ALEV ÇINAR

Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey

Bodies, Places, and Time

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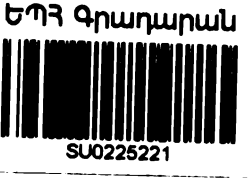

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Introduction

Modernity is perhaps one of the most controversial terms in scholarly literature, and to it is ascribed many, sometimes contradictory, meanings. The fact that it has been and continues to be such a constitutive part of social, political, cultural, and economic life all over the world compels scholars of different disciplines to address the term, serving to further proliferate its meaning and complicate its usage. *Modernity* may refer to a lifestyle, a culture, a discourse, a historical epoch, a movement, a project, a mind-set, an intellectual trend, to capitalism, industrialization, democracy, constitutionalism, or secularism. Sometimes it is generalized to mean all of these at once, running the risk of overloading the term to the point of analytical uselessness, and sometimes one of its narrower meanings is privileged over others at the cost of oversimplifying the term and overlooking its other unexpected manifestations.

Whether *modernity* is referred to as a concept, as a historical, social, or cultural process, or as an epoch with characteristic institutions, employing the term as an analytical category is even more challenging for scholars of non-European contexts[1] due to the complexity of the experience of modernity in these places. In places outside of Europe, as a consequence of colonialism and globalization, conditions have mostly evolved under European influences, even in countries like Turkey, which has never been directly colonized. Therefore, in these places it is possible to observe that most of the institutions and practices established in the name of modernity have been modeled after their European counterparts. However, this

adoption does not change the fact that these non-European modernities have their own unique trajectories, creatively combining European influences with local practices and institutions to yield innovative, unique, and often much more complex forms and processes. Observing the experience of modernity in different non-Western contexts, Gaonkar notes that "modernity is more often perceived as lure than as threat, and people (not just the elite) everywhere, at every national or cultural site, rise to meet it, negotiate it, and appropriate it in their own fashion."[2]

However, the widely held assumption that the origins of both modernity and the conceptual tools with which to study it are located in Europe presents a daunting dilemma for scholars studying these unique and contrary modernities. On the one hand, if they unquestioningly accept the European model, they run the risk of slavishly adopting a Eurocentric perspective and disregarding original and unique ways in which modernity has taken root in the context they study. Until the emergence of postcolonial criticism, a large body of literature had already been produced in this mode employing variants of classical modernization theory that took modernity as an exclusively European experience. On the other hand, if the claim to European origins is rejected altogether, scholars run the risk of overlooking the ways in which local conditions have been altered and transformed by European influences. Such scholarship, which has "gone native," so to speak, often takes up defensive anti-Western and anti-modern stances that tend to uncritically exalt local practices and institutions. This perspective has often been cultivated by ultra-nationalist, fundamentalist, or "Third Worldist" ideologies.

It has been postcolonial criticism that has responded to this dilemma and started to produce new ways of approaching the study of modernity in non-European contexts. Devoting a special issue of the Millennial Quartet to "Alternative Modernities," *Public Culture* addressed this dilemma head-on. Studies of alternative modernities presented in this issue suggest that the pervasive presence of modernity in non-Western contexts is the result of neither servile imitation nor an inorganic imposition from outside or above, but rather the product of "creative adaptation."[3]

As such, in a country like Turkey, modernity can be adequately studied only if the creative adaptations of European influences are given due recognition and if both the Eurocentric and the nativistic extremes are avoided. In this study I seek to find such middle grounds through a close analysis of the trajectory of modernity in Turkey, examining both its adoption as official ideology by the founding state and challenges to it by the Islamists of the 1990s, who started to produce the ideology of an

Islamic mode of modernization. This task requires a reexamination of the term *modernity* and the development of an operational definition that will allow the investigation of the locally specific dynamics by which Turkish modernity took shape.

Unfortunately, however, Eurocentric perspectives still dominate scholarship in different disciplines, particularly in political science, economics, and history. Studies of modernity in non-European contexts that stay clear of postcolonial criticism tend to examine only institutions and trends that are characteristic of modernity in Europe, at the expense of a closer analysis of the unique circumstances of those non-European contexts. Practices and institutions that may very well be regarded as "modern" in their own contexts but do not have counterparts in the European experience are not recognized as part of modernity, nor are analytical tools and concepts sufficiently developed to study them. The possibility of an "Islamic modernism" that may be attributed to trends developing within the Islamist movement in Turkey is a case in point. The claim that modernity is an exclusively European product becomes a self-fulfilling hypothesis, because other forms of modernity that do not comply with European norms either are conveniently categorized as belonging to the realm of the pre-modern or traditional or are simply disregarded as anomalies altogether.

