 *ff***.,** quoted in Stirling 1958, p. 400) Pews, cloakrooms and shoes were recommended in mosques. Entire rituals would be conducted in Turkish. Sermons delivered by philosophers of religion would preach the human and permanent face of Islam, which had remained unknown till then. The foreword to the proposal made it clear that the authors believed that religion was a social institution, and as such, it had to serve the goals of the

national State. Religion had to be capable of "progress," according to the "scientific principle of reasoning."

Efforts were made to rationalize the economy. Major investments were undertaken to rationalize transportation, communication, irrigation and energy production. Efforts were made to introduce farmers to modern agriculture techniques. Village Institutes trained elementary school teachers who would provide leadership in village communities, introducing the villagers to modern production methods.

Interestingly, with regard to the spread of religious orders, those which were most popular and therefore most successful were those which were in favor of science and economic development, rather than irrationality and economic backwardness with which Islam was associated in the minds of the founders of the Republic.[1]

One of these is the Nakshibandi religious order, led by Sheikh Esat Zahit Kotku, who initiated in 1969 the founding of the first political party in Turkey with a religious orientation, Milli Nizam Partisi (MNP). Kotku took moral development as a prerequisite for both material development and political stability. However, Kotku's ultimate goal was this-worldly. In his scheme of things, Islam would play a role similar to the Protestant Ethic in advancing Turkey. (Heper and Tokta 2003, p. 158)

Said-i Nursi, founder of possibly the most widespread sect movement Nurculuk wrote that there is no contradiction between religion and science. Nursi used scientific laws to

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[1] The association of religiosity with rationalism and economic development has roots in Turkey going back to the pre republican Ottoman era. Young Ottomans, who led the opposition to the absolutist rule of the Ottoman monarchy during the second half of the nineteenth century, were aware that the main problems Ottoman Empire faced were economic. They had rightly observed that the dumping of Western machine-made textiles, imported under trade arrangements which favored the west, destroyed native manufacture and led to unemployment. Young Ottomans advocated the adoption of western methods in industrialization and commerce. Yet, they rejected identification in with the west in culture and life style. They refused to admit that the source of the ills in society was Islam. On the contrary, they argued that the cause of disorder and decline was the failure to implement Islamic law fully. They demanded that each clause of a future Ottoman constitution for the Ottomans be examined and approved by the Sheik-ul-Islam, leader of the Moslem religious establishment. (Inalcik, 1998)

illustrate the existence of an order in nature and then presented this order as a sign of God's existence. (Yavuz 1999, p. 120)

One of the most powerful groups that emerged from the fragmentation of the Nurcu groups is the one led by Fethullah Gulen. Like Said-i Nursi, Gulen also teaches that religion and science and tradition and modernity can be reconciled. (Gulen 1996, pp. 43-48.) Gulen's community which is made up of businessmen, teachers, journalists and students run a rich and complex web of business networks which include a large media empire, a bank, more than five hundred high schools in Turkey and abroad, seven universities and numerous businesses. His philosophy stresses education and engagement in the market economy. "Gulen's community argues that a strong free market is necessary to produce economic wealth. This wealth, in turn, will support a modern educational system to produce and control knowledge which will then empower Muslims and the Turkish state." (Yavuz 1999, pp. 123 – 124)

A Religious Resurgence?

Let us now summarize, without using the terms secular or anti secular, the developments which took place in the young Turkish Republic, which have been the subject of the secular – anti secular debate. We shall then apply the Stark – Bainbridge framework to analyze the developments.

The young republic

- put religion under the political authority,
- subdued private practice of religion in subtle ways,
- made attempts to remove the political, economic, legal, education, health, spheres from the authority of religion
- introduced rational ways (as opposed to dogma and tradition, related to supernatural) in above spheres.
- Aspects of daily life associated with Islamic lifestyle, such as language, weekend were altered
- and dress codes were changed – red fez, the wearing of religious attire except for religious specialists when performing their jobs and headscarf for was female students and civil servants was banned.

Under popular governments which came to power since 1950,

- religion has remained under state control but the religious establishment has grown immensely
- private practice of religion has been encouraged and grown
- religion had its impact felt on the political scene, mainly through informal connections between political parties and religious orders
- networking along religious lines is effective in business
- religious education has been introduced in schools
- religious orders or individuals connected with religious groups own and control media groups, schools and universities
- concern is expressed by opposition that religious orders are infiltrating the bureaucracy and judicial system
- concern is expressed that more conservative lifestyles are enforced – though the opposite is also claimed
- rules with regard to public appearance of women as civil servants and students are relaxed – though there is mixed evidence as to whether the wearing of headscarf by women is on the rise
- yet rationality is on the rise in all spheres – market economy is spreading and even though those with religious education are reaching positions of prominence, one does not go to imams but to specialists when seeking solutions to problems related to spheres such as economy, law, politics, management and health.

In other words religiosity and the authority of religion have been rising in Turkey *together with* rationality.