Modernity and Contending Modernization Projects in Turkey

Perhaps because Turkey was not a part of the colonial world, relevant academic disciplines in Turkey have been hesitant to incorporate postcolonial criticism in their studies of modernity and therefore have not benefited sufficiently from such critical perspectives. As a result, apart from a very few exceptions, scholarship on Turkey is still producing work that views Turkish modernity from a Eurocentric perspective. A great majority of scholars of Turkish studies unquestioningly assume that modernity in Turkey did not start as an organic process evolving out of local social, economic, and cultural dynamics, but rather was introduced from above by the Ottoman state in the early nineteenth century and later more authoritatively imposed by the new state after 1923.[4] Institutions and practices that constitute modernity in Turkey are more readily thought of as imports from Europe and therefore not as authentic products of the local context. Turkish modernity is seen as an imitation that has never really taken root in society and has always suffered from incongruity with local practices and lack of popular support.[5] These studies overlook unconventional claims made about Turkish modernity, such as one made by

Şerif Mardin, who has shown that modernity, understood as the development of a pragmatic rationality in administrative practices and diversions from the Islamic code, had started to take root in the Ottoman administrative system as early as the sixteenth century.[6]

Regardless of how it is understood, modernity has had an immense transformative and constitutive power in the ongoing formation of the social-political order in Turkey. For many, being modern is a deeply cherished ideal that is held very much as a religion, with its own shrines, rituals, sacred spaces, and mantras. Indeed, for some, routinely going to a Western classical music concert at the Atatürk Cultural Center (Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, or AKM) in Taksim Square in Istanbul has a meaning far beyond the immediate function of experiencing musical pleasure: it is a reaffirmation of a modern and European lifestyle. Perhaps because of this devotion and to preserve the sanctity of the AKM Concert Hall as a sacred site of modernity, which is identified with secularism, the presence of patrons with Islamic attire is met with extreme annoyance and is certainly unwelcome. Similarly, the most significant monument of the nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's mausoleum, Anıtkabir, which is celebrated as a distinguished mark of Turkish secularism and modernity, is a site of nationalist pilgrimage. It is in the devout way in which such monuments of Turkish modernity and secularism are upheld that the official project of modernity has acquired a religious and untouchable status.[7]

In Turkey, *modernity* not only is about a particular lifestyle, institution, practice, or culture, but also is a widely used word in daily popular discourse. Being a "modern woman," having a "modern marriage," abiding by "modern principles," or putting forth "modern thoughts"—all have specific meanings that are frequently evoked in daily talk and the media. There are popular and active associations such as the Modern Journalists Association, the Modern Women Association, or the Support for Modern Life Association, which has a Modern Children club and a Modern High-School Girls project. Therefore, studying modernity in Turkey not only requires the identification of instances, practices, and institutions that are deemed modern, but also necessitates due attention to the meaning of the term as it is used in daily discourse.

It is important to acknowledge that even if a particular conceptualization of modernity becomes dominant in a given time period, it is by no means the only one. The meaning of *modernity* illustrated earlier is the dominant meaning, congruent with the official state ideology founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the 1920s, which took secularism, Turkish nationalism, and a West-oriented modernity as constitutive principles upon

which societal and political institutions were formed and the public and private spheres evolved. As the basis of the founding ideology of the new state, at that time *modernity* was understood as the adoption of what was seen as a universal norm of civilization, but what was in fact French bourgeois culture. On this note, Atatürk said,

> There are a variety of countries, but there is only one civilization. In order for a nation to advance, it is necessary that it join this civilization. If our bodies are in the East, our mentality is oriented toward the West. We want to modernize our country. All our efforts are directed toward the building of a modern, therefore Western, state in Turkey. What nation is there that desires to become a part of civilization, but does not tend toward the West?[8]

Reflecting the dominant understanding at that time, Atatürk's words show how modernity, civilization, and Westernism were seen as one and the same thing, understood primarily as a way of life and a universal norm that all modernizing countries were expected to adopt. This understanding of modernity has been the foundational principle upon which the Turkish Constitution, state institutions, a new sense of nationhood, and a new social order were built, and it continues to dictate the general direction of societal and political transformation to this day.

Nevertheless, the state's official version of modernity based on a West-oriented, secular nationalist ideology has never been the only project. Since the start of the Ottoman modernization efforts in the early nineteenth century, there have always been alternative projects of modernization that have understood and exploited the term in different ways. It was only one of these projects that overpowered others and came to be the founding ideology of the state under the leadership of Atatürk, but the institutionalization of this particular view did not entail the complete elimination of its rivals. Throughout the course of the twentieth century, several alternative conceptualizations have emerged, inspired by a range of different intellectual traditions and ideological movements including Bolshevism and Marxism, Islam, variants of ethnic nationalism, nativism, or laissez-faire liberalism. These have been formulated and deployed not only by different political parties and movements but also by forces of civil society such as the media, intellectuals, business associations, or religious groups, which have interacted with one another and sometimes even come to power, altering the official discourse in important respects.

Hence, even though secularism, Westernism, and Turkish nationalism have been sustained as the core principles of modernity in Turkey, the

pecially in the ways in which these core principles have been interpreted and reinstitutionalized. These changes came about as a result of important changes of regime and ensuing shifts in the ruling ideology. During the course of the twentieth century, two significant shifts have been worth mentioning. One of these was the rise of the Democrat Party regime in the 1950s when a notion of modernity that took technological and economic development as the primary defining mark of modernization was institutionalized, replacing the former understanding articulated by Atatürk.[9] Starting with this period, the meaning of "the West" also shifted from Europe to North America. France was dethroned as the bearer of the "universal" norm of civilization as the mark of modernity, and was replaced by the United States, which was idealized as the bearer of the ultimate form of an industrialized capitalist society, which had become the new mark of modernity. Indeed, one of the Democrat Party's catchy slogans in the 1950s was that they were going to make Turkey into a "Little America."

The second shift came in the 1980s with the advent of the Motherland Party under the leadership of late president Turgut Özal, who implemented policies based on an understanding that saw modernity primarily as liberal economics, consumerism, and a combination of local elements with global trends. At the turn of the century a third shift seems to be in order with the rising popularity of political projects inspired by Islam that culminated in the electoral victory of the Adalet ve Kalkınma (AK) (Justice and development) Party, which won an overwhelming majority in the parliament in 2002 under the leadership of Istanbul's former mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

This study compares and contrasts only two periods within this trajectory of modernity in Turkey. First, it examines the initial years of the republic and the techniques and methods employed toward the institutionalization of its main components, secularism and nationalism. The second period was the 1990s, which marked the rise of political Islam with the birth of the Islamist Refah (Welfare) Party, which won its first significant electoral victory in the local elections of 1994, when it came to power in the city administrations of several major cities in Turkey, including Istanbul and Ankara.[10] Examining the activities of the Islamist city administration in Istanbul under the mayoralty of Tayyip Erdoğan until 1998, when he was removed from office, this study analyzes the political ideology developed by the Refah Party and implemented by the city ad-

ministration to trace its interventions in public life, and it argues that this ideology was as modernist as its secularist counterpart.

In the midst of such alternative projects, modernity can be thought of as a ruling metanarrative or a larger discursive field wherein contending ideologies challenge and seek to overpower each other, ultimately serving to reaffirm modern discourse. According to Connolly, the interactions between such contending views and ideologies "establish a loosely bounded field upon which modern discourse proceeds" and where "adversaries sustain each other."[11]

What makes these different views and ideologies constitutive of modernity is their common goal to transform society toward an ideal future. As is discussed in more detail later, the common element in these projects is the specific attitude toward society, its present and future, that constructs the present as deficient and in need of remedial intervention that will transform it toward the future. On the other hand, the difference between these projects lies in their specific ideological positions, which dictate different visions of the future and also a different sense of "society." In other words, alternative modernization projects not only have different visions of the present and the future, but also have different notions of the "nation." Under conditions of the modern nation-state system, the "society" in question is the nation.

Hence, it is also important to acknowledge that the ideological bases for contending projects of modernization are invariably nationalist. I use the term *nationalism* here to mean any political project that conjures up a particular notion of the nation that is projected upon the community over which it seeks to rule. Broadly defined as such, a nationalist ideology need not take ethnicity as the constitutive basis of the nation; it can be based on a different unifying bond, such as a common culture, a common history, a sense of territorial unity, a common ideology or political ideals (as in the United States), or even a common religion. When religion appears as the basis of a nationalist ideology, the community in question is not the larger transnational or global religious community, as in the *umma* of Islam, but rather the specific national community of the modern nation-state over which the state rules. In other words, a political ideology is nationalist to the extent that it operates on the assumption that there is a monolithic nation with a single, linear history and over which the unitary state is to rule, which can be summed up in the formula "one state = one nation = one history." The fact that the core principle that unites the nation is defined on the basis of ethnicity, language, culture, or religion does not make the ideology any less or more nationalist.

If nationalism is defined as an ideology that builds on the basic assumption that there is a community of people with some common characteristic constituting a unified nation, then all modernization projects also operate through a nationalist ideology that defines the nation in a particular way. In other words, all modernization projects involve the creation of a particular sense of nationhood and the construction of a specific national identity, regardless of whether the unifying characteristic is defined around ethnicity, race, religion, culture, civilization, language, or some other similar primordial bond.