The rise of religiosity and the authority of religion in Turkey undr democracy has been explained by several commentators as "the resurgence of religion" which had been suppressed by Ataturk reforms: "The more democracy grows, the more religious resurgence is likely to increase in Turkey." *(*Yasin Aktay, *Body, Text, Identity: The Islamist Discourse of Authenticity in Modern Turkey,* Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Middle East Technical University, 1997, p. 282, quoted in Yavuz 2000, p. 26)

According to another proponent of this viewpoint, "the very fact that religion has been heavily controlled, marginalized, and circumscribed by the state for so long - an abnormal social occurrence in a Muslim country - has led to Islam's gradual but persistent reemergence onto Turkey's social, economic, and political stages. It was only natural that a key feature of

the Turkish identity - its deep association with the protection and spread of Islam for hundreds of years - *could not remain forever suppressed, even if Ataturk sought to excise Turkey's Islamic past from public awareness and expression*. Despite the importance of so many of Ataturk's Westernizing reforms, his suppression of religion in the public sphere could not last, and Turkey has been reverting back to a "normal" expression of religious sentiment, even in politics. Ongoing democratization has been the key to that process, just as democratization has strengthened political Islam in nearly all other Muslim countries as well". (Fuller 2004, s. 54)

Parallel to the "resurgence of Islam" viewpoint is the position that the secularization of the masses is "the great unfinished mission of Turkish elites." (Daver 1969, p. 30) This is because reforms had not been efficiently imposed at village level. (Stirling 1958, p. 404) With democracy, there would be the resurgence of the suppressed but not eliminated (because of inefficiency of reforms) Islam.

According to a complementary viewpoint, the resurgent Islam is a political movement expressing the grievances both of those poor with strong religious attachments, who feel excluded, and also of the "Islamic bourgeoisie," who also feel excluded, because they are excluded by the traditional republican elites. (Onis 1997, p. 748) According to this version, resurgent Islam "focuses on this world, defining problems that Muslims face here and now, devising the possible ways of action for solving these problems, and imagining a better world in the future that would be brought to life by current political action." (Yilmaz 2007, p. 484) Following statements by Prime Minister Erdogan are in line with this viewpoint:

- "Religions are a means for the happiness of human beings. God says Islam aims at improving the welfare of the people." (Recep Tayyip Erdogan, *Bu Sarki Burada Bitmez,* seventh printing, compiled by İbrahim Ethem Deveci, Istanbul, Nesil, 1999, p. 65, quoted in Heper and Tokta, p. 163)
- In every act or activity, one should provide for people's happiness, welfare, and security." (*Hürriyet,* June 29, 2001, quoted in Heper and Tokta 2003 p. 171)

Apparently, the political success of Erdogan, manifested in the 47,5% vote his party Justice and Development received at the general election held in July 2007, is based the contributions he made to the "happiness, welfare, and security" of people in concrete ways such as providing universal health care, providing scholarships and free books for students, constructing public housing and extending two lane roads to four lanes. (Adil Gur, Director of A&G Research, quoted by Nese Duzel 2008)

Below, we shall now introduce the Stark and Bainbridge approach to secularism and in the ensuing final section we shall propose an alternate interpretation of the developments which have taken place in Turkey since 1950, with regard to the secular – anti secular debate.

The Stark and Bainbridge Approach

According to "A Theory of Religion" proposed by Stark and Bainbridge, humans seek rewards, which are defined as "anything humans will incur costs to obtain." (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 27) Humans can settle for substitutes instead of rewards, when rewards are not available. Compensators are substitutes for rewards and are defined as "postulations of rewards according to explanations that are not readily susceptible to unambiguous evaluations." (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 30) Some areas, like afterlife, are likely to always remain in the realm of compensators. In other words, with regard to expectations for afterlife, one will always have to settle for compensators, when alive.

Compensators can be based on supernatural (supernatural referring to "forces beyond or outside nature which can suspend, alter, or ignore physical forces") assumptions, like promise of a good afterlife. (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 39) However, there are compensators which are not based on supernatural assumptions, such as the expectation of a communist utopia, which makes life in a communist society more bearable.

Religious and non religious organizations can both supply both rewards and compensators.

Religious organizations will specialize in the supply of compensators which are based on supernatural assumptions and non religious organizations will specialize in the supply of compensators which are not based on supernatural assumptions.

Religious organizations and groups will tend to specialize in the production of compensators, though religious organizations can be involved in the production of rewards as well. (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 43) For example, a mission may not only preach religion and pave the way to a good afterlife, but also provide health care, food, shelter and education.

Non religious organizations will tend to specialize in the supply of rewards, though such organizations can also supply compensators as well, like the communist utopia mentioned above.

If the rewards are limited in supply, the powerful persons and groups will monopolize rewards, reducing the amount of rewards available for the less well to do. (Stark and Bainbridge, 1987, p. 33) In this case, less well to do will be supplied with compensators.

The powerful who monopolize rewards can supply the less well to do masses with a non religious compensator like the communist utopia. It is more likely however, that the powerful elites who monopolize rewards will cooperate with the religious organization to provide the less well to do masses with religious compensators, such as promises of a good afterlife, in return for the hardships and scarcities they endure in this life.

Religious organizations will receive rewards in return for supplying compensators. Their vested interest would therefore be in the continued production of compensators rather than rewards. Religious organizations can therefore obstruct the pursuit of rewards. In this case, religious organization could be opposed to the provision of rewards such as the real medicine or irrigation, which activities it would be compensating with prayer and ritual – in return for rewards.

It is not rational to settle for compensators, when one is aware of the existence of rewards and if rewards are attainable. However, it is also rational to settle for compensators, when rewards are not known and not attainable.

Stark and Bainbridge define secular as "any parts of society and culture that are substantially free of supernatural assumptions" (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 289) Within the above scheme of things, the powerful will tend to be more "secular" (as they shall consuming rewards, and not the compensators based on supernatural assumptions) than the less well to do who will tend to be more religious (as they shall be consuming compensators based on supernatural assumptions, more so than rewards.)

This scheme of things can last for extended periods, with the secular powerful enjoying the rewards they are monopolizing and the religious masses getting by with compensators. Two variables (along with possible others, which we are not exploring) can alter the situation and bring about secularization defined as "the progressive loss of power by religious organizations:" (Stark and Bainbridge1987, p. 293) These variables are external competition and internal democracy. External competition will motivate elites to secularize segments of society hitherto supplied with compensators and internal democracy will motivate masses to seek more rewards rather than compensators.

If it is true that rewards are preferred to compensators, competitiveness of individuals and of societies would be based on their ability to produce rewards. The arrangement between the elites and the religious organization, while securing the monopoly of scarce rewards by the elites, would hamper the competitiveness of the society as a whole, as it would have a negative impact on the production of rewards. The elites who are aware of international competition can seek to extend the production of rewards, concurrently reducing the

production of compensators and the power of religious organizations, which supply compensators. Some areas will have priority in the production of rewards. Highest priority may be the military - a compensator military is worthless. Military therefore is likely to be one of the first areas where a society will cease to settle for compensators. Secular military elites can then lead secularization in other spheres.

If the less well to do masses are aware of the existence of rewards, the push for more rewards rather than compensators can come from below. In this case, masses will be less content with compensators and they will be seeking more rewards instead.

In order to attain more rewards, masses can network along non religious lines. However, since religious organization as provider of compensators is probably the most powerful organization the less well to do have access to, it is also possible that they will network using the religious organizations and use religious symbolism as a binding force. In other words, in order to attain more rewards, masses may utilize the religious framework set up to supply them with compensators. Religious organizations can modify themselves to supply primarily rewards rather than compensators once they are aware that this is what their clients are now demanding.

Applying "A Theory of Religion" to the Turkish Secular – Anti Secular Debate

End of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire was a massive political-religious organization which produced primarily compensators, with the scarce rewards being monopolized by the traditional elites and the leaders of the religious establishment. Segments of society, primarily the military had been secularized to provide rewards, rather than compensators. (Defense cannot be compensated.) Similar changes had been introduced in areas such as engineering and medicine, but as a whole these changes had not been sufficient to convert the empire into a large enough producer of rewards that would have enabled it to compete in the international arena. Collapse came with the First World War.

Nation building following the collapse was headed by secularized leaders, primarily with roots in the military, the first institution to be secularized. The leadership of the young republic made a genuine attempt to secularize the society as a whole, which meant, within the Stark-Bainbridge scheme outlined above, raising the supply rewards rather than compensators. Yet, because rewards remained scarce, despite the rise in their supply, less well to do masses had to mainly make do with compensators: prayers for health rather than medicine, prayers for rain rather than irrigation, tradition and convention (which many

thought was shariah, which often was not) rather than civic and other law, imam rather than the teacher and the judge, tradition rather than modern methods of production and a good afterlife in return for misery when alive. This was the "unfinished business of secularization" referred to above. (p. 16)

Under the circumstances, the lighter version of Islam which would primarily meet private needs and was preferred by the elites, who were relatively rich in rewards, would not be sufficient for the less well to do, who were relatively poor in rewards. More strict sects emerged to provide such groups with compensators. However, a key undertaking of the elites in Turkey had been steps taken toward democracy and the extension of information flows, which raised the awareness of the less well to do of the existence of rewards. This awareness made less well to do demand rewards rather than settle for compensators.

In order to make their demand for rewards known and in order to attain rewards, less well to do worked through political parties and religious orders (*tariqas*), these being the best developed networks they traditionally had access to. Religious orders which gained most popularity were not the more strict ones that promised more compensators, but the lighter ones, which favored and promised more rewards, based on rationality.

Secularization according to the Stark – Bainbridge definition of "loss of power by religious organizations" has been ongoing, as the rise in the supply of rewards reduces the demand for compensators based on the supernatural, reducing the leverage of religious organizations as providers of compensators.

Power of religion based organizations as providers of rewards (and rationality) however, is on the rise.

Religion based symbolism and practices such as the wearing the headscarf, attending the Friday sermon, abstaining from alcohol, help to screen membership in groups of previously less well to do or excluded, whose share of total rewards is now on the rise. Use of such symbolism may also (or may not) affect Turkey's place in the world. But, this is the subject of another paper.

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