In sum, this work starts with the assumption that modernity is the product of not one, but many, contending ideas and modernization projects, with different notions of nationhood and different ideals projected into the future, which either fight, tolerate, cooperate, imitate, or even merge with each other, though all seek to transform society along a set of social and political ideals. The Turkish case clearly illustrates that modernity is neither exclusively Western nor Eastern, neither foreign nor local, neither universal nor particular, neither historical nor atemporal, neither old nor new, but at times it can be all of these at once, or it can emerge in the ambiguous space in between these binary opposites. Turkey is a country where modernity as Westernism exists simultaneously with modernity as Easternism or where modernity as an unmarked universalism coexists with modernity as a heavily marked particularism. There are those who locate modernity in producing and consuming Western high culture, such as the patrons of the AKM Concert Hall in Istanbul, for whom *modernity* means being learned and cultured in the ways of the West. Others locate modernity in a mixture of local things with Western or global forms, such as fast-food chains that sell typically local food, like the chains that sell *lahmacun* (pastry with ground meat, also called the "Turkish pizza"). Or the apparel chain Mavi Jeans ("blue" jeans), which brings together things Turkish (labor, textiles, and the *Mavi* in its label) with things Western or global (the design, the *jeans*, marketing techniques, etc.). Or hybrid musical genres that have combined hip-hop and dance rhythms and instruments with Turkish folk or classical styles and forms. Or the new beverage Cola Turca, released in 2003 by a Turkish food company that prides itself in producing a soda that looks and tastes exactly like its American counterparts, the formula for which was developed by Turkish researchers in Turkey. Still others locate modernity in forging a national culture that is purely local and authentic, one that has been purified of Western influences. The Çamlıca restaurant managed by the Islamist city administration of Istanbul is an example of this latter case, where everything from the in-

terior design and background music to the food and beverages served are styled to display a "purely local" and "authentically Turkish" culture. I seek to establish here that the latter is also a modern undertaking, because it is part of an Islamist modernization project that seeks to transform Turkish society toward a more prosperous and happy life by tapping into the creative potential immanent in its "authentic" culture that has been suppressed by the Westernizing, imitative state.

As discussed in more detail later, *modernity* is understood here as an intervention related to bodies, space, and time that constructs their present as corrupt in order to induce a need for transformation toward a better future. In other words, bodies (the construction of the national subject), places (the making of national space), and time (the construction of national history) emerge as the sites for modernizing interventions by contending projects. In order to investigate these sites, this study takes the public sphere as the object of analysis and develops an understanding of the public sphere as a visual field that is constituted by performance and visibility rather than debate and dialogue. Through its interventions in the public sphere, the intervening subject constructs itself as the agent of modernity that is to save the nation from its current malady and guide it toward an ideal future. In particular, this study examines the formation and negotiation of Turkish modernity by comparing and contrasting Kemalism, the founding ideology of the republic, which is based on the ideals of secularism, nationalism, and progress promoted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, with one of its main contenders, Islamism. Islamism emerged in the 1990s as a new political ideology developed by the main Islamist political party, the Refah Party, which challenged the Westernist and secularist ideology of the state and developed an alternative national ideology that takes an East-oriented Ottoman-Islamic nationalism as its constitutive base. I argue that in the hands of the Refah Party Islamism turned into an equally modernizationist movement that uses the same strategies and techniques as those of the modernizing state to produce and institutionalize its own version of an equally totalizing national project that seeks to transform society toward an ideal future.

Islamism, Fundamentalism, and Islamic Modernism

Throughout the text the terms *secularism* and *Islamism* are used as ideologies or political projects that seek to transform and reinstitute a sociopolitical order on the basis of a set of constitutive norms and principles. As an ideology, Islamism uses selective postulates from Islam so as to constitute

identity and the assertion of a new sense of nationhood. Even though there is a general tendency in scholarly literature and a presumption in the Western media that Islamism is against the modern and secular values of the West, not all Islamist ideologies are anti-modernist or anti-Western.[12] Since scholarly literature tends to discount particularities within non-European experiences of modernity as belonging to the domain of the "traditional" or the "pre-modern," the study of political Islam has been marked by such a bias, which tends toward framing Islam-based movements as either outside of modernity or against it. Often the word *fundamentalism* is used as a qualifying mark of Islamism that posits Islamist movements as anti-modernist and anti-secularist. Bruce Lawrence notes that "Islamic fundamentalists, like other fundamentalists, are anti-modernist moderns. They are moderns because they accept the instrumental benefits of modernity."[13] They are anti-modernist because they "oppose modernism and its proponents."[14] Furthermore, Lawrence notes that for these movements, religion is mainly a façade, fundamentalism basically operates as an ideology, and "fundamentalist leaders are . . . in reality ideologues."[15] Martin Marty and Scott Appleby point out that the word *fundamentalist* is used to describe such movements because fundamentalists, in their war against modernism, which is understood as a value system that emphasizes change, consumerism, and particularly secularism, retrieve "doctrines, beliefs, and practices from a sacred past."[16]

Although such a characterization may be appropriate for some movements in Iran, Pakistan, or Egypt as examined by Lawrence, it does not hold for most of the Islamist groups in Turkey, and certainly not for the Islamism of the Refah/Fazilet Party. There are Islamist groups in Turkey that could be described as fundamentalist, such as the Aczimendi order mentioned in chapter 2, but these are quite marginal and not particularly welcome or even recognized by other more popular orders, such as those surrounding the Nur movement or Islamist circles such as the Refah/Fazilet Party.[17]

Another popular form of association based on Islam is religious orders (*tarikat*) that do not have any legal basis, but are sustained via social networks and personal connections. These religious orders may have intricate relations with different political parties, but it is quite a stretch to qualify their organization and activity primarily as ideologically based and anti-secular. The political parties with which they have ties are not necessarily only the Islamist ones, and they have variably supported conservative or center-right secular parties as well.[18]

There are also Islamist intellectuals whose views may bear traces of fundamentalism, but it is difficult to qualify the totality of the work of any one of them as fundamentalist. For example, Abdurrahman Arslan, who leans toward mystical Islam, is anti-modern to the point of refusing to use computers or have a telephone in his home, and has been writing extensively against all aspects of modernity, including secularism, capitalism, consumerism, and nationalism.[19] However, Arslan is also against the politicization of Islam or any ideology that seeks state power, which disqualifies him as a fundamentalist. Another prolific Islamist writer, Ali Bulaç, whose views influenced the policies of Erdoğan while he was the mayor of Istanbul, is famous for the recovery of the "Madina Document," which was used as a legal-constitutional frame when Mohammed ruled Madina in 622–32. Bulaç claimed that the Madina Document, which allowed for an administrative order based on multiple legal systems of different religious communities, could be adapted and implemented in Turkey so that there would be an Islamic legal system alongside a secular, a Judaic, and a Christian one under the same state, where everyone could live in accordance with the legal system of their own choice.[20] Although this proposition certainly qualifies as a retrieval of a doctrine or practice from the golden age of Islam, and hence fundamentalist, Bulaç is also an enthusiastic advocate of very modern ideals such as economic liberalism, basic liberal rights and freedoms, and democracy.

It is also significant that both these writers and others among this circle of Islamist intellectuals are very well read in both Islamic and Western intellectual traditions and history. In most of their writings, their lists of bibliographical references often include scholars and philosophers ranging from Aristotle and Plato and from Ibn Haldun and Ibn Arabi to Kant and Hegel or from Cassirer, Foucault, and Habermas to Balibar, Giddens, Gellner, and Benedict Anderson.[21] What marks the writings of these authors is a thorough and well-informed interrogation of modernity, but as Roxanne Euben points out, such an interrogation need not imply a stark negation of modernity. Euben notes that "Islamist critiques of modernity . . . are best characterized as an attempt to simultaneously abolish, transcend, preserve and transform modernity . . . rather than an a priori negation of it," which fairly qualifies the works of Turkish Islamist intellectuals as well.[22] If "fundamentalism" is to be understood as anti-modernism and anti-Westernism, it does not justly describe the views of these intellectuals.

As for the Islamism of the Refah Party, as is illustrated in subsequent chapters, neither its discourse nor its policies have been consistently antisecular, and certainly they have not been anti-Western. They have been

firmly against the Westernism of the state on the grounds that it is incompatible with Turkey's "true national culture" and that it has been implemented as a servile imitation of the West, but they have never expressed in word or deed any animosity against the West itself. They have refused to recognize the West as a superior power, especially in cultural terms, but they have consistently approached Western countries as allies. Operating on such a legacy, the Refah Party's descendant, the AK Party, has not only been fully supportive of Turkey's candidacy for the European Union, but actually declared it the party's top priority mission when it came to power in 2002.

The Refah Party's Islamism is also not fundamentalist in that retrieving "doctrines, beliefs, and practices from a sacred past" does not really qualify their ideology, their policies, or the ideals that they project to the future of Turkey. At every opportunity the Refah Party and its supporters have resorted to a liberal discourse of individual rights and liberties rather than citing postulates from the Koran. Particularly the moderate wing within the party, which was in power in Istanbul's city administration and later separated to form the AK Party, has long been promoting democratization, restoration of basic rights and freedoms, economic liberalism, and decentralization of state power. These policies later became the basis of the AK Party's program. What marked the Refah Party's Islamism was an antagonism against the Westernizing secular state, which was blamed for undermining Turkey's "true identity" and implementing policies to the detriment of the "true cultural values" of the Turkish people.

This ideology is not different from that of any other nationalism that places at its core not an ethnic or linguistic essence, but an identity based on vernacular religion. Indeed, as illustrated in detail in chapter 4, the Islamic identity promoted by the Refah Party is not forged for the larger transnational Islamic community (the *umma*), but is tailored exclusively for a Turkish-speaking audience living in Turkey. Furthermore, it takes Islam not as a religion but as a culture deeply rooted in the Ottoman past, and promotes the idea of an Ottoman-Islamic civilization as Turkey's "true national culture" and as an alternative to the country's official secular, West-oriented, and ethnic-based identity. This is not a return to the golden age of Islam, but rather is the restoration of what is believed to be Turkey's "true culture" and its potential as a "glorious civilization."

Even though the Refah Party had people with fundamentalist tendencies among its ranks and had occasionally made hostile statements against secularism (but not modernity) during the earlier years of its growing influence, it gradually veered toward a moderate center-right position as

its support base increased. After the Refah Party ceased to exist in 1998 and was replaced by the Fazilet Party, the political discourse of the party changed substantially and its leaders started to openly endorse secularism. They started to promote the idea that while the Fazilet Party was the truly secular party in Turkey, it was the state that was actually anti-secular and undemocratic because it was not recognizing freedom of conscience and was directly meddling in religious affairs, whereas under true secularism the state and religion should remain separate. The certain break from any fundamentalist tendencies came with the formation of the AK Party, which separated from the Fazilet Party after it ceased to exist and after the ensuing split of its two factions in 2001. This split resulted in the formation of the Refah/Fazilet Party's direct descendent, the Saadet (Felicity) Party, and the AK Party, formed by the moderate wing. During the elections in November 2002, the AK Party drew a majority of the Islamic vote as well as the votes of secular conservatives, coming to power with an overwhelming majority.[23]

It should be noted that other Islamic or Islamist groups in Turkey that do not follow the Refah/Fazilet Party's line and approach to Islam have substantially different views on modernity, secularism, Islamism, and Westernism. In this respect, there is no monolithic Islamist movement in Turkey, and the arguments presented here apply only to the Islamism of the Refah/Fazilet Party. However, this is not a generalization based on the study of a single case, because the Refah/Fazilet Party represented an overwhelming majority of political Islam in Turkey. There is only one other political party, the Grand Unity Party (Büyük Birlik Partisi, or BBP), formed in 1992, that can be qualified as "Islamist," but this is quite a marginal party with a narrow support base (it captured 1 percent of the national vote in 2002) that did not have a significant impact on formal politics or on the Islamist movement.

It is also important to distinguish between *Islamic*, *Islamism*, and *Muslim*. As noted earlier, *Islamism* is used here as a political ideology, and *Islamist* is used to refer either to proponents of this ideology or to actions, interventions, and policies that are undertaken in the name of Islamism. *Islamic*, on the other hand, is an adjective used here to indicate a view, thought, style, or practice that makes reference to Islam as a religion, but is not part of an Islamist ideology, as in "Islamic art" or "Islamic intellectual traditions." This distinction allows us to differentiate between "Islamist intellectuals," who are mainly the ideologues of political Islam, and "Islamic intellectuals," whose activity involves Islamic thought, scholarship, or art that is not part of the production of an ideology. For example, the works of writer

Ali Bulaç and poet İsmet Özel are often chunked together and analyzed by studies on "Islamist intellectuals" in Turkey.[24] However, the work of Ali Bulaç, who has written extensively in Islamist newspapers and magazines and was a consultant to the city administration of Istanbul under Erdoğan's mayoralty, qualifies him not as an Islamic but as an Islamist intellectual who actively contributes to the development of party ideology, whereas the work of İsmet Özel, who is considered one of Turkey's most distinguished poets, is celebrated by Islamists and secularists alike, and has produced thoughtful essays on modernity and Islam in Turkey, does not involve the production of a particular ideology at all. In fact, Özel is sharply critical of any quest for power, which he believes will have only fatal consequences for Muslims.[25] Özel's work can best be described as one of the most sophisticated criticisms of modernity in Turkey, and the fact that he takes an Islamic point of view qualifies him as an Islamic intellectual at best.

On the other hand, the term *Muslim* is used here to refer to those who identify themselves as the followers of the Islamic faith, regardless of their political opinions. Hence, just as there can be Islamist Muslims, there are also secular Muslims. It is important to make this distinction, because the word *Muslim* was used strategically by Refah circles to refer exclusively to Islamists or supporters and proponents of political Islam. This is a rhetorical strategy that attempts to monopolize the definition of *Muslim* to the benefit of the Refah Party and divest Muslims who are not interested in Islamism or are even against it, as were most secularists, of their faith.

Modernity and Secularism à la Turca

Official Turkish modernity took shape basically through a negation of the Islamic Ottoman system and the adoption of a West-oriented mode of modernization, yet it represents neither a blind submission to Westernism nor a totally imitative and inorganic adaptation from Europe.[26] Rather, the founding elite conjured up quite an original modernity project that was made possible by establishing a critical distance from two extremes that were both seen as dangers for the future of Turkey. On the one hand, if Westernism were taken to its extreme, Turkey would run the risk of losing its national uniqueness and distinctiveness. On the other hand, if the Islamic legal frame of the former Ottoman system were maintained, Turkey would not be able to modernize and become part of the Western "civilized world" as it deeply aspired to do. Hence, the official modernization project took shape by maintaining a distance both from excessive

Westernism, on the one hand, and from stagnant Islamism, on the other, thereby creating a unique in-between, hybrid modernity à la *Turca*. In other words, what has often been seen as a "paradox" or "dilemma" of Turkish modernity in that it has failed to take root in society because of its top-down, imitative quality, is in fact a creative innovation that has indeed been institutionalized into the current constitutional system. Secularism as a founding principle that has been successfully institutionalized (in the sense that it has endured as the core constitutive principle) as the single most important constitutive element of the Turkish constitutional system is the outcome of this innovation. The fact that it has been successfully institutionalized does not mean that it is the outcome of a societal consensus or a democratic process. On the contrary, as in the case of any other experience of state building, the Turkish nation-state was built upon harsh authoritarian measures, oppression, and elimination of rivals through dictatorial means.

Studying modernity through the Turkish experience proves to be quite an informative undertaking, especially in revealing the ways in which modernization is linked with the building of a nation-state. The Turkish experience has been marked by an uninterrupted modernization process that spanned a period of two centuries starting at the end of the eighteenth century with the reform programs of the Ottoman rulers, culminating in the formation of a nation-state in the early twentieth century, and continuing to this day, as Turkish modernization is under negotiation more than ever with the country's pending membership in the European Union.[27] Also, the fact that Turkey never became a colony but did uphold European norms of modernity and civilization as the only valid reference allows for the study of modernity and its link to Westernization in the absence of an external colonial power.

A unique feature of the Turkish experience of modernization as a state- and nation-building practice is that it is quite easy to delineate and trace the modernization project and its effects through various interventions of the state in public and private life. Indeed, subsequent chapters illustrate how the state has been directly involved in shaping not only the public but also the private sphere through its modernizing interventions in daily affairs. Throughout the twentieth century, the state was involved in matters from the clothing of its citizens to the music they were to listen to, from the type of leisure activity they would be engaged in to the type of family relations they would have. These telling interventions allow for the analysis of modernity as a self-constitutive project of the nation-state in relation to society. In other words, it provides important insights into

the various strategies and techniques used toward the constitution of the modern nation-state, where modernization has become the single most important device in the hands of the state in constituting not only a modern state apparatus but also a modern society. Therefore, twentieth-century Turkish politics offers an amazingly rich and diverse range of opportunities for studying different facets of modernity and modernization, as well as the sorts of strategies and techniques used to institutionalize such a major undertaking. The scope of this study allows for the analysis of only a small sample of these modernizing interventions in subsequent chapters.

Perhaps the most important contribution of studying the Turkish experience to the scholarship on modernity will be demonstrating the relationship of modernity to religion and Islam and the issue of secularism. Contrary to the classical assumption that modernity displaces religion, the Turkish case illustrates that the relation between modernity and religion is far more complicated and subtle.[28] First of all, since Turkish modernity was institutionalized in a society that had been governed by Islamic principles for six centuries, the outright rejection or suppression of religion was virtually impossible. Hence, the institutionalization of modernity involved not a direct exclusion of Islam, but rather an engineered *inclusion* of Islam within the modern political system. In other words, a specific understanding of modernity and secularism had to be carefully forged and implemented in a society that had lived by Islamic values, principles, and references and under an Islamic legal frame for centuries. It is exactly for this reason that Turkish modernity could not have been a purely imitative and cosmetic appropriation from the West. For it to take hold, it had to be an innovative, hybrid adaptation tailored to the particularities of local sociopolitical practices and Islamic frames of reference.

The Atatürkist innovation was to bring Islamic authority under the full and absolute control of the secular state. Rather than following the common pattern where all religious affairs are separated from formal political affairs, the institutionalization of secularism involved bringing all religious activity under the direct control and monopoly of the secular state. In 1924 a Directorate of Religious Affairs was formed to act as the ultimate authority on the knowledge and practice of Islam. The directorate would operate directly under the Office of the Prime Minister, and its chair and board would be appointed by the president. Simultaneously with the establishment of the directorate, all other practices and authorities of Islam were outlawed, including the caliphate, which had been the institutional

ruler of Islam all over the world since the sixteenth century. Autonomous religious lodges (*tekke* and *zaviye*) and sufi orders (*tarikat*) were banned. A secular civil code was adopted from Switzerland to replace the previous codes based on Islamic law (Shariat), and this code outlawed all forms of polygamy, annulled religious marriages, and granted equal rights to men and women in matters of inheritance, marriage, and divorce. The religious court system and institutions of religious education were abolished. Under the new secular penal code, the "use of religion for political purposes" was banned, the Ottoman dynasty was expatriated, the article that defined the Turkish state as "Islamic" was removed from the constitution, and the alphabet was changed, replacing Arabic letters with Roman ones.

Autonomous Islamic authorities were dissolved one after the other, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs was authorized to oversee the knowledge and practice of Islam, which included the supervision of all mosques and the public sermons given there, the appointment of imams, and the production and dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

One of the most controversial attempts to bring Islam under the control of the secular state was changing the call for prayers (*ezan*) from Arabic, the sacral language of Islam, to Turkish. In this case, "control" was attempted by the nationalization of a prevailing Islamic ritual. The first call for prayers in Turkish, translated into "pure Turkish" by the Turkish Language Association founded by Atatürk, was chanted in 1932 in the Ayasofya Mosque in Istanbul, and then standardized throughout mosques around the country upon the orders of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Since the *ezan* is chanted five times a day from atop minarets scattered around cities and is intended to be heard by everyone, it is a highly salient mark of the undeniable presence of Islam in the public sphere. By having the *ezan* chanted in Turkish, the secular state not only brought under control Islam, which had gained a unique public presence through sound, but also submitted it to nationalist discourse. This intervention, however, never became popular, could not be institutionalized, and was abolished by the populist Democrat Party regime in 1950.

Therefore, the institutionalization of secularism involved not exclusion, but a tightly controlled inclusion of Islam in the public sphere. This gesture of public inclusion was the means by which the authority of the secular state was realized and consolidated. In other words, the formation of the nation-state involved the creation of a secular-national public sphere where, contrary to the common understanding that secularism excludes religion, religious practices, knowledges, and activity were monitored and

given a specific public presence. While official Islam was given a limited and closely supervised place in the public sphere, autonomous Islamic practices were disallowed.

However, this unique synthesis was by no means left unchallenged. The search for the specific path that Turkish modernity would take—a search that dominated nineteenth-century political writing, reform proposals, and all the successful or failed reform programs of the Ottomans—resulted in a parade of rival ideas and projects that combined to different degrees secular and legal-rational experiences inspired by Europe with Islamic customs, norms, and references. Throughout the twentieth century the official secular Turkish nationalism of the state was continually challenged by such rival projects, including Islamist, Kurdish, and Marxist movements that produced alternative projects of modernity and nationalism. Among these, the Islamist challenge was no doubt the most significant in unsettling the foundations of the secularism that had silenced opponent ideologies for a long time.

The Emerging Visibility of Islam in the Secular Public Sphere

Under the overbearing gaze of the modernizing state, the relationship between Islamic social formations and the modern sociopolitical order has been marked by strategies of inclusion and exclusion and authoritarian control mechanisms rather than by dialogue and debate. Even though Islamic formations remained in various forms throughout the twentieth century, most of these were gatherings around orders (*tarikat*) that were maintained due to their deeply entrenched traditions of secrecy and covertness. Islamist discourse and Islamic thought survived around such informal social gatherings, sustained mainly through literature, poetry, and music. While the national public sphere was thriving under the supervision of the state and secularist elite circles, Islamic formations maintained a rather low profile, surviving through personal networks and communal gatherings that avoided public visibility, and thereby the domineering gaze of the state.

It was not until the mid-1980s that autonomous Islamic practices started gaining visibility in the secular public sphere. Increasing numbers of men and women were assuming Islamic identities, which were gaining a salient public visibility mainly through women's headscarves. The Refah Party capitalized on this development and started increasing its support base rapidly. The Refah Party had been a part of the political scene since the late 1960s, but until the early 1990s it had remained a small party

(gaining less than 10 percent of the national vote) and was identified as a right-wing, conservative party rather than as Islamist. Only after the late 1980s did the Refah Party start to assume a more explicitly articulated Islamist identity and become more outspoken in its endorsement of an Islamist discourse. This new trend carried the Refah Party to the top, bringing the party its first major electoral victory during the local elections of 1994, which placed an Islamist administration in the municipality of Istanbul, making Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Istanbul's first Islamist mayor. A year later, in December 1995, the Refah Party emerged as the top party in the general elections, placing its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, in the seat of the prime minister in 1996 as part of a coalition government. Apparently this placement went beyond the limits that the secular system could bear. The Refah Party's reign lasted only a year. After the famous February 28, 1997, decree of the National Security Council calling for the Refah-led coalition government to use stronger measures against the rising threat of Islamism, the coalition government fell, and Necmettin Erbakan's short but significant incumbency ended.

With the rising power of the Refah Party, secularism, which had enjoyed a relatively unchallenged authority in the public sphere, found itself facing a serious challenge from Islamism, which was thought to be permanently marginalized and pacified. The realization that Islam was no longer under the state's control and had become a serious political contender came as a shock during the local elections of March 1994.

The 1994 local elections have become one of the landmarks of contemporary Turkish political history. The emergence of the Refah Party as the victor in the city administrations of most of the major cities, including Istanbul and the capital, Ankara, was perceived as an astounding historical moment by both secularists and Islamists, but for opposite reasons. While the Refah Party's supporters were celebrating the Islamist victory with slogans such as "The Other Turkey Is Coming to Power,"[29] various secularist groups were reacting sharply and immediately in shock and panic. Turkey witnessed one of the most fervently embraced and rather unconventional political protests of its recent history. Within a matter of days, a "blacklist" of all the businesses and enterprises that had provided financial support for the Refah Party was anonymously prepared and circulated through faxes calling for consumers not to do business with these places. This form of protest became so popular and effective that certain businesses that had been "mistakenly" placed on the list had to place large ads in newspapers denying such allegations. Other forms of secularist protest ensued. Grassroots organizations and associations were established to act